

1 FIELD SQUADRON GROUP  
THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS  
QUEENSLAND INCORPORATED

## 'FOLLOW THE SAPPER'

Website - [www.1fieldsappers.org](http://www.1fieldsappers.org)  
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June 2019 Edition 32



Follow The Sapper

### Greetings fellow Sappers and Friends.

2019 has had a rough beginning with the North in one of the worst floods recorded. At my home in Townsville, we recorded a bit over 1600 mm of rain in January/February. So many families' homes (2737) were inundated with enormous loss of property. The West of Queensland suffered flooding where the stock losses were estimated to be in excess of 500,000. Then there were the bush fires across the country. And in March two cyclones of category 4 strength hammered the northern coasts of Australia. And then the horror of the massacres in Christchurch and Dunedin, New Zealand leaving 50 innocents dead. Where are we going with this madness all around? No doubt much debate will follow on all these issues but I wish to focus here on 'the North.'

The Townsville Bulletin produced a 33 page lift out in its 30 March 2019 Edition, titled, *Rising Above; Stories of Resilience, Resourcefulness, Courage and Generosity*. Part of this deals with the Military support provided to the Townsville region. To quote from Police Inspector Damian Irvine, *'I think we really dodged a bullet and we're very lucky that we are a garrison town because the effort and assistance given to us by the military, I've never seen anything like it. If the military hadn't mobilized as quick as they did, and thrown the assets – the machinery, equipment and staff – at us as quick as they did, people would have died.'*

I am sure most will have seen the coverage. Unless one was in Townsville, particularly on 3 February when the spillway gates of the Ross River Dam were fully opened, one could not begin to imagine the fear factor. So to the recovery effort. From an ADF and in particular RAE view, our men and women were there – UBIQUE holds true. Despite the fact that many military personnel suffered damage to their homes, they were on the job helping others. About 40 Sapper families of 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment (Townsville) were impacted by the floods. The Corps has rallied. BRIG Wayne Budd as Director of the RAE Foundation, sent out a call for support. Here is, in part, what he transmitted:

*Hello Fellow Sappers, I write to all in my capacity as a Director of the RAE Foundation. None of us could have missed the devastating effect of the recent flood event in Townsville. It therefore wouldn't surprise you to know that 40 Sapper families of members of 3 CER were impacted. 3 CER have been offered support for these families from around the Corps and have set up a RTF facility for that support...The RAE Foundation has today offered CO 3 CER a \$10000 immediate impact donation to support the families...Donations can be made to the Foundation for flood relief purposes using the following details: BSB: 033 508 Acc 140 072 Name Royal Australian Engineers Found – Reference: First name Surname 19FR...*

This message received very wide distribution and it is hoped it will gain your support. Our Sappers and indeed ADF members here in Townsville, were out supporting the wider community when their own homes were inundated. It will take months for many before they can return to their own homes. We can be justly proud of our Corps and our military families for their commitment. Our best wishes go to all who were impacted by this event.

Derek Smith  
Editor



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## 1 FD SQN REUNION 2019



Hey you Engineer blokes, we are looking for you. Yes you with the Australian accent. WE WANT YOU NOW. Your reunion is under 100 days off and we need heaps more to register. We have less than 30 so far.



Us Meer cats love to watch you all spinning yarns and having a few ales. Looks great catching up with your old mates. You are all getting a bit older each year so hey, best come along to this Reunion. It is on that Gold Coast place where you always go.

It is 23 to 25 August this year; not far off. Your Editor told us that since he has been involved with your newsletter- 2013 – and this is a very sobering thing – 62 of your members have passed on.

You need to come and say g'day to old mates. Us Meer Cats want you to register now.

I GOT IT  
IN TWO  
DAYS!

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

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

CPL Frank Smith	1 FD SQN GP 1968/69 and 1971	Passed away 5 August 2018
SPR Gerry Lyall	1 FD SQN GP 1969/70	Passed away 2 November 2018
SGT Vern Tuskin	2/8 FD COY RAE (WWII)	Passed away 14 November 2018
Padre John Wessel	ex-Padre for 1 FD SQN GP reunions	Passed away December 2018
CPL Colin Dennis	1 FD SQN GP 1965/66 and Borneo	Passed away 2 January 2019
SPR Mike Lee	3 FD TP 1965/66	Passed away January 2019
CPL Tony Sutton	21 SPT TP	Passed away 17 January 2019
SPR Frank Taylor	2/15 FD COY (WWII)	Passed away 30 January 2019
SPR Zygmunt (Ziggy) Gniot	1 FD SQN GP 1970/71	Passed away 8 February 2019
CPL (D'arcy) Duggan	1 FD SQN GP 71/72	Passed away 12 February 2019
SSGT Harry Eustace	1 FD SQN GP 1971	Passed away 11 March 2019
SPR John Cross	1 FD SQN GP 1970/71	Passed away 16 March 2019
SGT Simon Wilson	1 FD SQN GP 1967	Passed away 28 March 2019
SSGT Bernie Bickel	1 FD SQN GP 1971	Passed away 7 April 2019



#### COLONEL Barry Petersen MC

Although this man was not from 1 FD SQN GP RAE, he was none the less a warrior. COLONEL Barry Petersen MC, passed away on 28 February 2019. Barry was a member of the AATTV in 1963. His role was to train the Montagnard villagers to take the fight to the VC. He did a second tour to Vietnam where he commanded a rifle company in 2 RAR in 1970/71 and was awarded an MID. His is an amazing story. His book, *The Tiger Man of Vietnam*, is a good read.

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#### 1 Field Squadron Group Web Site

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## Why is the City of Amiens and the date 8 August 1918 of particular significance to the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers?

### 8 August 1918

At 0420hrs on 8 August 1918, one of the biggest attacks of World War One by British, French and American units was launched on the Western Front. It was the first day of the Battle of Amiens. By the end of that day the following decorations had been earned by personnel of the Australian Engineers (the prefix 'Royal' was added on 31 January 1936):

- 1 x Distinguished Service Order  
(original citation recommended the Victoria Cross),
- 4 x Distinguished Conduct Medals  
(of which two citations recommended the Victoria Cross),
- 4 x Military Crosses,
- 1 x Military Medal.

There may have been more decorations and citations written for that day. However, the list given is the largest number of very high-level awards for bravery on the battlefield ever received in one day by the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers. The date upon which the actions by Australian sappers led to these decorations being awarded was 8 August 1918.

### Amiens

The Cities of Amiens and Arras were Ground of Strategic Importance to the British Army. The German Generals, Paul Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff knew this and in a desperate attempt to win the war, launched Operation Michael (and other supporting Operations) in March 1918 to capture both these Cities. Operation Michael was a failure albeit it came close to success.

Australians were positioned in large numbers in or near the City of Amiens in early August 1918. There were five Australian Divisions in the field. Each Division had three Brigades. Each Brigade was allocated one Company of Australian Engineers. Each Australian Division was allocated one Australian Pioneer Battalion. This gave a disposition of the following engineer combat units ready for battle in the Amiens area on 8 August 1918:

- 15 x Engineer Companies AE, and
  - 5 x Pioneer Battalions
- Added to this resource were a number of detachments of Australian Tunnelling Companies AE.

Quite often, the Pioneer Battalions were placed under the command or control of the Australian Chief Engineer at Australian Corps HQ or under command/control of the Australian Commander Royal Engineers at Divisional HQ. Sometimes the Commanding Officer of a Pioneer Battalion would have a number of Australian Engineer Companies placed under his command and at other times, Pioneer Companies would be placed under command of Australian Engineer Companies. The point here is that quite often, Pioneer Battalions and Australian Engineer units worked as a synergistic engineering resource in support of combat operations in the battle space. The decorations listed above are exclusively those awarded to personnel of the Corps of Australian Engineers.

The Battle of Amiens was an intense concentration of Australian combat engineering resources in the one place and for the one Operation.

In the following pages there are excerpts of the actions of three Australian Engineer Companies that served with distinction during the Battle of Amiens from 8 August 1918 onward. They are: 5th Field Company, 8th Field Company and 12th Field Company AE. The description of their work is referenced on documents held in the Australian War Memorial.

### Significance

There are no memorials to all Australian Engineer units of WWI anywhere in the world. The contribution to the war effort during that war by Australian military engineers should be recognised. A memorial befitting their service can be built and their service commemorated on a particular day each year. It is recommended that an appropriate place for a perpetual memorial to Australian engineers of WWI is the City of Amiens in France and the date for commemorating their service is 8 August each year.

### The Concept of a Memorial

The 1 FD SQN GP RAE Association identified the significance of Amiens (France) and 8 August 1918 during a reunion in 2015. The Association began a project to recognise the high standard of soldiering set by our forebears in the Great War. Visits to the battle sites in 2016 and 2017 indicated that there are a number of opportunities to honour the WWI Sappers with a memorial. The Amiens City Council and the 1 FD SQN GP RAE Association agreed that a candidate memorial bridge could take the form of a Bailey Bridge because it has a distinctive military look, it provides symbolism in that WWI brought two peoples together from the opposite sides of the world in the name of freedom and it would provide the citizens and visitors to Amiens a useful piece of infrastructure in its dual role as a monument and a footbridge.

The potential memorial bridge project is a work-in-progress with a lot more work yet to be done before Australia and France can celebrate the idea as the only perpetual memorial to Australian engineer units of WWI.

Ubique  
George Hulse

President 1 FD SQN GP RAE Association  
26 March 2019

## Australian Engineers

### The Battle of Amiens 8 to 12 August 1918

#### 5th Field Company

The early morning darkness of 8 August 1918 along the Somme River Valley in the area of Corbie, Hamel and associated territory was enshrouded in fog. At 0420hrs, along the whole front of the British 4th Army Sector, the Artillery commenced a bombardment. It started as a concentrated bombardment on German lines at the forward edge of the battle area and then continued unabated as a creeping barrage across the whole of the German front facing the British 4th Army.

At 0420hrs, the forward infantry units of the British Army 'went over the top' and aggressively attacked the German Army. This attack was supported by a copious number of tanks, infantry battalions, artillery in great depth and numerous combat aircraft. The boundary between the Australians left flank and the 58th Division (London Fusiliers) followed the line of the River Somme with the Australians occupying the area to the South and inclusive of the river.

The Operation produced an immediate force multiplier effect and the German High Command were taken by surprise. The majority of the 4th British Army advanced rapidly against a quickly crumbling German defence and the Germans either abandoned their areas and withdrew, or they surrendered in large groups.

Immediately after the infantry 'went over', 5 FD COY deployed its Sections (TPs) into road upgrades and bridge and other line of communication work. The Sections moved forward rapidly upgrading roads and tracks from the Jumping Off Line (Line of Departure) with the infantry along the line of attack. They reconnoitred forward to the township of Bayonvillers and cleared enemy wire obstacles in this area. The road from the LD along the line to Warfusee-Abancourt and surrounding area was reconnoitred for mines/booby traps, and shell craters. The COY declared these roads and tracks open by 0715hrs ie three hours after the attack commenced and as a result, 12 Armoured Cars (Whippets) passed through Warfusee-Abancourt at 0730hrs on their way to close with the enemy.

During the push forward by 3 TP of 5 FD COY a dugout was located situated under the road a short distance from Warfusee. The dugout was filled with 5 German officers apparently having breakfast and totally unaware that they had been over-run by the Australians. The sappers took them prisoner and handed them over into the PW system.

At the same time at Bayonvillers, a hastily abandoned German HQ was entered by 5 FD COY AE sappers and a large number of maps captured. These were handed over to HQ 7 BDE. Included in these documents were a number of geological maps for which the CE AUSTRALIAN CORPS personally congratulated the unit.

This account demonstrates two things: One is the speed at which the Australians advanced on the enemy on the morning of 8 August 1918, the other is the fact that Sappers were at the leading edge of the battle supporting their infantry brothers and did so using Initiative, Courage, Resilience and Innovation – the Values being promoted for today's Army going forward.

#### 8th Field Company

On 8 August 1918, two TPs (in those days called 'Sections') of 8 FD COY were allocated to HQ 7th Aust INF BDE to assist in consolidation when the final objectives were captured, and one TP allocated to each of the two assault infantry battalions.

On 8 August 1918 the Australian infantry units pushed forward successfully and occupied their objectives. 8 FD COY was engaged in strong point construction, counter-minewarfare, constructing wire obstacles, water supply, road and track maintenance and general engineer works.

On arrival at the Blue Line (Final Objective) Lieutenant George Burrows, 2998 Sapper Leslie Strahan and 2447 Sapper John Palmer went forward immediately and saw a German 11.5" (28 cm) railway gun ahead. It was situated about 200 metres ahead of the Australian limit of exploitation (in 'No-Man's-Land'). It had been abandoned by its crew but was still well in the fields of fire of German machine guns. They immediately pushed forward and mounted the locomotive. This is how the citation for each Sapper for that action reads:

#### **"For conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty.**

In the attack east of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX near AMIENS on the 8th of August, Sapper Strahan (and Sapper Palmer) were with a section accompanying the assaulting Battalion. On the final objective east of Harbonnieres a long range 11½ inch gun on railway mounting was seen on a siding 200 yards beyond front line. A locomotive with several ammunition wagons and coaches which were on fire was also on the siding. Without hesitation this man (these men) volunteered and went forward with his (their) Section Officer and in spite of enemy machine gun and rifle fire, assisted to raise steam on the locomotive, shunt the burning coaches on to another siding, couple up with gun and ammunition and bring them back safely into our own lines. His (their) great courage and determination in the face of the enemy resulted in the capture of an extremely valuable gun and locomotive and it is worthy of the very highest recognition."

Sapper John Palmer and Sapper Leslie Strahan were both awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. LT George Burrows received the Military Cross (a bar to his existing MC).

The next day (9 August 1918) the sappers moved the gun on its tracks further into friendly territory by lifting the tracks behind the train and then relaying them to the front of it and repeated this until the gun was so convincingly captured that the Germans could not mount a counter-attack to retrieve it.

Initiative, Courage, Resilience and Innovation

#### 12th Field Company

The advance along the Australian front was swift. However, there was a problem along the Somme River at the point where it met the village of Chipilly. The British 58th Division had communication issues from the outset and the German resistance on the Chipilly Spur was determined and resolute. The British units along this line of advance became bogged down as they closed with the enemy on Chipilly Spur.

The Australian infantry units advanced quickly but had a flank protection issue developing on their left boundary at Chipilly and this had the challenge of disrupting the Australian 4th Infantry Division's line of communication. Bridges across the Somme River were vital to the maintenance of momentum for the Australian units.

By 0930hrs the fog had lifted and 12 FD COY pushed forward to construct a number of bridges in the Cerisy, Chipilly and Morcourt areas.

At about 1000hrs LT Ralph Hunt of 12 FD COY AE arrived at his allocated spot in the village of Cerisy. Cerisy is located in the Somme Valley and is overlooked by the high ground of Chipilly to its North about 1.5 Kms away. The Germans were still in strong possession of the entire Chipilly Spur and had good fields of fire across the Somme Valley into the Cerisy area and along the Somme River. German fire units included artillery, machine guns and rifles.

As instructed by his OC, LT Hunt pushed forward to conduct a reconnaissance of the bridge sites. He did this under German machine gun and rifle fire. He located CHERRY bridge and found it to be intact. He crossed the bridge taking with him a patrol of sappers and continued his reconnaissance. With the enemy firing from 300 yards away, he arranged for a large shell-hole to be filled and while that was being done, he continued with his reconnaissance taking one soldier with him, Sapper George Hook. As the two Australians reconnoitred forward, Sapper Hook was shot and severely wounded whereupon LT Hunt, under intense enemy fire, carried his man some 200 yards to safety. Unfortunately, Sapper Hook was twice again wounded and research suggests that he died of wounds (details are not available as to what happened to SPR Hook after he was evacuated from the battle area).

LT Hunt returned to his TP and brought forward his 5 pontoon wagons to the water's edge in preparation for launching a bridge. This was accomplished by the sappers under direct fire from an artillery piece across the river and under intense machine gun and rifle fire. He sent back a report to his OC describing in detail the conditions at the river as well as confirming that CHERRY bridge was intact and open to friendly traffic. Acting on this timely information, Major Riddell ordered LT Hunt to withdraw his pontoon wagons for use at another point in the river. LT Hunt and his sappers accomplished this under the same intense combat circumstances as their push forward earlier.

At CHERRY Bridge LT Hunt left an NCO and 6 men to guard it. It became obvious that the British units immediately to their North were under extreme pressure from a pair of German machine guns located about 500 yards north of CHERRY Bridge.

Two Australian sappers from 12 FD COY decided to investigate the situation to their North and on arrival they could see that two German machine guns had halted the British advance and that the British troops were pinned down. The German machine guns were protected by a platoon of German infantry. They decided to conduct a two-man assault of the German Platoon and two machine guns. The two sappers were 6211 Sapper Arthur Dean and 5057 Sapper William Campbell. They

formed up behind the German position and rushed it. The Germans assumed that they had been enveloped and surrendered to the two Australian sappers. The British Fusiliers rushed forward and took the German Platoon and machine gunners prisoner. They were then able to continue their advance on Chipilly Spur.

For their courage and determination on 8 August 1918, in the opening hours of the Battle of Amiens, LT Hunt, Sapper Dean and Sapper Campbell

were recommended for the Victoria Cross. Their citations were written by Major C.C. Riddell and supported by the CRE 4 AUST DIV and the Commander 4 AUST DIV Major-General E.G. Sinclair-MacLagan. Their decorations were downgraded by the Commander of the British 4th Army, General Sir Henry Rawlinson as follows:

LT R. Hunt the Distinguished Service Order.

SPR A. Dean and SPR W. Campbell the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Initiative, Courage, Resilience and Innovation.

Reflections of LTCOL George Hulse RAE (Retd): *"And there for the sake of the penstroke and whim of a Pommie General went the only opportunities for the Victoria Cross to be awarded to the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers. In another part of the same war, I believe that SPRs Dean and Campbell would have received the VC (my opinion). This is another reason why a memorial bridge dedicated to every Australian engineer unit that served in WWI should be erected in the City of Amiens and the action of our forebears commemorated there on 8 August each year"*.



## President's Report June 2019

### Reunion 2019

Our reunion 2019 will have a couple of different features. There are six major elements about this reunion that I would like every member to consider. These are:

1. The memorial service on Saturday 24 August 2019 in Chris Cunningham Park (next door to the Twin Towns Services Club, Tweed Heads) will be supported by the Australian Army Band – Brisbane, the RSM of the Corps of RAE, a Catafalque Party comprising all Sappers from 2CER, our patron LTGEN Frank Hickling AO CSC, our Padre, and a National Flag for the 63 members of RAE units who were lost to overseas service since 1945. We will need flag bearers for the name reading and these may be volunteers from outside our Association. The service commences at 1545hrs Saturday 24 August 2019.
2. The reunion Dinner will be conducted in the same spot as for our registrations in the Mantra Hotel. During the Dinner we will be acknowledging the service of all our Unit Citation for Gallantry awardees. This will be conducted by LTGEN Frank Hickling AO CSC to recognise that this very high level of unit award for courage in the face of the enemy is an important event in the history of RAE. It will be the only time that this will be conducted with the RAE veterans of those battles. Keep in mind that the UCGs were posted to our veterans in a cardboard box through the normal mail system. This is a unique opportunity to say 'well done' to those guys.
3. Another unique opportunity not to be missed is the promotion of a lady from Doctor to Sapper. Leonie Jones was instrumental in helping us to gain the UCG. She has not been acknowledged formally for her role in this work and we, Sappers, will do that by promoting her to the rank of Honorary Sapper on 24 August 2019. She will be awarded the Sapper slide-on, a shirt DPCU and a Certificate formally acknowledging her status in the Corps.
4. During the lunch on 25 August 2019 the OC 1 FD SQN, Major Simon Young, will give a presentation on the current activities and other interesting facts in respect of 1 FD SQN.
5. The AGM will be conducted in the ANZAC Room of the RSL in the Mantra building commencing at 0930hrs Sunday 25 August 2019.
6. At the time of writing this report, we only have about twenty members who have committed to the reunion. May I ask you to get your registration squared away as soon as possible so that we can firm-up catering and seating arrangements well before 24 August please?

### Engineer Monument to WWI Sappers in France

The Memorial Bridge to all Australian Engineer units involved in The Great War progresses. There are formal requests in the pipeline from both the French authorities and Australian Government for the deployment of Australian soldiers (Sappers) to Amiens in France to construct the Bailey Bridge. We await their responses.

Just briefly, we intend to build a Single/Single Bailey Bridge that will provide a 30 metre crossing between the City Centre and The Botanical Gardens. It will be in a very prominent position and be used every day by numerous citizens of Amiens, particularly university students attending their Engineering Faculty. The bridge will contain memorial plaques in English and French and acknowledgement plaques for our sponsors who helped to pay for it.

There will also be an unmistakable Australian emphasis embedded into the bridge that people crossing it will recognise immediately as an Australian donation to their City. The bridge will be designed for foot and bicycle traffic only.

Part of the dedication ceremony on 8 August 2020 will be a march of ADF personnel, Australian veterans and relatives of WWI soldiers over a route of about 500 metres leading into the Botanical Gardens and across our bridge. There will be further broad promotion of this during the course of 2019/20. If you can attend this event in Amiens France on 8 August 2020, bring your HKFF (Slouch Hat) with Corps badge on the front and Army Badge on the side. Relatives of WWI soldiers who wish to march should bring along the medals of their heroes and wear them on the right breast. More to follow on this as things firm-up.

For those who can't be in Amiens France on 8 August 2020, there is another Amiens right here in Australia. Its near the township of Stanthorpe in Queensland. The Historical Association there, headed up by Professor Roger Willis, is building a sister Bailey Bridge (9 metres long) and will dedicate that on 26 July 2020 in their very impressive museum area. The Amiens (Qld) folk are about to invite HRH The Prince of Wales to re-enact what his forbear did in July 1920 - and that was the dedication of the railway line from the terminus in Amiens to Stanthorpe.

More to follow at the reunion.

### Annual Subscriptions

Your membership is due on 1 July. Annual membership is \$30 so please renew at your soonest. The membership renewal form is in this edition of 'Follow The Sapper'. Many thanks.

### Marching Banners on ANZAC Day

The Sapper Association of Queensland has suggested that all Sapper marching banners be brigaded with the Sapper Association for the march on ANZAC Day. This is a good idea because our numbers are dwindling and our units are disappearing from the Order of Battle for the main marches in our Capital Cities. Our marching banner will be paraded behind the Sapper Association in Brisbane on ANZAC Day and be carried by serving Sappers of the RAE.

See you at the reunion at Tweed Heads in August

Follow The Sapper

George Hulse  
President  
15 June 2019



## George Hulse's Book – On Dogs of course "In Dogs We Trust"

We are the War Dog team .... and this is our story.

To be the very first person that an enemy soldier sees and not to be able to look for the enemy yourself while you concentrate on any indication of trouble from your dog in front of you requires a special kind of combat soldier. It requires a special kind of dog. This book will give you what it's like to be that person taken from first-hand experiences of military working dog handlers in both the Australian Army and the Royal Australian Air Force. Be amazed, informed and captivated by the accounts of this special asset in the Australian Defence Force that you probably didn't know existed.



## A New Book by Sandy MacGregor

### Classified Memoirs – A Life Too Interesting

There are several parts of my life of which I am proud and some parts of which I am not so proud. I have written my memoirs called Classified Memoirs in a 'no holds barred' book. A few chapters of the book are about my tour with 1 RAR Group when they were the third battalion of 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vietnam, 1965 (I was a Captain Troop Commander of 3 Fd Tp RAE in 1 RAR Group) and my association with 173rd Airborne Brigade.



The chapters cover the successful clearance of the Cu Chi tunnels on Operation Crimp in January 1966 and the birth of the 'Tunnel Rats'; my confrontation with a senior company commander of 1 RAR when, with my heart in my mouth, I disobeyed a lawful command on Operation Newlife; and I have told of my invitation to lecture on "Resilience" to 173 Airborne Brigade in Italy where I visited as a DV (Distinguished Visitor) for 14 days. (I have also provided links to this complete experience).

#### Here are the Opening Paragraphs of the FOREWORD:

*"Like all young Sapper officers fresh out of Duntroon, I first encountered Sandy when I read his book "No Need for Heroes". This was required reading on the Regimental Officers' Basic Course, where we learned our trade as leaders in the Royal Australian Engineers. There was no requirement for compulsion, as it was a gripping read and richly described all the experiences we yearned to have ourselves. Sandy's deployment to Vietnam included all the great aspects of service in the illustrious Corps we were so proud to have joined: providing specialised expertise to support the infantry, either well forward with them in the fight or out in front of them being the absolute tip of the spear.*

Brigadier Rupert Hoskin AM  
Commandant, Royal Military College of Australia."

If you would like to read more information about the book or buy an e-Book copy or a hard copy then please go to these links

Hard Copy: <https://shop.calm.com.au/collections/books/products/classified-memoirs-a-life-too-interesting>

eBook, with internal links. It can be read easily in a PC, tablet or Kindle:

[https://shop.calm.com.au/collections/books/products/e-book\\_classified\\_memoirs](https://shop.calm.com.au/collections/books/products/e-book_classified_memoirs)

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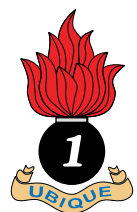
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## BLAST FROM THE PAST NUI DAT NEWS 25 JULY 1971

Sadly our VALE list grows with each passing year.

This extract from the NDN features two of our past comrades in arms; SSM of 1 FD SQN GP, WO2 Bob Tough, and TP SSGT of 2 TP, SSGT Harry Eustace. I am sure that if they were with us, they would have a good laugh. May they rest in peace but let us wind back to Nui Dat in 1971:

Heard about Staff Harry E and the washing machine blowing up the other day? Yeah, so did our Roving Reporter and here's the story as he happened to overhear it in the Snakes Pit.

RR (Roving reporter) Sierra Sierra Matchbox walked into the Mess with a strained look on his face about 1745 hrs. You know the look, a cross between "I dunno weather to laugh or cry", "Scuse me fellas, gotta give birth to a Nasho", and "Yer ona A4" all wrapped up into one. Grabbed poor shaken HE and the discourse went something like this.

SSM: *"Ya dumb bugger. I know I toldja the best way to get the explosive out of a 105 was to boil it out, but who said anything about a bloody spin dryer?"*

HE: *"Well I had ta dry the bloody thing somehow din I?"*

SSM: *"But not in a spin dryer for petes sake. Whereja learn a dumb friggin trick like that? I know the AO had a*

*tub in the HQ washing machine a while back, but this is the dumbest bloody thing ever. He can be excused cause he's an officer, but you're sposed to be a bloody FE Staff Sergeant. Where the hell did you get such a stupid bloody idea anyway?"*

HE: *"You sir. You taught me all I know."*

SSM: *"Yeah. Well maybe it wasn't such a stupid idea at that. Keep up the good work HE but next time take the fuse out ok."*

And from the same edition: When he arrived in Vietnam in the early 1960's, an Australian advisor while visiting a local village was surprised to see a Vietnamese man riding a donkey while his wife, loaded down with bundles, trudged along behind. Upset at the lack of chivalry, he asked the Vietnamese man, "Why do you ride while your poor wife walks behind?" "Custom" grunted the man.

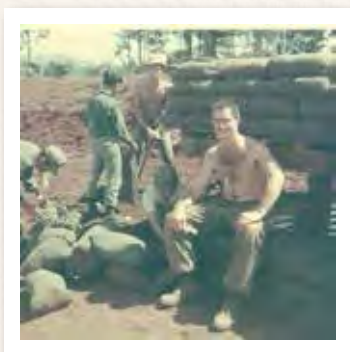
A few months later the same Advisor visited the same village and spied the same Vietnamese man. He was still riding the donkey but now his wife walked in front down the road. "You probably don't remember me" said the Advisor, "but when last I saw you your wife walked behind you and you said it was the custom. Now I see she is in front. Why the change?" "Land mines." Came the reply.

## NUI DAT NEWS 6 SEPTEMBER 1971

And this from the Nui Dat News of 6 September 1971 – A bit on 21 EST – yes again – we of NDN feel that they deserve the award of the Fickle Finger of Fate, for what else but fate could have lead to the fire truck catching fire. And we do feel that Stan Greenwood would have looked more the part in a pair of black leotards and cape when he heroically disconnected the battery leads, the cause of the fire. To Ken Collins the driver, we say Bravo – that was ONE fire the brigade from 21 Engineer Support Troop wasn't late for.

And of our Padre. Seems he took some pictures out at Land Clearing. They came out just great and he enthusiastically displayed them in the Officers Mess for all to see. Everyone was very impressed. Everyone that is bar the OC for it seems all the Diggers in the photos were without shirts. Yes Padre, we do appreciate that Adam never wore a shirt, but that was a long time ago and, of course, times have changed.

### From our Editor - Derek Smith



Another of our Comrades in Arms who passed on 5th August 2018 was CPL Peter Carrodus who we listed in Edition 31. I served with Peter in 1 FD SQN GP in 1969. The picture shows Peter supervising the construction of a bunker at the Barrier Minefield near Dat Do, and the other picture shows how such bunkers ended up if the local soldiers (RF/PF) did not man them during the night and old mates VC crept in and blew them up. In the second pic is CPL Bill Maher (Tpt) and CPL John Britton (HQ Orderly Room).



## Derek Smith OAM Medal of the Order of Australia General Division

The 1 FD SQN GP RAE Association congratulates our 'Follow The Sapper' newsletter editor for being awarded the OAM in the New Year's Honours List.

His Citation reads:

'Derek Vincent SMITH, Cranbrook QLD 4814 For service to international community through humanitarian aid.

- *Founder and Coordinator, Australians Supporting Kids at Vinh Son Orphanages Kon Tum Vietnam, since 2007.*
- *Author, a biography book 'A Twist in the POGO's Tale: An Army Clerk's Passage from Childhood to War in Vietnam'.*
- *Newsletter Editor, 1 Field Squadron Group, Royal Australian Engineers, since 2013.*
- *Totally and Permanently Disabled Ex Servicepersons Association Townsville. Secretary, current. Served as Treasurer, Committee Member. Life Member.*
- *Awards and recognition includes: Recipient, Paul Harris Fellowship, Rotary Club of Townsville Sunrise, 2015.*
- *Past President of the Sappers Association of North Queensland for 3 years.*

Good work Derek! A fitting and appropriate recognition of a generous and caring Australian.

Follow The Sapper  
George Hulse  
President 1 FD SQN GP RAE Association  
26 March 2019



### A Personal Note from Derek:

"As you know I was presented with my OAM last night (17th May 2019) by His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland. One of the official guests was Colonel Matt Richardson, Commander Combat Training Centre. Matt is a Sapper and served in 3 Combat Engineer Regiment along with other Corps postings. It was great to have a fellow RAE man present. I have attached a pic of him, my wife Rhonda and self at the ceremony."

## CAMPAIGN IN PAPUA

### ENGINEERS

Source – *Khaki and Green, With the Australian Army at Home and Overseas, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, ACT 1943*

It has been rightly said that the war in New Guinea was a war of supply. This being so the flow of supply was limited only by the means for moving supplies forward. This in turn was dependent on either roads, dropping grounds, or airfields, whose availability was dependent in the first place on work of the Engineers.

The first big task the Engineers performed was the development of the road to Nauro so that Seventh Australian Division could be supplied from Moresby. Thereafter they were always well up with the Infantry, preparing dropping grounds in the Owen Stanleys as the troops advanced.

In the coastal area it was the Engineers who enabled the first supplies to be brought in by air with the completion of the Popondetta strip. Thereafter other strips were rapidly developed, enabling the constant and increased use of aircraft for supply.

One of the greatest achievements by the Engineers has been the development of the Wau-Bulldog road. This is one of the outstanding feats in the history of road construction, going as it does over some of the wildest and most mountainous country in New Guinea. It brought in its train the most exacting conditions in which the Engineers have had to work, and may be regarded as their finest achievement



Must be Sapper Bunnies

Source – *Khaki and Green, With the Australian Army at Home and Overseas, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, ACT 1943*



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  
 e-mail: info@1fieldsappers.org

DONATION FORM

AMOUNT: \_\_\_\_\_ Receipt required: Yes  
 No

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION**

# 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 \_\_\_\_\_ 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/ Postal Order to PO Box 236 Raymond Terrace NSW 2324 or  
Direct Deposit to Heritage Bank BSB 638-070 Account 10045570 with your details.

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.

## CPL Jayden Day DSM\* 1 FD SQN RAE

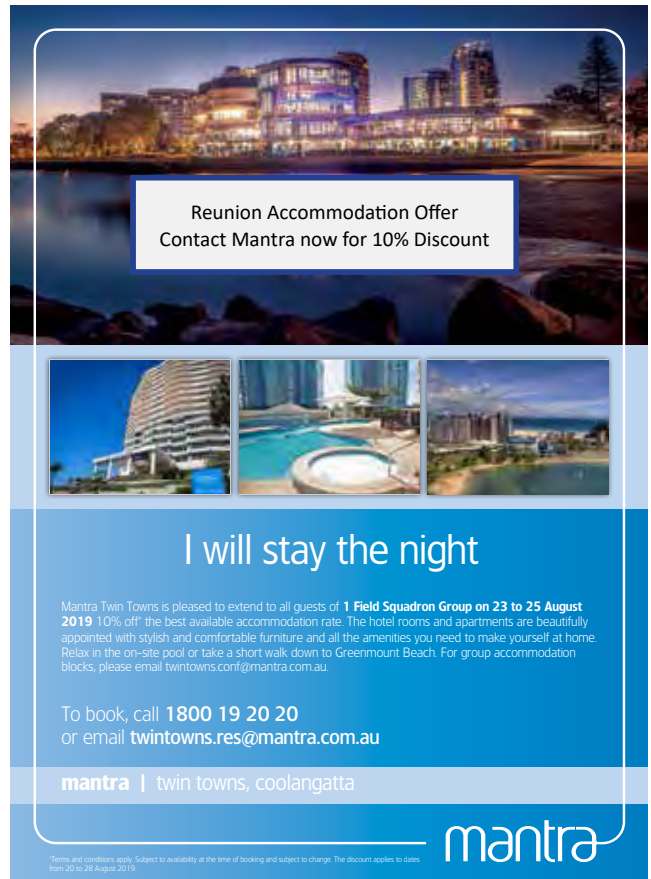
1 FD SQN GP RAE Association congratulates you on a magnificent achievement in being awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. It is a morale booster to those of us who are now 'mature aged' 1 FD SQN veterans to see that our current-day Sappers are being recognised for the contribution they make to our Nation's defence. The Citation reads:

*"While holding a senior role, at times far above his rank and experience, Corp Day directly enabled his squadron, regiment and brigade to meet their operational, contingency and force generation requirements along with achieving certification of the Ready Battle Group."*

Corporal Jayden Day was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for meritorious achievement in the headquarters of 1st Field Squadron, 1st Combat Engineer Regiment. Please continue with your good work and be assured that the veterans of the Squadron are proud of what you have achieved.

Well done Jayden.  
Follow The Sapper

\*DSM = Distinguished Service Medal.



Reunion Accommodation Offer  
Contact Mantra now for 10% Discount

### I will stay the night

Mantra Twin Towns is pleased to extend to all guests of **1 Field Squadron Group on 23 to 25 August 2019** 10% off\* the best available accommodation rate. The hotel rooms and 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](mailto:twintowns.conf@mantra.com.au).

To book, call **1800 19 20 20**  
or email [twintowns.res@mantra.com.au](mailto:twintowns.res@mantra.com.au)

mantra | twin towns, coolangatta

\*Terms and conditions apply. Subject to availability at the time of booking and subject to charge. The discount applies to dates from 23 to 25 August 2019.

## 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 - \$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 O Box 236 Raymond Terrace NSW 2324 Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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