

VERY SPECIAL EDITION No. 38 from our President.

Greetings fellow Sappers and Friends.

YOU own a Bailey Bridge! It's a Single deck footbridge purchased from the Mabey Bridge Company in the UK and, right now, it is on the high seas on its way to 2CER at Gallipoli Barracks at Enoggera in Brisbane where the Sappers will assemble it.

Every member of the 1st Field Squadron Group RAE Association Inc bought this bridge by dint of our own hard work in fund-raising together with a lot of support from the ADF, Brisbane City Council and the RSL (Toowong Sub Branch). It measures 15.24 metres long by 2.1 metres wide and is made from hot-dipped galvanised British steel.

Our Association is going to be the only group of Sappers in our 120 years as a Corps to honour the service of every one of our World War One engineers with a monument. We will do this on 11 November 2022 at ANZAC Park, Toowong, Brisbane commencing at 4:00 pm as a part of our 2022 Squadron reunion (Details in this edition of FTS).

2022 is the 120th anniversary of the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers and a big reason to celebrate this as a part of our reunion on 10, 11, 12 and 13 November 2022 at the Wests Rugby Union Football Club reception centre located in 65 Sylvan Road, Toowong, Brisbane.

The bridge will be a monument entitled: "The Bridge of Friendship Between Australia and France: Dedicated to every Australian Army Engineer unit involved in World War One". The dedication ceremony will include very high-level leaders from the diplomatic, political and military communities and includes the Ambassador for France, Monsieur Jean-Pierre Thebault and his military attaches. The Ambassador has arranged for a contingent of French Sapeurs to join together with a big grouping of Australian Sappers to dedicate the bridge. Our Corps Banner, with its FSPB Coral-Balmoral Ribbon, will be on parade guarded by a grouping of Australian Sappers.

There will be a red-carpet reception after the bridge dedication (In the same spot as our reunion dinner at Toowong) commencing at 6:30 pm Friday 11 November 2022, where we will meet and exchange gifts with our VIP personalities.

If you have ever attended a 1 FD SQ GP RAE Association reunion, this is the one NOT to miss. There will never be another like it again. The application form to attend this special one-time-opportunity is inside this newsletter – please take time to fill it in and send it to our Treasurer Mr Jim Weston at PO Box 236, Raymond Terrace, NSW 2324.

See you at the reunion in November this year!

George Hulse OAM President

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Contact Details Please ensure your mail and contact details are correct!

If you have relocated or your contact details have changed please message our Hon Secretary directly at:

info@1fieldsappers.org or P O Box 236 Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

facebook

Vale - 1 FD SQN GP RAE members:

The following list is of our brothers who have marched out since our last newsletter.

Our deepest sympathies to all those families of those we have lost.



A brief comment from your Editor:

As most will know, my first posting after graduating from Army Apprentice School in 1964, was to 32 Small Ship Sqn, Woolwich.

My first ship was the LSM AV1356 Clive Steele. I did not attend any RAE Corps Training so my first bridge was where the skipper who held the Army rank of CAPT, perched and gave his orders to drive the ship.

As this young POGO progressed, attending promotion courses was a must. I headed off to SME to do my FE2 course. It was at SME where I first encountered the dreaded **Bailey Bridge**. Who among us did not gain a few bruises and battered knees while constructing those big critters and all the other types of wet gap stuff we had to put our backs into? Welcome to the real Corps of RAE young Derek.

Progress to 2009 and I am facilitating the construction of a bridge (well a series of culverts really) in Kon Tum, Central Highlands, Vietnam. This was a MiVAC project. As you would expect, the bridge is named "Sappers Crossing". At our grand opening we had some of the kids from the orphanage sing a Miley Cyrus song (believe it or not) called 'The Climb'.

Some of the words were as follows:

There's always gonna be another mountain, I'm always gonna wanna make it move,

Always gonna be an uphill battle, sometimes I'm gonna have to lose,

Ain't about how fast I get there, Ain't about what's on the other side,

It's the climb.

Great words I reckon and speaks volumes about the life of the orphan kids, the mission to get my little bridge done and dusted, and really, the climb our Association has undertaken to launch The Bridge of Friendship on 11th November 2022 as a major part of our 1 FD SQN GP Reunion.

This is a reunion not to be missed. See you there.



Derek and Coi at Sappers Crossing 2020.



Children from orphanage at crossing 2010.

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1 Field Squadron Group Web Site

is maintained by John Robertson at Visreal Productions - Ruakaka NZ. Mob. +64 21 430 166

Email: visrealproductions@gmail.com

We acknowledge photos marked with * are from AWM, ADF Media or Wikipaedia All others are from private collections and in some cases source is unknown.

President's Report June 2022

Reunion 10, 11, 12 and 13 November 2022

The reunion scheduled from 10 to 13 November 2022 will be the biggest event that we have ever held. In addition, to our meet and greet on 10 and 11 November at the Western Suburbs Rugby Union football fields in 65 Sylvan Road, Toowong (Brisbane) we are the lead agency in celebrating the 120th anniversary of the birth of our Corps.

We will be dedicating a monument in the form of a Bailey footbridge in ANZAC Park, Toowong commencing at 4:00 pm Friday 11 November 2022. Our VIP list includes the Ambassador for France, top level political, diplomatic and military leaders and a contingent of French Army Sapeurs to accompany a large contingent of RAE Sappers with our Corps Banner at the bridge dedication.

We will hold a big Reception in the Wests RUFC building in Sylvan Road commencing at 6:30 pm 11 November 2022 (after the bridge dedication ceremony) where we will rub shoulders with the VIP group and enjoy the spectacle of being hosts to our Australian and French friends.

We will also conduct our commemoration of the 63 Australian Sappers lost to overseas wars, on 12 November at the Cenotaph next to the Wests RUFC playing fields and this will be supported by over 80 ADF service personnel. This reunion is the one that you really need to come to. It is special. It is spectacular. It will be unforgettable. More details in this edition of Follow The Sapper.

AGM 2022

The Annual General Meeting for 2022 will be conducted on the morning of 12 November in the Wests RUFC Convention Centre. I will stand down as the President and our Association is seeking a younger person for that role.

Engineer Monument to WWI Sappers in France

Our memorial bridge in Amiens France has been rescheduled for 25 April 2024. All the arrangements as previously advised for the construction and dedication of it remain the same. The Amiens City Council will confirm arrangements with us in late 2023. The design of this bridge will be a copy of the one that we are dedicating at ANZAC Park in Toowong this year. Funding for the monument in France remains a concern and we will need to discuss this challenge at our AGM in November 2022.

New Patron for our Association

Every member of the 1 FD SQN GP Association warmly welcomes Brigadier Michael Say DSC as our Patron. Brigadier Say served in 1 FD SQN and commanded 1CER during his career. He is concurrently the RAE Head of Corps and the Commander 7th Combat Brigade based in Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera. His bio and photograph are on the Association website.

Meritorious Unit Citation for 1 FD SQN

We will renew our appeal to the new Minister for Defence once he has had time to settle into his new role. More on this in the next edition of Follow The Sapper.

Subscription Renewal Time

Just a friendly reminder to renew your annual membership. It is due on 1 July every year and it's from your membership funds that we are able to keep this Association going and alive. Thanks for your membership and camaraderie as fellow Sappers.

See you at the reunion in Toowong Brisbane in November this year.



J. W. Hulse

Follow the Sapper George Hulse OAM President

15th June 2022

Executive and Committee Members 2021 - 2022

Patron:

Brigadier Mick Say DSC.

Executive Committee:

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Hon: Secretary: Tony Andrews Email: antony.andrews@bigpond.com Mobile: 0417 579 218

Hon Treasurer: Jim Weston P O Box 236 Raymond Terrace NSW 2324 Email: james.weston5@icloud.com Mob: 0419 260 463



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Combat Assault Bridges

The following information was taken from a variety of sources including Wikipedia

The Military Bridge is generally considered as a temporary bridge that must usually be constructed in haste by military engineers, from available materials and frequently under fire. The earliest types historically were floating pontoon bridges. Pontoon bridges were constructed in ancient times by Persians, Greeks, Romans, and Mongols, the most famous being Xerxes' 3-km (2-mile) span over the Hellespont in the Dardanelles not far from the infamous Gallipoli landing area. The Romans, however, frequently built more durable military bridges, notably Julius Caesar's timber crossing of the Rhine River and Trajan's timber-arch span of the Danube. By the 17th century, bridging equipment was part of the train of European and Turkish armies, with pontoons fashioned not only of timber but also of leather, copper, and tin. Pneumatic pontoons with steel roadways made their appearance during World War II.

Military bridges were built in considerable numbers in the wars of the 19th century, notably the American Civil War. Abraham Lincoln, inspecting a 120-metre railroad bridge over Potomac Creek, built in nine days, expressed his astonishment: "Loaded trains are running every hour, and upon my word it consists of nothing but beanpoles and cornstalks." Such is the ingenuity of the Army engineer. (https://www.britannica.com/technology/trestle)

This an example of the Eiffel Bridge designed by Gustaf Eiffel of Eiffel Tower fame in Paris. This was not an equipment bridge and had to be manufactured in whole pieces, transported to site and positioned with mechanical equipment.



This is the bridge at Cerisy in France which had been codenamed 'Cherry Bridge' prior to the major Allied Offensive commencing on 8 August 1918. This bridge was captured by Sappers of 12 Field Company AE and is the spot from which Sappers Dean and Campbell departed on their successful two-man attack on a German infantry platoon that was protecting two heavy machine guns which were cutting the forward elements of the London Fusiliers to pieces. The bridge is still there today.



Australian Sappers and Expedient Bridges in WWI

On 26 August 1918, the British opened a new offensive and there was to be very little rest for anybody. The Somme River needed to be crossed in many places in the Peronne area. Recon parties from 5, 7, 8 and 15 FD COY reached their destinations, in some instances, before the infantry. They quickly assessed the locations where bridges were either destroyed. remained intact or where equipment/expedient bridging was needed. At Feuilleres, the German engineers blew up a road bridge at 0830hrs 29 August 1918. 5 FD COY were on the job repairing it by 1030hrs. The tempo and pressure of work for the engineers was a test of their mental and physical resilience.

Here is an example: In late August 1918, 7 FD COY had been working on water supply during the day, and then that night were ordered to place two bridges across the Somme River.

The first bridge was a floating pontoon bridge designed to be transported and assembled as a modular/mobile unit. This required a combination of transport means to get it into position. The first was using horse drawn wagons to a point 300 metres from the enemy front line, followed by a man-muscle lift to the water's edge where some of the floating modules were assembled into bigger floating component modules. After that, the modules were rafted for about 400 metres to their final location where they were joined up and the floating bridge completed. This bridge was opened at 0300 hrs the following morning right on the forward edge of the battle area.

The second bridge was more adventurous. It was made from cork floats and duckboards. The pieces of this bridge were again transported by wagon to the site area, unloaded, carried forward, assembled and then floated for 1000 metres along a canal to its final site. This bridge was opened at 0500hrs, the allocated H HR for the advance, and the infantry conducted an assault river crossing at that time. Both bridges had been built at the leading edge of the combat zone and under shellfire including HE and gas rounds. Not a bad day's work, but it must have tested the physical stamina of the sappers as well as causing a determination to push forward despite sleep deprivation combined with physical exertion.

Then came the 'game-changer' – The Bailey Bridge of WWII

The first operational Bailey bridge during WWII was built by 237 Field Company RE over the Medjerda River near Medjez el Bab in Tunisia on the night of 26 November 1942. The first Bailey bridge built under fire was constructed at Leonforte by members of the 3rd Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers. The Americans adopted the Bailey bridge, calling it the Portable Panel Bridge. In early 1942, the United States Army Corps of Engineers initially awarded contracts to the Detroit Steel Products Company, the American Elevator Company and the Commercial Shearing and Stamping Company, and later several other companies to manufacture the Bailey Bridge in the USA.

The Bailey bridge provided a solution to the problem of German and Italian armies destroying bridges as they retreated. By the end of the war, the US Fifth Army and British 8th Army had built over 3,000 Bailey bridges in Sicily and Italy alone, totalling some 90 km of bridge, at an average length of 30 metres per bridge. One Bailey, built to replace the Sangro River bridge in Italy, spanned 343 metres. Another on the Chindwin River in Burma, spanned 352 metres Such long bridges required support from either piers or pontoons.

Production was accelerated for the 1944 D-Day landings and large stocks of this bridge were available for the Allied forces after the beach assaults of 6 June. The US also licensed the design and started rapid construction for their own use. A Bailey Bridge constructed over the River Rhine at Rees, Germany, in 1945 by the Royal Canadian Engineers was 558 metres long including the ramps at each end, and became the longest Bailey bridge ever constructed up until that time. In all, over 600 firms were involved in the making of over 320 kms of bridges composing of 500,000 tons, or 700,000 panels of bridging during the war. At least 2,500 Bailey bridges were built in Italy, and another 2,000 elsewhere.

In Tasmania, the temporary Derwent River floating Bailey Bridge at Dowsings Point was 961 metres long.

This is an example of a Double-Single Bailey Bridge during WWII.



Who invented the Bailey Bridge?

The Bailey Bridge is named after Sir Donald Coleman Bailey who was born in Rotherham, Yorkshire, England on 15 September 1901, and passed away on 5 May 1985 in Bournemouth, Dorset.

After graduating from the University of Sheffield, Bailey worked for a time in railroading, but then in 1929 he joined the staff of the Experimental Bridging Establishment of the Ministry of Supply. When World War II broke out, he had already developed an idea for a military bridge, and in late 1940, at a conference on the problem of providing temporary spans capable of taking heavy loading, his concept of a strong but relatively light steel truss that could be prefabricated in sections was at once approved. The characteristics of the Bailey bridge were standardization and simplicity of panels, readiness of assembly in the field, capacity for additional strengthening by doubling or tripling the truss girders, and adaptability to long spans with the aid of pontoons. A Bailey pontoon bridge over the Maas River in the Netherlands spanned 1,200 metres. Bailey was knighted in 1946.



Sir Donald Bailey looking at a model of his design.

Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery wrote in 1947:

"Bailey Bridging made an immense contribution towards ending World War II. As far as my own operations were concerned, with the Eighth Army in Italy and with the 21 Army Group in North West Europe, I could never have maintained the speed and tempo of forward movement without large supplies of Bailey Bridging" and again later:

"Without the Bailey Bridge, we should not have won the war. It was the best thing in that line that we ever had."

General Dwight Eisenhower

"(the Bailey Bridge)...one of the three pieces of equipment that most contributed to our victory in Festung Europa."

What has become of the Bailey Bridge now?

During the 1960s Thomas Storey Engineers Ltd of London marketed Bailey Bridges under the name Bailey-Uniflote all over the world. Later, another English firm, Mabey Johnson, fabricated the same component steel segmented truss bridges using higher strength, lower weight structural steel.

The 1st Field Squadron Group RAE Association's 'Bridge of Friendship' is being shipped to Brisbane as we go to print with this edition of FTS and is manufactured by the Mabey Bridge Company located at Lydney in Gloucestershire England (an Acrow Company). It will measure 15.24 metres long by 2.1 metres wide and look something like this:





AUSTRALIAN ARMY

1 Field Squadron, 1st Combat Engineer Regiment BQ29792800

1 FIELD SQUADRON UPDATE - JANUARY TO JUNE 2022

The Squadron continues to set and exceed high standards – which is due to the drive and dedication that every member displays whist being "Ready, Professional, Proud". This started with the annual mandatory training requirements and individual courses to achieve our baseline readiness, which then flowed into Section Level training designed and ran exceptionally well by the Corporals.

Shortly after this, the Federal Government announced that the ADF would be undertaking OP AGED CARE ASSIST – and the Squadron took the lead for 1 CER to deploy 100 personnel into Western Australia. Whilst we did not deploy the Squadron into WA, we deployed a team of five into Alice Springs and another team of five into Sydney to augment Independent Medical Teams assisting aged care facilities. This then evolved into five more personnel supporting in Sydney and two personnel in Perth. Concurrently, the Squadron deployed 10 personnel on OP FLOOD ASSIST in Lismore, and 10 personnel to the Philippines as part of the Joint Australian Training Team – Philippines. This saw 37 personnel (close to half the Squadron) supporting Domestic and Security Cooperation Operations.

Whilst supporting these operations, the Squadron also completed a range of valuable training. The limited number of personnel in the Squadron provided an opportunity to integrate the Marine Rotational Force – Darwin engineers into our activities. This was at the forefront during Ex AMPHIBIAN CRAWL, where Marines assisted in the construction of a Medium Girder Bridge and participated in a 90km zodiac infill to an objective to conduct Engineer Reconnaissance – thus helping the Squadron commence its journey towards Littoral Operations, the vision Army has for the 1st Brigade in Darwin.

The next activity, Ex AMPHIBIAN WALK, allowed sappers to hone their search and demolition skills and incorporated Marine EOD and explosive detection dog handlers from the Malaysian Armed Forces. The search activities focused on civilian facilities in a scenario that saw an explosive threat present in the lead up to major sporting events. The demolitions serials allowed for various munitions to be destroyed through explosive hazard reduction, and for sappers to reacquaint themselves with a variety of breaching charges.

Most recently, the Regiment deployed into the field for Ex GOANNA CANTER at Mount Bundey Training Area – something that has not been possible since 2020 due to a range of issues. During this exercise, the Squadron conducted offensive and defensive mounted manoeuvre, established obstacles and a company defensive position, conducted route search, and culminated with a urban clearance. Overall – a great activity for the entire Regiment that reinforced the importance of collective training in the field environment.

As always, we pass on our best wishes to all former members of the squadron and their families.

Yours sincerely

Peter Witcomb

Major

Officer Commanding, 1 Field Squadron 08 July 2022

1 Field Squadron Group Royal Australian Engineers Qld Inc.

2022 Family Reunion Registration Form.

Dates: 10th,11th,12th, & 13th of November 2022 in the Convention Centre at

Venue: Western Districts Rugby Football Club, Convention Centre, 65 Sylvan Rd Toowong. Qld. 4066.

Personal Details:				
Family NameCor	ntact Ph			
First Name Email				
Postal Address	Postcode			
Preferred Name Partners Na	me			
Other guests attending - Number () Guests Names				
It is preferred by the Executive Committee that all guests be over 18 ye	ears.			
Cost Covers All Events: \$200 p	er person.			
Meet'n'Greets on Thursday, Friday & Farewell on Sunday, Toowong RSL s/b Remembrance Day Service,				
Bridge Dedication, Reception for VIP's, Memorial Flag	Service & Family Reunion Dinner.			
Payment Details				
Please accept my Registration for: Number attending	Amount			
Payment method: Cheque, Money Order or Direct deposit into account.				
When making a Direct Deposit ensure you mark it 'Reunion' and your 'Family Name'				
Heritage Bank:				
BSB. 638-070				
Account No. 10045570. Amount enclosed:				
Make cheques, money orders payable to 1 F	D Sqn Gp RAE Qld Inc.			
All registrations to be pre-paid by 21	1 st October 2022.			
Please Post or Email this Registra	ation Form to:			

Treasurer.
1 FD Sqn Gp RAE Qld Inc
PO Box 236.

RAYMOND TERRACE. NSW.2324

Email: james.weston5@icloud.com

1 FIELD SQUADRON GROUP

THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS

QUEENSLAND INCORPORATED

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

'NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION'

Mrs Surname Ms	First Names	
(Family Name) Mr	(Given Names)	
Date of Birth (Confidential if ticked)	Wife/Partners Name(Confidential if ticked)	
Residential Address	State	Postcode
Private Phone () (Confidential if ticked)	Email @	
Veteren's Service Details or other a	ppropriate information. (If possible)	
Name	Service No	
	/ / To// Active Set	rvice: Yes NO
Unit/Units	Which Country Served for? Australia or Other	
Which duties? (F.E, Plant, Mine	Clearing, etc.)	
	n June in each year. Fees are accepted until 30th September, in access will not be able to vote at the Annual General Meeting.	ordance with the Association's
New Member Entrance Fee Annual Subscription Renewal TOTAL	\$ 10.00 (Once Only - Inclusive of Association Badge.) *Los \$ 30.00 (Includes Newsletters) \$ 40.00	st Badge \$5.00 each
MEMBERS SIGNATURE	Date//	
	MEMBERSHIP 'RENEWAL / UP-DATE 'FO \$30.00 per year. (1st July to 30th June)	≥
Name		
Address		
	STATE F	POSTCODE
Private Phone ()	Email @ _	
Wife/Partners Name (Confidential if ticked)		
EXTRA or 'LOST' Membership	p Lapel Pins Required, please tick - How many?	\$5.00 each P&H included.
MEMBERS SIGNATURE	Date/ /	
	ostal Order to PO Box 236 Raymond Terrace NSW 2324 or B 638-070 Account 10045570 with your details.	

IF YOU USE THE DIRECT DEPOSIT FACILITY PLEASE FORWARD THIS FORM AS WELL. NO CASH IN MAIL PLEASE.

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





1 Field Squadron Group Merchandise

- Special polo shirts and caps that commemorate the 11 November 2022 bridge.
- Book entitled "First In Last Out: The Australian Combat Engineers of WWI"
- Souvenir coins
- Timber plaques.

These will be available for purchase commencing on 10 November 2022 at the reunion.



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 Field Squadron Group Merchandise

NEW STYLE CAPS AND SHIRTS



1 Fd. Sqn. Gp. Polo Shirt - \$40.00 + 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 = P	\$	
'Cheque, Money Order or Direct Deposit by NetBank'	(Confirm by email-Please)	