



## RAE CORPS POLICY STATEMENT

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### STATEMENT 15 - RAE SUPPORT TO FUNERALS

**Issued by the Head of Corps Royal Australian Engineers for application within the Royal Australian Engineer Corps.**

*Original Signed*

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### **DISTRIBUTION**

**RAE Corps List A**

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## **RAE SUPPORT TO FUNERALS**

### **References:**

- A. Ceremonial Manual, Vol 1, Chap 18
- B. DI(A) PERS 31/3 – *Army Funerals*

### **Introduction**

1. The passing of a serving or ex serving member of the Corps is always a sad occasion. It is important that the Corps recognise the members passing and wherever possible acknowledge the members service to the Corps and country.

### **Aim**

2. The aim of this policy statement is to detail what RAE support is available to NOK on the death of a sapper, whether a current serving or ex serving member of the Corps, and how the Corps will acknowledge the sappers contribution to the RAE.

## **POLICY**

### **Entitlements for Serving Members**

3. The entitlement to a Military funeral for a serving member is detailed in references A and B and is summarised below:
- a. a member of the Australian Regular Army (except those classified as an Illegal Absentee);
  - b. a member of the Australian Army Reserve (except those classified as an Illegal Absentee) who at the time of death was on duty or, whose death was the result of illness or injury contracted, or sustained, while on duty;
  - c. a member, or retired member, whose rank, military title or honorary rank at the time of death was major general or higher, whether death occurred on duty or not;
  - d. a member or ex-member whose rank was less than major general for whom the Chief of Army has previously authorised, or authorises, a military funeral, whether death occurred on duty or not; and
  - e. a member, or ex-member, who has been awarded the Victoria Cross.
4. Funeral parties for officers and other ranks are detailed in references A and B. Where practical the sapper's posted unit is to provide the parties detailed in the references. When it is not practical for the posted unit to provide the necessary support the unit is to contact the Corps RSM for advice on alternate support or assistance.

5. Military funerals may only be conducted with the approval of the member's next of kin (NOK).
6. In all the cases listed above Head of Corps (HOC) will provide a wreath on behalf of the Corps and send a letter of condolence to the deceased member's NOK. In addition, HOC will provide a wreath and letter of condolence for any current serving Active ARES member whether the death occurred on duty or not. A letter of condolence only will be sent for members that were on the ARES Inactive List.
7. HOC will, if required, appoint a senior Corps representative to lay the wreath on behalf of the Corps.

### **Entitlements for Ex Serving Members**

8. References A and B advise that ex-members of the Australian Army who have given long, or distinguished service may, on approval from the Ceremonial and Protocol Section – Army Headquarters (AHQ), and on request of the next of kin, be given limited ceremonial support at the burial/cremation or memorial service, even though they are not entitled to a military funeral. The support may be given provided that no direct expenditure of public funds is entailed. Support will normally be limited to the following:

- a. a bearer party;
- b. bugler (or piper);
- c. drummer;
- d. chaplain;
- e. an official mourner; and
- f. the use of a military chapel.

9. The term 'long and distinguished' service is not explained in references A and B. As a generic guide long service could be interpreted to be in line with the 15 years of service required for awarding of the DFSM. Distinguished service should consider any operational service or service recognised by honours or awards. Nonetheless, NOK wishing to request a unit to provide the above support are still required to obtain approval for the support from the Ceremonial and Protocol Section – AHQ. Local units are to assist applications from NOK to obtain the necessary approval and where possible provide the necessary support if the request is approved.

10. HOC will send a letter of condolence to the NOK on the passing of any ex serving sapper, ARA or ARES, who served in the RAE.

11. Units are to advise the SO2 HOC or the RSM SME when they are informed of the death of a sapper. RAE ex service associations will be encouraged to do the same. Where possible the informant is also to advise the details of the NOK. If there is an

entitlement to a wreath the informant is also to provide details of the funeral service and any wishes of the NOK in relation to the provision of a wreath or flowers. In the case of a unit being the informant, the RSM/SSM is to be used as the POC regarding the provision of information. If an ex Service association is the informant the SO2 HOC is to liaise with the association to ascertain the required information.

12. HOC will fund the purchase of wreaths for any member entitled to a Military funeral (per para 3 above).

13. RAE Corps Funds will fund the purchase of a wreath for any member that dies on Active ARES service (per para 6 above).

14. Funding may be provided from either HOC or Corps Funds to fund T & S costs that may be associated with the movements of an official RAE mourner, if so appointed by the HOC.

### **Parading of the RAE Sovereign's Banner**

15. The Corps Banner may only be displayed at a funeral for a member of the rank of Colonel with the exception that a member of the rank of Lieutenant Colonel who was a Commanding Officer of a unit at the time of death may also have the Banner paraded at his/her funeral.

### **Summary**

16. It is imperative that any service to our Corps is recognised. The above policy provides the guidance to ensure that if a sapper dies we take the necessary steps to inform the sappers NOK that we are grateful for the service rendered and the Corps has not forgotten the sapper's service.