



Australian Sapper 2025



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An Australian Army M1150 Assault Breacher Vehicle during a live fire M58 Mine Clearing Line Charge (MICLIC) Serial at Townsville Field Training Area, Queensland, on 06 September 2025.

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MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF CORPS

BRIG Michael Say

Dear Fellow Sappers,

It is a significant honour to be able to write this message as part of the Sapper magazine. 2025 has been another busy year and one that will be remembered for a number of significant events and further achievements of the Corps as we continue to punch well above our weight.

The articles in the magazine highlight the achievements of the Corps across Army, the ADF and the community. A big thanks to all those that contributed articles as the magazine is an important medium that captures the accomplishments of the Corps and ensures they are preserved in history.



I wanted to take the opportunity to reflect on the achievements of our people across the Total Workforce – they have and continue to be significant. There is no shortage of demand for the skills and expertise of the Corps to support Army and the integrated Force. This has been evident through extensive involvement of our people in operations, activities and investments both domestically and overseas. Our Sappers continually impress with their utility, professionalism and most importantly, empathy and humility.

Sappers are making a critical contribution to international engagement activities and investments within the INDO-PACIFIC. We are having a strategic effect through engagements with the Philippines, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Fiji, Japan, Singapore, Papua New Guinea and the US. This is highlighting the investments in relationships with Allies and partners that is contributing to the collective security of our region. As I travel around units, it has been fantastic to engage with so many of our Sappers who have been provided an opportunity to participate in this important work.

While all this work in the region has been extremely important. So too is further testing our foundation warfighting skills to be ready for the next challenge. Through major collective training exercises, which culminated with the largest Exercise Talisman Sabre in history, our Sappers have demonstrated their role within the combined arms team. I have been impressed in the way our teams across the Corps have fought for time to train and ensure we focus on development of the professional mastery of our junior NCOs and officers.

The Corps has utilised major collective training to demonstrate the requirement for engineer staff at the Divisional level. This has included the establishment of Divisional Engineer cells within the 1 (AS) and 2 (AS) Division which will enable the application of the principles of engineers to inform the employment of our Sappers.

The Corps has been the beneficiary of a number of capability enhancements in recent years; A highlight for the Corps was achievement of Interim Operating Capability for Armoured engineering within the combined arms. This was the result of significant work to acquire, introduce and employ a crucial new capability. However we still face the challenge of growing the people to fill positions across the Corps to ensure we truly deliver additional capability. This will require us to explore alternative ways to recruit and train across the total workforce.

I offer we also require the Corps to continue to adapt and think differently about how we structure, train and provide support within a combined arms team. This will ensure we maximise the employment of our sappers and evolve to meet future challenges including opportunities to utilise autonomous systems to undertake tasks that had previously been undertaken by a sapper.

The Corps is scheduled to undertake a capability review in 2026. I would like to openly thank all those involved in the work undertaken thus far. In particular, I was enthused by the manner in which our people utilised this year's Corps conference to initially contest ideas prior to developing a single, consolidated view. This needs to continue to be our approach as we progress through the review.

Throughout this process our history will be important, however we will need new approaches. To this end, I ask that you keep an open mind with a focus on the future. The Corps must identify legacy capabilities that are no longer fit for purpose – this will lead to some difficult recommendations to inform decision-makers and can only be achieved if we present a singular Corps position, which is sustainable and fit to meet the future challenges. We cannot sit and wait for someone else to do the work. It will require contributions from across the Corps and I strongly encourage you to find the time to provide input to the future of our Corps.

Our people remain the centre of gravity and make the Corps stand out within Army. This is supported by our community – an essential element to enabling our people to perform their role both at home and overseas. Our RAE teams continue to identify additional opportunities to build on the excellent foundation we have as a Corps in contributing to Army in the community.

Promoting and enabling our Sapper Associations and the RAE Foundation are crucial in supporting our people. Once a Sapper, you are always a Sapper and I encourage Sappers to join an Association well before they leave the Army as it provides a connection to support camaraderie and interaction across the Corps outside of our units. Improved connection and communication between serving members and our Associations will be a focus area in 2026 and I ask that you identify opportunities to connect.

I would like to highlight those involved in the 80th anniversary of the Kapooka tragedy which commemorates the 26 sappers killed in an explosion while training for war on the 21 May 1945. The incident remains the Australian Army's largest loss of life in a training accident. Your efforts ensured there was recognition and commemoration for the families and Wagga Wagga community of such a significant event in the Corps history. Well done.

The plan to deliver Volume 5 of the Corps History continues to progress and we are about to sign a contract with the author. This will require input from a wide range of sappers of the past as we look to capture the significant contributions of our predecessors. However it will also need support from across the Corps as we undertake fundraising activities. This is linked to contributions to Corps funds – as I again ask the senior leadership of the Corps, the SNCOs and above, to lead by example as we seek to continue to be able to support our sappers.

I wanted to personally thank the Colonel Commandants that will be moving on in 2026. The efforts and contributions of MAJGEN Day, MAJGEN Williams, COL Murray and COL Mostafa have been immense and demonstrate their continued commitment to our Corps. I also welcome MAJGEN Ryan, BRIGs Carey, Wainwright and Galton, and COL Madden to the team and thank them for their willingness to support the Corps.

In closing, each of you can take great pride in the role you have taken to contribute to Army and the integrated force up to this point; however much work is yet to be done on how sappers can contribute to the challenges of the future. I therefore ask each one of you to identify opportunities where you can make a difference and ensure the Corps is well positioned for the future while remaining connected to our past.

Serving as a Sapper in the Australian Army is a great honour. It has also been a privilege to be the Head of Corps for the past four years. While this role comes to an end in January 2026 when I hand the reins to BRIG Mick Scott, I look forward to opportunities to continue to contribute to our impressive Corps and support our amazing people.

Thank you for what you do.

Follow the Sapper.

Ubique.

MESSAGE FROM THE CORPS REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS

WO1 Russell Peel

Sappers,

As we close out 2025, it is important to reflect on our achievements, honour our history, and look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead. This year has been significant for the Royal Australian Engineers, marked by milestones that reinforce our proud heritage and our commitment to future capability.

This year we commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the Kapooka Tragedy, a solemn reminder of the risks inherent in our profession and the enduring strength of our Corps. On 21 May 1945, 26 soldiers lost their lives during a demolition training accident at Kapooka. Their sacrifice remains etched in our collective memory, reminding us of the importance of safety, discipline, and professionalism in all that we do.

As part of this year's commemorations, the Wagga Wagga City Council honoured the fallen by naming three roads within the Special Activation Precinct (SAP) after soldiers who perished in the tragedy:

- Pomeroy Drive
- Cousins Road
- Linthorne Road

This initiative ensures their legacy will remain visible to future generations and reinforces the deep connection between the local community and the Royal Australian Engineers. The road naming ceremony was a poignant moment, symbolising both remembrance and respect, and it stands as a lasting tribute to those who gave their lives in service.

2025 marked a major leap forward for the Royal Australian Engineers with the introduction of the Combat Engineer Vehicles (CEV) into service - a capability that fundamentally transforms how we operate in complex environments. Designed to provide mobility, survivability, and versatility, the CEVs are purpose-built to support breaching, obstacle clearance, and route opening under threat conditions, ensuring our combat teams maintain momentum in the most challenging scenarios.

The CEVs combine armoured protection with advanced engineering systems, enabling Sappers to execute tasks such as gap crossing, mine clearance, earthmoving, and obstacle reduction while remaining under armour. This capability significantly reduces risk to our soldiers and enhances operational tempo across the battlespace. Its integration into our units is not just a technological upgrade - it represents a step-change in how we deliver assured mobility and combat engineering effects.

Training and familiarisation programs are already underway, with crews and maintainers embracing the opportunity to master this cutting-edge platform. The introduction of the CEV also opens doors for innovation in tactics, techniques, and procedures, ensuring that the Royal Australian Engineers remain at the forefront of Army's future-ready force.

This is more than a new vehicle - it is a symbol of our Corps' adaptability and commitment to providing decisive engineering support wherever and whenever it's needed.



Another key milestone was the closure of the RAE Implementation Directive, marking the successful completion of a multi-year effort to align our Corps with the broader objectives of Army's modernisation program. This achievement reflects the hard work and dedication of every Sapper, from the newest recruit to our most senior leaders. We have streamlined processes, enhanced interoperability, and positioned ourselves to meet the demands of future operations with agility and confidence.

As we move into 2026, our priorities remain clear: training, people, and capability. Training will ensure our Sappers are prepared to operate and maintain new technologies like the CEV while continuing to master core combat engineering skills. People remain at the heart of everything we do - developing leaders, fostering resilience, and maintaining the strong culture that defines our Corps. Capability will continue to evolve as we integrate modern platforms and refine our tactics, techniques, and procedures to meet the demands of future operations.

The challenges ahead will demand adaptability and teamwork, but I have no doubt that the Royal Australian Engineers will rise to meet them - just as we always have.

Thank you for your commitment, your professionalism, and your unwavering dedication to the Corps and the Army. Together, we honour our past, embrace the present, and build the future.

Follow the Sapper

SCHOOL OF MILITARY ENGINEERING

Forward by LTCOL Thomas Whale

It has been a cracking year at the School of Military Engineering. A great deal has been achieved, and the School is well positioned to continue its excellent work in 2026. My sincere thanks go out to all the staff at the School, particularly the instructor cohort. Our value to the organisation lies in how effectively we can inculcate the art of military engineering within our trainees. Our instructors are extremely dedicated and passionate—their energy and drive are key pillars of our success. Their commitment often comes at a cost to their families and loved ones, and this does not go unnoticed - Thank you.

From a training perspective, the School continues to deliver Military Engineers to Army and the Integrated Force. This year, we graduated 287 individuals through their Initial Employment Training, who have now joined the ranks of Sappers and Airfield Engineers within operational units. We also trained the largest-ever cohort on the Regimental Officer Basic Course, with 51 students graduating—37 new officers joining the Royal Australian Engineers, six Airfield Engineers posting to RAAF units, and eight lieutenants completing the course from partner nations. Promotion courses remain well supported; throughout the year, the School prepared 104 soldiers for promotion to CPL, 67 soldiers for SGT, and 16 soldiers for WO2.

Our relationships with partner forces continue to flourish. We maintain permanent staff embeds from the British Army, the United States Army, the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, and the Republic of Fiji Military Forces. Our trainees come from all corners of the globe, with 38 international students attending our courses this year. These included personnel from the New Zealand Defence Force, the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, the Timor-Leste Defence Force, the Vanuatu Mobile Force, His Majesty's Armed Forces – Tonga, the Malaysian Armed Forces, the Philippine Army, the Indonesian Army, the Singaporean Army and the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces.

Some of the key highlights at the School this year include hosting STEELE CUP 25, which featured the inaugural participation of a New Zealand team; attending en masse the 80th anniversary of the Kapooka Tragedy in Wagga Wagga; and hosting the Deputy Prime Minister, who conducted a demolitions confidence charge prior to attending an IET march-out parade. This year also marked the inaugural Middle East Area of Operations Veterans Day, hosted at the 'Home of the Sapper.' Additionally, we held a special Waterloo Dinner at the Australian Army Museum of Military Engineering, where we invited a large cohort of RASIGS officers to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the Corps of Signals.

There were a number of key achievements over the year including supporting the IIS of L8120, which enabled the conversion of every plant vehicle across the ADF; delivering upgraded urban facilities for the School of Infantry and Kapooka; and optimising the Dry Support Bridge course to reduce training time while improving outcomes. We deployed our trades personnel to Exercise Puk Puk and Olgetta Aviator (PNG), Exercise Hari Hamatuk (Timor-Leste), and Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025. Additionally, we introduced new equipment into our training suite, including explosive initiators and Shrikes, upgraded CBRN-D equipment, and the newly minted, Australian-designed and manufactured F60 Bangalore torpedo.

In closing, the Regimental Sergeant Major and I extend our sincere thanks to all School staff and their families for supporting the growth and development of the next generation of Sappers and Military Engineers. Your commitment, dedication, and support have been essential in inculcating an Engineer mindset and culture. Our trainees now understand *what it means to be an Engineer* and possess the requisite skill sets to deliver Engineer effects in peacetime and in war. We make and we break—Ubique!

Regimental Headquarters

Partner Forces, Trainees, and Visits

By LT Aden, OPS LT,

Engagement with partner forces remains a critical component of our operational objectives, fostering interoperability, mutual understanding, and capability development. Recent activities have focused on strengthening relationships through training, knowledge exchange, and high-level visits, ensuring alignment with strategic goals and mission readiness.

Our collaboration with partner forces continues to deliver tangible benefits in training, enhancing regional security and operational effectiveness. We currently have staff from PNG, Fiji, USA, UK and NZ. Joint exercises have emphasized combined arms integration, tactical planning, and communication interoperability. These engagements have provided opportunities to share best practices, refine standard operating procedures, and build trust among our Partner Forces. Feedback from partner force leadership indicates strong commitment to ongoing cooperation and future initiatives.



From left to right, Mrs Rachel Heart, LT Ali Aden, OR8 ADJ Ben Hoving, OR7 SM Harm Schot & OR7 SM Antonie Horsten. Royal Netherlands Army BBC Visit, Museum Tour.

Training programs have been tailored to meet the specific needs of our soldiers, focusing on both foundational and advanced skill sets. For the 2025 calendar year SME has trained 38 and hosted over 40 international students from countries around the world including regions from the Middle East, Asia, The Pacific and of course our nearest neighbour in NZ. Some of the courses our international trainees have been attending throughout 2025 include Military Engineering, ROBC, SUBJ's for WO, SGT and CPL, Construction Civil Plant Course, Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Defence Trg as OPS Assistant SPVR and SPVR, and explosive detection dog handler. Our Construction Wing (CW), Combat Engineering Wing (CEW), Specialist Engineering Wing (SEW), and Engineer Tactics Wing (ETW) have all given feedback that trainees have demonstrated high levels of engagement and adaptability, with performance assessments showing marked improvement in core competencies. Continued mentorship and follow-up training will consolidate these gains and ensure sustainability.



Brigadier General MD Syeedur Rahman presenting LT Ali Aden with Bangladeshi Coins after a tour of the SME kennels.

Official visits have played a pivotal role in reinforcing strategic partnerships and facilitating dialogue at the command level. Recent delegations have included senior military representatives and subject matter experts, enabling comprehensive discussions on capability development, future exercises, and regional security challenges. These visits have also provided opportunities to showcase our facilities, training methodologies, and operational frameworks, further strengthening confidence in our collaborative approach. The Royal Netherlands Army attended SME to observe training conducted by Watermanship and Bridging Cell. East Timor Defence Attaché visited their students and later in the year, the PNG Defence Force Engineer Battalion CO visited the school. Other visiting partner forces included Germany, Bangladesh and NZ.

Deputy Prime Minister Visit



Recent visits to Holsworthy Barracks have provided an outstanding opportunity to highlight the critical capabilities of the Australian Defence Force's Combat Engineers. Early in the year the School of Military Engineering hosted the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles, alongside David Moncrieff, the new Member for Hughes. This engagement underscored the importance of military engineering in supporting defence operations and national security.

During the visit, SME staff delivered a demolition confidence practice in the SME dust bowl, supported by the SEW Dems cell and CEW IET instructors. This was followed by the Minister attending an IET march out ceremony. While these visits can sometimes be seen as a distraction in what is already a very busy year of training, the strategic importance of hosting the Minister for defence for the Corps as a whole cannot be understated.

These activities provided the opportunity for meaningful dialogue between RAE leadership and government representatives, fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges, opportunities and innovation within the Military Engineering domain. By engaging directly with our Sappers and Officers, the Minister for Defence gained a greater understanding of RAE and Military Engineer capabilities and how they can be utilised in the future.



Engineer Tactics Wing

By MAJ Kyle Davis

OC Engineer Tactics Wing, U.S. Army Exchange Officer



The Cadre of the Engineer Tactics Wing has worked tirelessly to modernize and improve Officer and Promotion courses, all in an effort to prepare Soldiers for future requirements. In addition to providing quality instruction to hundreds of Soldiers and Officers, the Wing has been responsible for numerous course and doctrine updates, input into future capabilities, and the revamping of policy. The largest changes include the realignment of the ROBC curriculum towards Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) and various changes to doctrine and authorities that will empower Corporals to effectively lead their sections.

I would like to highlight the work of a few individuals who have gone above and beyond towards improving the capabilities of the School. SGT Parkes, CPL Duffey, CPL Evans, and CPL Christian have shown incredible diligence while conducting the CPL Course and have been instrumental in the inclusion of Reconnaissance and Demolitions Explosive Safety Officer/OIC into the curriculum. CAPT Argaet and WO2 Gerste led a highly efficient and successful ROBC class consisting of over 50 young LTs. Their hard work and dedication concluded with significant changes to the curriculum that will enable future LTs to successfully lead their elements in a demanding future conflict.

Exciting times are ahead for ETW, the School and RAE. Future projects include updating doctrine, updated planning scenarios, and a focus on future Engineer requirements. As always, ETW's main task is to ensure all Officers and Soldiers are tactically proficient and prepared for the future; a task we are eager to execute in the year to come.

Honouring the Fallen: 80 Years since the Kapooka Tragedy

By CAPT Stephen Pope

On 21 May 1945, a routine training exercise at Kapooka turned into one of the darkest days in Australian Army history. 26 soldiers lost their lives when an underground bunker exploded during a demolitions training activity. Known ever since as the Kapooka Tragedy, this event remains a solemn reminder of the risks inherent in military service and the importance of safety in training. This tragedy saw the largest military funeral ever held on Australian soil, with 7000 people lining the streets of Wagga Wagga to pay their respects. The first official commemoration of the tragedy was not held until the 63rd anniversary in 2008.

2025 marked the 80th anniversary of the incident, and was commemorated through the unveiling of a commemorative plaque as well as the Wagga Wagga City Council renaming new street signs to honour the fallen. Pomeroy Drive (formerly Merino Road), Cousins Road, and Linthorne Road now stand as permanent tributes to three of the soldiers who perished that day. These street names will serve as a daily reminder to the local community of the sacrifice of those fallen Sappers. This presentation was followed by the annual memorial service, which was held at the site of the bunker, led by the Corps RSM and engineers posted to the 1st Recruit Training Battalion (1RTB).



Over 40 Junior Officers from the Regimental Officer Basic Course attended, paying their respects to those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The ROBC was undertaking the demolitions component of their course, which reinforced the importance of understanding and respecting the rigorous safety standards required to deliver training. The memory of the tragedy serves as a powerful reminder that every precaution matters as much in training as it does in conflict.

The night before the memorial, the ROBC shared a private dinner with families of the deceased, retired engineers, and local parliamentarians. This gathering provided an opportunity to reflect on the enduring impact of the tragedy and to strengthen the bond between the Army and the community.

For today's engineers, the Kapooka Tragedy underscores the critical importance of demolitions safety. As the Corps honours the fallen, it also commits to ensuring that such an event never happens again, carrying forward the legacy of those who paid the ultimate price.



Specialist Engineering Wing

By MAJ Jacob Frahn, OC Specialist Engineering Wing



Specialist Engineering Wing (SEW) delivered a year of significant capability development, training modernisation, and Corps-level engagement across its specialist disciplines.

Explosive Detection Dogs

The Explosive Detection Dog (EDD) Section successfully trained a new generation of handlers and leaders, graduating trainees from EDD Basic Handler and EDD Section Commander courses. The Section also travelled to regiments to conduct certification, ensuring the Corps maintains a highly capable detection capability for future operations.

Force Protection

The Force Protection Cell continued to deliver specialist instruction in Explosive Hazard Reduction, Mine Warfare, and Search. Training realism was enhanced through live electronic counter measures fills and bespoke threat device replication, while the Cell supported Subject 4 courses and ROBC. This year also marked the first SME-led delivery of Mod 3 EOD.

Demolitions

2025 saw the introduction of two new firing devices—the Mini-DRFD and DCTX—alongside updates to LMPs incorporating Tactical Military Demolitions and Planning. Subject 4 graduates are now eligible as Officer's in Charge (OIC) and Explosive Safety Officers (ESO), streamlining range management. The Cell also conducted live demonstrations for the Deputy Prime Minister and commemorated the 80th anniversary of the Kapooka tragedy.

CBRN Defence

The CBRND Cell supported DEF2110 equipment integration and introduced a new training continuum, with trial courses commencing late 2025. The Cell also delivered training integral to all RAE leadership courses and specialist training across the ADF.

Watermanship and Bridging

The first iteration of the revised Dry Support Bridge continuum was executed which saw a reduction in training lead times to enable the generation of sufficient operators for the Regiments. WAB also conducted numerous Watermanship and Bridging phases as part of NCO and Officer training continuums, keeping the section busy throughout the year.

SEW also delivered **EX Crucible** for ROBC and hosted **Steele Cup** on behalf of the Corps, for the first time with international participation. The Wing has been heavily involved in continuous updates to doctrine, training modernisation, and equipment and platform projects, ensuring the needs of the Corps were represented in this important work.

In 2026, SEW will continue to refine specialist training continuums and expand international engagement. This work will ensure all training delivered in the wing remains relevant, contemporary and considers emerging technologies to ensure specialist engineering capabilities is agile and aligned with future operational requirements.

Demolition Cell.

WO2 QMSI Meehan, SGT Rollinson, CPLs Bawden, Kennedy & Coombe.

2025 has been a landmark year for demolitions, marked by the introduction of two new demolition-firing devices: the Mini-DRFD and the DCTX. These devices have significantly enhanced the capabilities of the Australian Defence Force. In addition, updates to the current LMPs now include two new components—Tactical Military Demolitions and Tactical Military Planning—which, alongside existing LMPS, clearly delineates Engineering capabilities and proficiencies against the wider All-Arms community.

Graduates of the Subject 4 Corporals course will now be eligible for appointment as OICs and ESOs on Confidence and BNS ranges. This change will alleviate pressure on units by streamlining range appointments and allowing personnel to focus on training giving greater experience opportunities.

The Demolition Cell had the privilege of conducting a live capability demonstration for the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia during his visit to SME, as well as a weapon effects demonstration for the Australian Defence Force Academy.



This year also marked the 80th anniversary of the Kapooka tragedy. Members of the Demolition Cell and the ROBC course paid their respects by attending the remembrance parade at the original site. Lest we forget.

Looking ahead, work is underway to involve 173 Squadron Aviation in future training, integrating personnel lifts with the tactical elements of demolition exercises to further enhance operational readiness.

CBRND Cell

The Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence (CBRND) Cell has continued to support the ADF implementation of DEF2110 equipment into service. This focused on providing subject matter expert advice to the creation and review of the new CBRND continuum. In conjunction with Army Headquarters (AHQ), the CBRND Cell will lead in the conduct of trial courses commencing in Q4 2025 and continue throughout 2026. The Cell has also assisted with the trial and IIS of a new design of Haversack and the FM54 respirator.

The CBRN cell has continued to contribute to the training on RAE's suite of leadership and promotion courses from Subject 4 CPLs course through to ROBC by providing immersive training for Officers and Sappers alike. The Cell also maintains its responsibility of providing CBRND training and advice to the whole of ADF through the execution of the standalone CBRND courses from CBRND Assistant Supervisor to CBRND Advisor.

Force Protection Cell

Although relatively new to the School, the Force Protection Cell continues to operate beyond expectations, delivering specialist instruction in Explosive Hazard Reduction (EHR), Mine Warfare, and Search. One of the many efforts of the Cell was the contribution to Subject 4 courses for Corporals and Sergeants, providing the culminating activity of their 3–4 months of training. The Force Protection Cell also continued to shape the next generation of leaders on the Regimental Officer Basic Course often working 1–2 ranks above our own to assess and develop the future junior officers of the Corps.

Realism is central to our approach. With live ECM fills integrated into search and EHR tasks, giving soldiers first-hand experience in authentic electronic force protection measures. The cell is at the head of delivering Mod 3 EOD (RAE). Utilising the Makerspace we are able to further enhance training immersion through the production of imitation bespoke threat devices replicating hazards seen worldwide.

Through innovation, technical skill, and leadership adaptability, the Force Protection Cell has ensured combat engineers leave training confident, capable, and prepared for the demands of contemporary and future operations.

Construction Wing

By Major Lachlan Grono, OC CW

2025 in Construction Wing, School of Military Engineering was a year of capitalising and expanding on past successes. In addition to delivering the full suite of ab initio, promotion and specialist courses, Airfield Engineering courses, and managing over 150 apprentices conducting their On the Job Training the focus of the Wing was on designing tasks that could simultaneously provide training whilst also contributing directly to Defence.

The conduct of live-task training for apprentices continued and expanded, with apprentices being attached to AACAP, Exercise Puk Puk in PNG, Exercise Hari'i Hamutuk in Timor Leste as well as a number of domestic exercises. In addition, for the first time apprentices attached to 65 ABRS to participate in Olgeta Aviator in PNG. Furthermore, Construction Wing supported the delivery of a Subject 4 Sergeant course in Fiji as part of Coral Sapper with Construction Wing staff providing training materials and conducting instruction.

Construction Wing continued to provide works enhancing the defence estate, despite a difficult regulatory environment. This included delivering urban training facilities to the School of Infantry and 1 Recruit Training Battalion. In addition, several further self-delivered works tasks have been fully planned to enable delivery once the policy has been finalised with the Security and Estate Group.

Apprentice Troop staff, with participation by current apprentices, provided assistance to our RASigs counterparts. This included the construction, at short notice, of a dais for the parade reviewed by Princess Anne to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the RASigs corps.

Civil Troop completed the introduction of L8120 equipment, integrating all new C and D equipment into courses and supporting the final suite of Introduction Into Service courses.

Construction Wing's support to the ADF's International Engagement program also expanded, providing positions for regional partners on a range of courses, as well as providing positions for the UK, Netherlands and, for the first time, Oman on Airfield Engineering courses. The quality of these courses resulted in Oman funding the delivery of the Pavements course in Oman, which was conducted for the first time in December 2025.



SPR Ilic, SPR Spong, SPR Stein-Smith and SPR Spendlove in front of the Dias they constructed for Princess Anne.

Combat Engineer Wing

By Major Hayden Duczek, OC CEW

Combat Engineer Wing (CEW) has delivered another year of exceptional output, capability development, and training refinement throughout 2025. Across the calendar year, CEW conducted eight full-time and two part-time Military Engineer Courses, and five full-time and two part-time Combat Engineer Courses. Responsible for training the broad spectrum of RAE ECNs and Air Force Field Engineers, CEW marched out over 600 RAE and RAAF soldiers, from Australia Fiji, Vanuatu, Timor Leste and Tonga. These achievements reflect CEW's commitment to delivering the highest standard of ab-initio engineer training within the Australian Army.

Recognition of Major Achievements

CEW marked 2025 with significant honours, awards, operational deployments and international engagement. CEW staff were recognised across the Army training enterprise, through the awarding of one Silver Commendation, four Bronze Commendations, and a range of individual and team accolades. Two Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) deployed on OP KUDU in support of Australia's operational commitments, while another member was selected as the Land Combat College Instructor of the Year—an achievement that reflects the Wing's instructional excellence. CEW also celebrated success at the NCO level, with its Corporals being awarded the SME Team Army Award for their contribution to capability development and trainee engagement.

Strengthening international ties remained a core feature of 2025, including a New Zealand Army instructor exchange that enriched the training environment and broadened Corps interoperability. These achievements collectively highlight the professionalism, dedication and high performance that defined CEW throughout the year.

Training Modernisation and Capability Advancements

2025 saw major enhancements to the Combat Engineer continuum, with increased training days allocated to critical trade tasks, weapons training, demolitions, and soldier skill competencies. In 2025, CEW delivered the first generation of Combat Engineers qualified on the F9 pistol. The weapon now forms a core component of the basic weapons suite for Sappers, with trainees receiving integrated dry drills, transition training, and live-fire components within the expanded Basic Combat Shooting Continuum (BCSC). Demolitions packages were also expanded to include modernised electric and non-electric firing systems, aligning with updated doctrine and operational requirements. Trainees received increased practical repetitions and exposure, enhancing confidence, safety, and proficiency across all demolition tasks.

1 Troop

1 Troop delivered a strong and productive year, successfully graduating 33 Combat Engineers and 20 Military Engineers, including trainees from Timor-Leste, Fiji, and Vanuatu. Interoperability with ROBC trainees improved the integration of future Sappers and junior officers, promoting shared understanding of combat engineer tasks from the earliest stages of training. 1 Troop also coordinated support from RAAF Airfield Engineers and a New Zealand Army instructor, enhancing the instructional depth and ensuring trainees were exposed to joint and coalition perspectives.



2 Troop

2 Troop delivered Military Engineer Course 0049 and Combat Engineer Course 0035, qualifying 22 new Sappers. The troop also contributed to ANZAC Day and Coral–Balmoral commemorations across the Liverpool and Ingleburn communities, ensuring the next generation of Sappers remains connected to the legacy of the Corps. Trainees consistently demonstrated high morale, teamwork, and professionalism across both field training and classroom instruction, setting a solid standard for future courses.



3 Troop

3 Troop completed delivery of two full RAE Combat Engineer IET Courses in 2025. Staff showcased professionalism and flexibility, with several members deployed or externally tasked across Operation Kudu and a New Zealand Instructor Exchange Program. The Troop successfully delivered the full spectrum of engineer trade skills, including enhanced obstacle breaching, field engineering, watermanship, survivability tasks, and the updated demolitions modules. Their dedication significantly contributed to Corps capability development.



4 Troop

4 Troop maintained a consistently high output across both part-time and full-time training. The troop conducted a combination of four full and part time courses, successfully qualifying 96 Sappers, making it one of the highest-producing troops of 2025. The Troop also celebrated several staff achievements, including two Bronze Commendations, an instructor selected as LCC Instructor of the Year, and involvement in the Team Army Award.



Holdfast Troop

Holdfast Troop remained integral to trainee welfare, administration, and career management. Supporting over 600 trainees, Holdfast coordinated discipline, accommodation, transitions, and postings while supporting tasks to 2 CDO Regt, SOER, 6 ESR and 20 EOD.

Conclusion

2025 marked a decisive shift in Combat Engineer training, with expanded training days, updated continuum streams, new weapons platforms, and improved demolitions systems. These changes strengthen the capability, confidence, and operational readiness of every new Sapper entering the Corps. CEW remains committed to continuous improvement and ensuring the trade remains aligned with future Army direction. The staff and trainees of CEW would like to pass on our appreciations to all external organisations and instructors for supporting those who undertook training in 2025.

Trainee Rehabilitation Wing

By MAJ L Turley, OC TRW

The Trainee Rehabilitation Wing (TRW) is an all-corps rehabilitation centre within the Land Combat College (LCC). TRW's mission is to manage long term rehabilitation of pre-trade qualified trainees IOT facilitate individuals to achieve their maximum potential, both physically and vocationally. The main effort is the rehabilitation and reconditioning of trainees with the supporting effort being the delivery of military training.

TRW currently holds up to 40 trainees at any one time and is supported by 11 full time and reservist staff. The team works closely with civilian medical specialists and the Holsworthy Health Centre to provide the trainees with tailored rehabilitation programs and ensure the best outcomes for the trainees.

The TRW Framework looks to enhance the holistic development of trainees across three lines of effort. Those being physical, psychosocial and vocational. TRW operates on a 4-week training cycle of, and not limited to, range of motion workouts, hydrotherapy, non-impact cardio, physiotherapy classes, strength and conditioning, and swim training. State of the art rehabilitation assets continue to be implemented, allowing trainees to have unlimited access to recovery equipment such as compression sleeves, saunas, and ice-baths. The training program also features fortnightly off-base activities, such as excursions and PT.

Additionally, the program incorporates regular guest lectures, covering topics from nutrition and breath work to military-focused presentations on current ADF Operations, Activities and Investments. Each presentation aims to broaden the trainee's perspective and provide them with additional tools that will assist them in their rehabilitation journeys and understanding of the broader Defence Organisation.

To ensure trainees maintain their foundation military skills they participate in daily military skills lessons focusing on skills such as navigation, patrolling, sections attacks, communications, Army First Aid/Tactical Combat Casualty Care and more. A year at TRW includes 3 modified field exercises, which culminate a given training block. Each activity encompasses a range of skills with the most recent exercise including scenarios based on vehicle checkpoints, urban clearance and cordon and search in a combined training setting with combat engineer trainees from CEW.

TRW has been responsible for approximately 50 trainees rehabilitate and return to their training establishments in 2025. This demonstrates a 97% test out rate, contributing to trainee retention in Defence across the Goal 1 and Goal 2 ADF Rehabilitation Program Pathways. This success highlights the value of TRW's unique capability, which supports all Army Training Establishments. Looking ahead, the Trainee Rehabilitation Wing will continue to uphold the Army's enduring commitment to prioritising and caring for its members.

1ST COMBAT ENGINEER REGIMENT

Foreword by LTCOL Colonel Travis Day

2025 has been a year of continued operational success for 1 CER as we refined our light littoral capabilities and strengthened regional partnerships.

In 2025 over 350 soldiers and sappers deployed on operations and overseas activities including to Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Malaysia, the Philippines, and on OP RESOLUTE. These deployments provided invaluable opportunities to enhance our littoral skills alongside partner forces across Southeast Asia. Additionally, being persistently deployed in the region has enabled 1 CER to be at the cutting edge of Stand-in Force operations for 1 BDE and 1 (AS) DIV; forward deployed in austere environments and postured for any contingency. 9 FD SQN's command of a multidisciplinary combat team conducting combat engineer training in Mindanao is particularly noteworthy.

The Regiment has also continued to sharpen its core combat engineer warfighting functions through the PREDATOR and TALISMAN SABRE exercise series. Non-equipment bridging, live-fire Troop attacks, obstacles, breaches, and reserved demolitions all featured as sappers exercised dispersed operations from locations including East Arnhem Land, Mount Bundy, Bradshaw, and Shoalwater Bay. Having our Head of Corps observe 1 FD SQN's reserved demolitions serials was a particular highlight! On EX TALISMAN SABRE, 23 SPT SQN led the development of A2AD firing positions for 10 Bde at Bradshaw, leading the way for the corps in how engineers support long-range fires.

Beyond operations, 2025 featured other significant milestones. The Regiment continues to support the 1 FD SQN Association as it transitions into a 1 CER Association, strengthening the link between past and present serving members. The enhancement of the Sapper Fred Reynolds Centre led by our Regimental Trust Fund committee has also significantly enhanced our Regimental cultural hub for future generations.

The Regiment's success is grounded in its exceptional people, exemplified by SPR Connor Fieldhouse-Baker and LT Bailey Roos being awarded champion SPR and LT of the corps respectively. The achievements of 2025 reflect the professionalism and dedication of every member of 1 CER, and their commitment to combat engineering excellence.

Ubique

1st Field Squadron

By Major Jarrod Johnson, OC 1 FD SQN

2025 has been a year of high operational tempo, growth, and cohesion for 1st Field Squadron. From the outset, the Squadron demonstrated its adaptability and professionalism across a range of activities, both in barracks and in the field. The year concludes with 1 Troop deployed in the Philippines and 2 Troop mounting for OP RESOLUTE.



Bridging on Exercise Amphibian Crawl.

The Squadron supported major exercises, including Goanna Crawl and Walk, Predator's Run and Talisman Sabre, delivering combat engineering effects in support of combined arms teams and multinational partners. These activities tested our sappers in mobility, survivability, and counter-mobility tasks, reinforcing our reputation for technical excellence and mission focus.



Small boats training on Exercise Amphibian Walk.

During Exercise Goanna Walk, sappers constructed non-equipment bridges (NEBs) and conducted reserve demolitions, showcasing technical proficiency and reinforcing the Squadron's critical role in enabling manoeuvre and shaping the battlespace. On Exercise Talisman Sabre, the Squadron deployed by air from Bradshaw Training Area to Shoalwater Bay, where they conducted littoral operations, demonstrating expeditionary capability and adaptability in complex environments.



1 FD SQN with the remnants of an NEB post initiating reserve demolitions on Exercise Amphibian Walk.

With International Engagement the Sqn has been fortunate to have experienced multiple opportunities to train with the Pakistan Army, U.S. Marines, Indonesian Army, Timor-Leste Defence Force and Philippines Army, demonstrating versatility across both training and operational environments.

Professional development remained a priority, with junior leaders attending courses and workshops to build tactical and technical proficiency. The Squadron also embraced innovation, trialling new equipment and refining procedures to meet evolving operational demands.

The Squadron welcomed new members and farewelled others, maintaining continuity and resilience through transitions. Once again, 1 Field Squadron approached the end of another busy year ready for future challenges, proud of its achievements and committed to excellence.

1 Troop

In 2025, 1 Troop, 1st Field Squadron (E11) had a rewarding training year, initially returning to its Vietnam-era roots by operating in jungle terrain and delivering combat engineering support in the close fight. The year began with Regional Warfighter Exercise – Tully, where specialist engineering serials prepared Sappers for jungle operations and infantry integration.



E11 with an improvised bridge they constructed whilst on the Regional Warfighter Exercise in Tully.

The troop then deployed on the Predator series, conducting engineer-specific training in advanced demolitions, watermanship, and core tasks to ensure readiness in the littoral domain. With warfighting capability confirmed, 1 Troop participated in Exercise Talisman Sabre 25 with 1st Field Squadron, initially under TG GOANNA on Bradshaw Island, conducting obstacle and position development. The Sqn later attached to BG TIGER, executing a TALO into Shoalwater Bay and transitioning to air-mobile operations via CH-47 Chinook.

During this phase, 1 Troop delivered mobility effects through route clearance and small boat operations, survivability through position hardening, and counter-mobility via obstacle emplacement.



E11 members conducting small boats training.

On return to Darwin, the troop re-bombed toiletries and prepared for its first international deployment of the year, Exercise Super Garuda Shield 25. 1 Troop integrated with partnered forces, delivering combat engineering effects and fighting as infantry in the close fight. The exercise displayed the troop's adaptability and lethality in a multinational environment.



E11 on Exercise Super Garuda Shield.

The year concluded with 1 Troop deployed on the Joint Australian Training Team – Philippines (JATT-P), providing jungle-focused engineering support and reinforcing regional partnerships—a fitting end to a demanding and successful year.

EDD Section



1 CER EDD Section conducting watermanship training.

Throughout 2025, the Explosive Detection Dog (EDD) Section executed a comprehensive and high-tempo year of training, enhancing its operational readiness across multiple domains. EDD teams conducted watermanship training, enabling effective support to amphibious and littoral operations.

High Risk Search (HRS) activities were a key focus, with handlers refining detection techniques in complex terrain and urban environments. Integration with Red Team Homemade Explosives (HME) training provided realistic threat scenarios, sharpening the section's ability to identify and respond to emerging explosive hazards.



EDD section conducting high risk search training.

The capability was further proven during Exercise Talisman Sabre 25, where a deployed kennel system was established to sustain EDD operations in the field, ensuring both mission effectiveness and canine welfare. This holistic approach has reinforced the EDD capability as a critical enabler in both domestic and expeditionary operations.



EDD Section deployed kennel in Bradshaw Field Training Area on Exercise Talisman Sabre.

Internationally, a 1 CER EDD handler represented the Corps by visiting the Army Canine Centre in Pakistan, conducting joint training and knowledge exchange to enhance EDD techniques in explosive detection, search procedures, and canine care in operational environments.



LT Roos and CPL Nordling on a visit to the Army Canine Centre in Pakistan.

2 Troop

2 Troop, 1st Field Squadron (E12) saw an exciting and eventful 2025, integrating with international partners and deploying in a range of environments from local areas to internationally. The first half of the year focused on upskilling across various combat engineer tasks, including infantry minor tactics, demolitions (standard and light urban), MGB deployment, watermanship, search and urban operations.



Members of E12 in Shoalwater Bay as a part of BG TIGER on EX TALISMAN SABRE 25.

The troop deployed to Kangaroo Flats, Mount Bunday, Bradshaw, and Shoalwater Bay in a five-month period as part of BG TIGER. During this time, E12 got the opportunity to train and work alongside MRF-D combat engineers on EX GOANNA CRAWL and GOANNA WALK, as well as 5/7 RAR, as part of BG TIGER for EX PREDATORS RUN. A highlight for many sappers was the combat engineering across GOANNA WALK, including demolitions ranges and both building and blowing up their own non-equipment bridge.



E12, landed at Rockhampton on Canadian aircraft, ready to move to Shoalwater Bay as part of EX TALISMAN SABRE 25.

The back half of the year saw the Troop deploy as part of EX HARI'I HAMUTUK to Timor Leste, where they delivered training on water purification, tree felling, obstacle emplacement and search. A peak for this exercise was the integration and exchange of culture with their international partners and friends. The final task for the year for E12 was mounting for OPERATION RESOLUTE, to aid in the security of the nations' Northern borders. This commitment runs until December 2025, when the Troop will shift to enjoying a well-deserved Christmas break.



E12, with F-FDTL partners, taking part in a teamwork and cultural exchange day. The team climbed the mountain behind Metinaro Military Base with their Engineer Company friends, before preparing and cooking a traditional lunch and enjoying karaoke together.

9th Field Squadron

By Major Brendan Xenos, OC

9 Field Squadron experienced a fun-packed and rewarding 2025. The Squadron commenced the year in preparation to conduct the Predator Series and Talisman Sabre through the execution of Troop Live Fire manoeuvre ranges and watermanship training, before being re-tasked to lead a Land Mobile Training Team (LMTT) in the Philippines.

In May, the Squadron deployed to the Mindanao region in the Philippines, under the Joint Australian Training Team – Philippines (JATT-P) forming LMTT 01-25. The Sqn was re-designated Combat Team ‘Kasangga’, meaning ally, friend or ‘Mate’ in Tagalog. The Squadron spent six weeks in the mountainous Camp Kibaritan with the Philippine Army’s 504th LAGTAS Combat Engineer Battalion, hosted by the 4th Infantry ‘Diamond’ Division. Over this six-week deployment, the Squadron trained over 250 Philippine soldiers in the art of conventional Combat Engineering and reconnaissance. This training included trench development, route and area search, counter mobility tasks, demolitions and operational planning. This rewarding experience provided our Sappers the opportunity to work alongside and instruct Philippine soldiers who themselves, had a wealth of combat experience from recent Counter-Insurgency operations. The results of this training were successful, with the Squadron helping to establish a new era of combat engineering within the Philippine Army, focused towards territorial defence in the region.



SPR Ethan Powell during a route search lesson with Philippine Combat Engineers from the 504th LAGTAS Battalion.



CPL Cody Mellor
deployed on Ready
Combat Team –
Butterworth 149 on
Exercise Bersama Lima

After a short post-deployment leave break, 4 TP, with members from 3 TP and Recon TP, were quickly out the door, deploying to Butterworth, Malaysia with Ready Combat Team, Rotation 149. This three-month deployment saw the Engineers work within an Infantry Combat Team, conducting a series of jungle training exercises in Sik National Park, Kuantan, and Gemas. They put their dismounted infantry minor tactics to the test in austere environments and arduous conditions, gaining an appreciation for the unforgiving nature of the jungle. The engineers then speared away to participate in Ex BERSAMA LIMA 2025, where they spent three weeks integrating with Malaysians, British Gurkhas, and the Singapore Armed Forces to conduct tactical actions as the land component, alongside joint air and sea elements. Immediately after this, the Troop participated in Exercise HARINGAROO serial 75/2025, where they integrated with the 14th Royal Malay Mechanised Regiment, and operated out of APCs in the jungle. Towards the end of the trip in PULADA, the Troop conducted a series of complex small arms ranges, culminating in a platoon defensive live-fire serial by night, involving high explosive weapons and battle noise simulation. Every member of the Troop became qualified on a new weapon system, expanding their

ever-growing skillset.

Back in Australia, the remainder of the Squadron deployed to East Arnhem Land to support the 25th annual Garma Festival. The Squadron moved by road to the Garma Festival Cultural Site, transiting through RAAF Tindal and Mainoru Station. The transit through RAAF Tindal allowed Squadron members to familiarise themselves with the operations of 452 SQN (Air Traffic Control) and 75 SQN (F-35A Lightning II). On arrival to Nhulunbuy, the Squadron quickly established camp and commenced the 'Wood Chop' in support of the Indigenous community. In addition to tree felling experience, this activity provided the opportunity for other field engineering tasks and community engagement with East Arnhem Traditional Owners. The Squadron also supported the remediation of the Garma Cultural Walk through the construction of a footbridge and the refurbishment of steps. Small teams were able to interact with the community through attendance at the Nhulunbuy Show and Shine, supporting the Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation and attending the Nhulunbuy Primary School. By the end of the activity, over 200 trees were felled, resulting in 35 tonnes of firewood to support the Festival. This activity strengthened the Squadron and the ADF's relationship with the Indigenous community and further enhanced our readiness to meet Emergency Support Force requirements and demonstrate the successful deployment of light engineer teams into the near region.



9 FD SQN Sapper tree-
felling in East Arnhem
Land in support of the
Garma Festival.

In November, the Squadron, with supporting elements from across the Regiment, were force assigned under Joint Task Group 639 to form Task Element Predator in support of Op RESOLUTE. This Operation saw the Squadron deploy to the Coburg Peninsula off West Arnhem by road and by sea, conducting vehicle and small craft patrols throughout the Peninsula searching for Illegal Fishing Vessels and Unlawful Maritime Arrivals. This Operation was an invaluable experience to test the Squadrons littoral capability and to provide Sappers the opportunity to conduct live search tasks in support of Border Protection.

As the year concludes, the Squadron remains poised to support the immediate near region as the Northern Territory Emergency Support Force for High Risk Weather Season 2025/26.

23rd Support Squadron

By Major Peter Walsh

23 Support Squadron has once again lived up to its namesake as the Warthog Squadron; rough, no-fuss, and determined to get the job done. 2025 proved a busy but extremely rewarding year, where the Squadron continued to provide essential specialist engineering support to the Brigade and the Joint Force despite fluid mission profiles. From warfighting efforts to international engagement to crash support and recovery, the Squadron experienced it all in 2025.



An early morning patrol at Mount Bunday – Note the NASAMS!

The year began with execution of Ex Goanna Teams, which provided an opportunity for our junior leaders to shake out with their teams. Troops had time to baseline their skills and engage in team-



Recon mounting up!

building and adventure activities. This provided the opportunity for new teams to build and foster early cohesion before tempo could pick up. This worked well leading into EX Goanna Crawl, seeing execution of Troop level training objectives and an initial Squadron hit-out. Troop and Section Commanders were quick to capitalise on this freedom of action by designing and executing realistic and forward thinking training; Construction Troop pushed the limits on

capability tests within the Close Training Area (driven in large by CPL Will Finger), refined NASAMs and HIMARs mock-ups (thanks to the leadership of LCPL Timmy Muhamad and SPR Brad Aceglav), and shook-out water purification capabilities (led by LCPL Kieren Beattie), Recon Troop (under the guidance of LT Harry Sowry and SGT Matt Anderson) saw practice of insertion techniques and the upskilling of terrain analysis skillsets, and Combat Rescue Troop saw progression of updated operating procedures to support ongoing aviation skillsets and vehicle mounted support to the close (facilitated by LT Kyle Budd and CPL Aiden Malek). Goanna Crawl culminated in a well-sequenced demolitions and live-fire package, coordinated in large by WO2 Jonathan Grossmann (SSM) and CPL Euan Lamont (Ops CPL).



A solid plant hit-out!

Meanwhile, the RECONO, CAPT Locky Attard, simultaneously planned and executed a complex technical reconnaissance in Timor-Leste. This was completed in preparation for Exercise Hari'i Hamutuk, a HADR-centric exercise involving the Timorese Defence Force, Japanese Self-Defence Force, United States Navy and New Zealand Defence Force. A massive undertaking, the recon confirmed multi-national requirements across a multitude of Timor-Leste bases, building the skeleton for what would be an excellent exercise later in the year. The team considered opportunities for life support, partnered training and construction efforts. Technical contributions from LT Jackson Wright and CPL Adam Colquhoun were very well-thought-out; particularly the identification of key beach-side locations and coffee stops being very welcome findings!

Following a brief reset over the Easter period, the Squadron headed out the door for the Predator Series. Efforts were divided between Mount Bunday, Dundee Beach, Point Stuart and the Close Training Area; 2IC CAPT Darielle Corpuz worked admirably to keep tabs on all the moving parts! Commencing with Ex Predator Walk, Squadron-level specialist training was executed to include the design of a landing craft mock up, M777 cradle construction, finalisation of HIMARS and NASAMS decoys, support to dive modernisation trials, shake-out of tactical reconnaissance profiles (to include reverse cycle serials), and execution of combat search and rescue scenarios; the Squadron was truly ubiquitous. This proved an important exercise to bench-mark and refine



Combat Rescue hone their recovery skills

specialist skillsets, prior to combat-teaming for Ex Predator Run; Construction Troop was to provide capability bricks to support beaching and construction teams, Recon Troop to provide both Brigade and Battle Group recon effects, and Combat Rescue Troop to get a solid warfighting hit-out playing enemy party whilst supporting ongoing aviation operations. Our outstanding junior leaders stepped up from the offset of all the above tasks.

Ex Predator Run was an excellent test for the Squadron. Allocated to enemy party in conjunction with forces from the Marine Rotational Force – Darwin (shout out to the US Marine F Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines), 23 Squadron and OSS attachments executed an urban defence. Of note, engineer recon patrols were heavily involved in C-ISR actions, Construction Troop's decoy NASAMS and HIMARS systems successfully shaped the friendly advance, Specialist Section executed a sound obstacle laydown (meticulously planned by CPL Doug Shellcot), and Combat Rescue conducted a number of successful night raids (ably led by CPL Kieran Rowe). Overall, the Squadron held its own against a numerically superior force before its final demise in a culminating dawn attack. The Squadron certainly got a work-out!



Keeping busy on Ex HH
25

Reposturing for Talisman Sabre, the Squadron again found itself split across multiple fronts. Plant elements inserted early to Bradshaw Training Area, preparing positions and access routes for Long Range Fire Systems, recon teams informed options for a Brigade defence, Specialist Section readied water purification systems, and Combat Rescue detachments supported 1 Aviation Regt flying operations. Special mention is made to CPL Nicholas Shore, for his outstanding clearance

efforts in enabling the first domestic firing of long range fires, and CPL Alex Hamilton and SPR Brayden Almond for their courageous response to an aviation hard landing.

Back in Darwin, the tempo didn't stop; Combat Rescue Troop successfully executed Combat Rescue Operator and tactical roping courses, developing a strong relationship with the 1st Health Battalion, and the Squadron readied for Rotation 2 (Philippines) and Ex Hari'i Hamutuk (Timor-Leste) international engagement commitments in the near region.

On JATT-P, our Recon Team did extremely well to lead littoral insertion and defence training, surviving a couple of typhoons and a very prolonged trip back home! They delivered excellent training outcomes, drawing from the lessons of their team who deployed on Ex Salik-Nib and JATT-P Rotation 1 earlier in the year (which was well-executed under CPL Jordan Chapman). Construction Troop and attachments from 2 Troop and OSS performed admirably on the HADR-focussed Ex Hari'i Hamutuk, seeing completion of the largest training and construction packages for some time. This saw execution of communications, medical, combat engineering, trade and logistics training, a five-nation culminating activity, and the completion of eight construction scope items (to include delivery of two accommodation buildings (housing up to 40 persons), a volleyball court, a roof refurbishment, defensive bunker systems, concrete aggregate storage bays, two multi-bay car parks, an ablutions refurbishment, and the electrical fit-out of a training shed). Our SQ, WO2 Sekaia Vateitei certainly kept busy! Despite the constant power outages (a shout-out to our resident electrician SPR McMillan for fixing them), the exercise was a resounding success.



Littoral skillsets being maintained!

On return from overseas commitments, the Squadron supported CBRN training for Op Kudu, F-FDTL Gender Exchanges, 1 CER-led Corps Dive Concentration, Op Resolute, 6 ESR Lombrum works, and High Risk Weather Season responsibilities, all while readying itself for CO handover. Whilst this led to a sprint finish to 2025, Squadron members carried themselves proudly as professionals right to the end, taking all tasks, challenges and actions in-stride. My thanks goes out to the family and friends of our Squadron for your ongoing support and commitment to our mission – we couldn't do this without you. Best wishes to all members of the Warthog Squadron over the Christmas break and looking forward to what 2026 brings.

OSS

By Major Ayesha Allum

The year started at hectic pace for Operational Support Squadron, in particular for Squadron Headquarters, Technical Support Troop (TST) and Logistics Troop.

After Goanna Leader, the SQN went to work supporting the Regiment for Goanna Teams and subsequently Goanna Ranges, where a late wet season downpour ensured OSS, especially one CPL Yolanda Foley got to practice littoral operations by demonstrating the best way to test the waters depth only to end up fully submerged on a track in Kangaroo Flats Training Area.

The SQN then moved onto Goanna Walk, where we were able to practice small team Corps tasks. TST conducted both dry and live FRT tasks and Log TP concentrated on Replens and developed solid TTPs which later came into practice on subsequent Exercises. Highlight of Goanna Walk was TPT spending countless hours setting up their 'hide' (it was actually more like a BSG) only to have to pack it straight up and move.

The SQN minus proceed to MBTA for Exercise Predators Walk which saw LOG TP and TST combine into one composite TP to provide a Regimental logistics effect. The training conducted during Goanna Walk proved to be very effective with continuous maintenance and logistical support throughout both exercises, especially from CFN Blair Hill and SPR Casey Watson with their work for the NEB build and subsequent demolitions.

After Predators Walk, there was a quick reset in location which involved a State of Origin night where the RQ and her team cooked the Regimental BBQ at Scale A. The late wet weather continued to prove a challenge for the BDE, but what a hindrance for one is a joy to a Recovery Technician. CPL Sammy Mwee not only provided support to 1 CER but the entire BDE to ensure the 'show' could go on.

Exercise Predators Run culminated with the OPFOR defence of the Urban Operations training facility, so the 'Loggies' were able to get back to their grass roots as soldiers and assist 23 SPT SQN and RHQ to defeat the BLUEFOR of 5/7 RAR by employment of a robust patrolling program and well constructed field defences and obstacles.

From there the SQN was off to Exercise Talisman Sabre, which turned into an exercise of dodging plane rides, however the members were able to observe the higher strategic picture with personnel redeployment and the preparation of DG packaging for air transport.

The year for OSS was high tempo, which required a lot of flexibility by all members, enabling the Regiment to achieve all training outcomes throughout the year. A lot was asked of the SQN but the highlight was getting a SQN PT shirt after ten months of discussion and posturing. The year finished living through category 3 Cyclone Fina and an almost activation of ESF; rounding out a busy but diverse year of highs and one-off experiences, making us better for it. Bring on 2026.

2ND COMBAT ENGINEER REGIMENT

Forward by LTCOL Alex Edgar

A very warm G'day from myself, the RSM, and the command team of the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment (2 CER). 2025 has been another cracking year for the Regiment, with plenty of opportunities for our members to stay busy and meaningfully engaged.

The activation and deployment of the Contingency Force Element (CONFE) continued in 2025, with the entire unit being activated and forward-deployed at short notice to Lismore in Northern New South Wales in response to Tropical Cyclone Alfred. Later in the year, another activation of engineer elements aligned to the Ready Battlegroup OPERATION BEECH occurred, resulting in the forward deployment of the RBG to the Middle East Area of Operations. These two deployments bring the unit's CONFE enactments over the last two years to four.

2025 was characterised by extended periods away from home, with formed bodies of the unit committing to lengthy (two-plus month) exercise campaigns in the familiar Shoalwater Bay Training Area, as well as regional engagement alongside our valued partners and allies in New Zealand, New Caledonia, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, and the Philippines. This year also provided the opportunity to revitalise the unit's combat engineer dive capability and experiment with how engineers support the lowest echelons of the combined arms team through the reintroduction of engineer splinter teams.

2025 was also a special year for both the 7th Brigade and the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers, marking the 110th anniversary of the formation's raising—on 1 April 1915—and the anniversary of the first Waterloo Dinner. Looking to the past, 2 CER's sub-units have long and rich histories.

- **2 CE SQN** has direct lineage to the 2nd Field Engineer Company, one of the three engineer sub-units that supported the 1st Division during the campaign on the Gallipoli peninsula. During that campaign, the Sappers from the 2nd Field Engineer Company emplaced obstacles, excavated and constructed field fortifications, and even provided construction parties to build a 64-metre pier vital for the eventual Allied retrograde from the peninsula.
- **7 CE SQN** traces its lineage to the 7th Field Engineer Company, which during the First World War was one of the three engineer companies supporting the 2nd Division. It cut its teeth on the Western Front, conducting non-equipment bridging operations to support the attack on Mont St. Quentin. The unit's current mascot—Driver, an Australian Terrier—draws from the tradition of the 7th Field Company's original mascot of the same namesake and breed, who accompanied the company throughout the entire Western Front campaign before conveniently skipping AQIS inspection to retire in Sydney.
- **24 SPT SQN** has lineage to the 24th Field Company, a sub-unit raised during World War Two to operate exclusively in our near region. The company supported the New Guinea campaign extensively, and it is no coincidence that elements of 24 SPT SQN spent the longest periods and were the most heavily committed from the Brigade to the region during the year.

Although 2 CER's origins stretch back over a century, little has changed for the Sappers of 2 CER. We remain relaxed professionals, Army's problem solvers, and are the ones that conduct the cognitively challenging and physically demanding tasks on the battlefield. Another similarity that has endured throughout the ages is the exceptional Sappers, soldiers and junior leaders that inhabit engineer units whom are adaptive, resilient and gain strength from disorder.

I would like to take this opportunity, with an eye to the future, to reinforce that irrelevant of future structure changes or the introduction into service of new platforms/system the most important role of the leadership group within RAE is the stewardship of the next generation of leaders through positively influencing and actively promoting growth in our Sappers so they can develop into the creative and courageous problems solvers the army needs in the future.

It has been a great privilege to command a unit comprising such exceptional people over the past two years.

2nd Combat Engineer Squadron ***By CPL Plato***

2025 served as a powerful testament to the resilience, adaptability, and unwavering professionalism of the 2nd Combat Engineer Squadron. It reinforced that readiness is not merely an aspirational concept but a foundational principle that underpins every facet of the Squadron's identity.

The year commenced with a sense of urgency as the Squadron was tasked to deploy south in support of **Operation Tropical Cyclone Alfred Assist**, responding to communities devastated by severe weather events. In the face of challenging conditions, our sappers executed critical route clearance operations and restored essential lines of communication, enabling the delivery of vital aid and reinforcing the indispensable role of Army engineers during times of national crisis. These efforts were not only significant to the community but emblematic of the Squadron's ability to respond at short notice.



The Squadrons attention shifted decisively toward reaffirming our core warfighting competencies.

Exercise Wolverine Horn provided a rigorous platform for the Squadron to conduct live-fire demolitions, showcasing precision in breaching tactical obstacles and validating our technical mastery. The Squadrons ability to integrate with **8/9 RAR** during dismounted platoon-level live-fire clearances further demonstrated our capacity to deliver mobility support in complex tactical environments. These activities transcended routine training; they represented a deliberate reaffirmation of

the Squadron's ability to generate decisive combat effects when required. This confidence was subsequently reinforced during **7X Live Fire Exercise**, where the Squadron seamlessly reintegrated with Battle Group RAM to conduct combat team clearances under complex conditions.

The campaign season continued with **Exercise Diamond Strike** and **Talisman Sabre 25**, where the Squadron operated within a multinational battle group alongside coalition partners, including the New Zealand Army, Royal Gurkha Regiment, and Republic of Fiji Military Forces. These exercises showcased the Squadron's ability to deliver freedom of manoeuvre and enhance survivability in combined arms operations. Highlights included 10 Troop's successful execution of a Medium Girder Bridge build and 11 Troop's sustained route clearance support to the Battle Group. The season culminated in a combined arms assault through urban terrain, where our sappers employed advanced impediment-to-assault reduction techniques, ensuring momentum was maintained and operational objectives achieved.



The year concluded with a significant international engagement during **Exercise Alon** in the Philippines. Operating in challenging tropical terrain, our teams embraced the opportunity to strengthen regional partnerships through knowledge exchange and collaborative training. Integration with the Philippine Army during cross-level training and subsequent joint warfighter activities underscored the Squadron's adaptability and professionalism. This deployment also served a critical certification function, confirming our readiness to assume responsibilities within the Ready Combat Team and Ready Battle Group for the next 12 months.

From domestic disaster relief to multinational combined arms manoeuvre, 2025 was characterised by operational excellence, technical proficiency, and an unwavering commitment to mission success. The 2nd Combat Engineer Squadron stands proud of its achievements and remains fully prepared to meet the challenges of future contingencies with confidence and resolve.



7th Combat Engineer Squadron

The 7th Combat Engineer Squadron (7 CE SQN) once again demonstrated hallmark professionalism, adaptability, and technical mastery throughout 2025. From domestic operations to regional engagements, our Sappers delivered exceptional results, reinforcing the Corps' reputation as a critical enabler of the Army's Ready Battle Group. This year's achievements reflect not only operational success but also the unwavering commitment of our people to serve with skill and purpose.



Early in the year, 7 CE SQN played a key role in Operation TC Alfred Assist, responding to the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Alfred across Brisbane, Lismore, and surrounding areas. Our Sappers deployed rapidly, applying engineering expertise to clear debris and restore safe access for emergency services and the public. Further contributions to the civil community included a DACC 6 task supporting the Queensland Police in Kingaroy, where the squadron assisted in searching for suspected contraband. This task strengthened ties with Queensland Police and established partnerships that will continue into 2026.

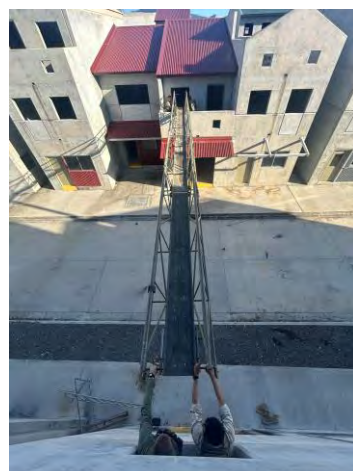
In the near region, a section from 7 CE SQN contributed significantly to Exercise CROIX DU SUD, a multinational training activity designed to enhance interoperability and disaster response readiness. Our Sappers participated in complex scenarios aimed at testing and evaluating disaster response as part of a combined force. This performance reinforced the significant contribution to Australia's commitment to regional security and stability while fostering strong ties with partner nations. The exercise highlighted the Squadron's ability to operate seamlessly in diverse environments, applying technical ingenuity to challenging situations.



Through our habitual relationship with 6 RAR, the Squadron has once again demonstrated the importance and reliability of engineers within a combined arms team. As the Engineer CONFE within the spearhead RBG from Oct 24-Oct 25, 7 CE SQN participated in key training and operational activities. Highlights included:

- Exercise GLOBAL DEXTERITY, where our teams improved a dilapidated airfield and implemented 'splinter teams' to enable infantry with agile search and clearance capabilities.
- Rifle Company Butterworth 148, deploying a section to Malaysia with B Coy, 6 RAR, to provide engineer support, enhance combat skills, and gain experience in a complex tropical environment. A privilege to have our sappers represent the Corps in what continues to be an important enduring partnership between Australia and Malaysia, reinforcing our presence in Southeast.
- Most notably, the adaptability of our assigned Engineer CONFE was showcased during a rapid recall for Operation BEECH, transitioning from field training to international deployment under significantly reduced timelines—an outstanding demonstration of readiness and resilience.

The campaign season concluded with the year's largest and most demanding activity, Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2025, where 7 CE SQN served as the Exercise THREATFOR. Working alongside Australian and allied forces, our Sappers executed critical tasks across the full spectrum of mobility, counter-mobility, and survivability operations in both conventional and urban environments. Their contributions as part of a Combat Team enhanced tactical training outcomes from section level upward, allowing our JNCOs and Sappers to demonstrate expertise and elevate the overall effectiveness of the force.



Across all missions, the defining feature of 7 CE SQN has been the expertise and versatility of our Sappers and junior leaders. Whether delivering civil aid, clearing explosive hazards, enabling mobility in austere conditions, or supporting courses and FORGEN, their technical proficiency and problem-solving mindset have been instrumental to mission success. These achievements reflect not just engineering excellence, but leadership, resilience, and a commitment to excellence that permeates every level of the Squadron.

As 2025 draws to a close, 7 CE SQN is proud of its contributions both at home and abroad. The Squadron's efforts have strengthened communities, enhanced regional security, and ensured the Australian Army remains ready and capable. Our Sappers have proven once again that they are more than engineers – they are innovators, leaders, and trusted allies in every mission.

Aut viam inveniam aut faciam

(I Shall Either Find A Way, Or Make One)

24th Support Squadron.

Commencing with disaster relief to the communities of N/NSW, 24 SPT SQN had a highly successful year growing diverse range of highly specialist bespoke engineer capabilities. The SQN struck a balance between individual course through-put and our extensive campaign season, seeing the complete SQN enjoying brisk Shoalwater Bay Training area for two months, over the Jun - Jul period.



Specialist Troop. The Recon/Dive capabilities had an excellent hit out in 2025 (further detail of dive activities is captured in separate article) commencing with Engineer Recon fundamentals under Ex Crocodile Slide at Canungra training area, before moving into a range of combined arms training including; 8/9 RAR's activity Ex Ram Horn and in support of 2/14 LHR across the 7 BDE Warfighter and Ex Talisman Sabre activities.



24's Sappers undertaking Close Target Reconnaissance and Observation Post training as part of 24 SPT SQN's Ex Crocodile Slide 25

The other key capabilities resident within SPEC TP were also exercised extensively in 2025, including Dry Support Bridge bridging and WPDS capabilities over the campaign season and the Explosive Detection Dogs and handlers were busy growing silent recall and urban proficiency.

As the SQN approaches 2026, the highly successful growth of the dive capability will see the SQN split the dive and recon capabilities from the Specialist Troop into a bespoke Dive/Recon Troop.

Construction Troop. In 2025 the tradies focused on partnered regional activities; deploying under Ex Coral Sapper Suva, Fiji to conduct partnered refurbishment works of Queen Elizabeth Barracks (QEB) with the Republic of Fiji Military Forces. Secondly deploying on Ex Povai Sapper, to Tongatapu, Tonga to conduct partnered trade works with His Majesty's Armed Forces of Tonga of Tailai Military Camp (further detail on these activities is captured in a separate article).



For Plant Section, it was a long campaign season, and in typical fashion; the 'first in, last out'. Major tasks included conducting trench systems in support of live fire activities, route refurbishment, bank improvements in support of a Non-Equipment Bridge and a host of survivability works. Key highlights from the year was the establishment of permanent range infrastructure during Ex Diamond Strike 25, at Range Control's request a pad for ammunition storage, exercising the skill sets required to generate hard standing transshipment areas and works in support of Ex Global Dexterity, to exercise airfield apron refurbishment.



Shoalwater Bay Training Area, a permanent pad for ammunition storage and transfer, with a particular view to supporting Main Battle Tank loading.



Pozi-track SSL installing a Windsock at Macrossan Airfield, Townsville as part of Ex Global Dexterity 25.

Combat Rescue Troop. The TP focused 2025 on driving forward Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting and Personnel Rescue capabilities, as they undertook a range of continuity and lead-up training. This was followed by providing live crash and rescue support to 1 (AS) DIV force assigned aviation assets and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit's platforms. A key highlight was familiarisation training aboard the USS America, which saw the team sail down the QLD coast whilst working with their MEU counterparts.



Vehicle extrication and casualty recovery training in the lead up to the 2025 campaign season.



Combat Rescue Troop aboard the USS America after undertaking familiarisation training on US aviation platforms.

Finally, we would like to introduce the Corps to “Wickham” who has been approved by the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary to be named as the honorary 24th Support Squadron mascot. Currently a 3.3m, 17 year old salt water crocodile, who is expected grow to 5m and is on track to live past 100 years old (possibly out-living our OPS SGT).

2 CER Dive team, building capability and readiness.

2025 marked a significant year of regeneration for the 2 CER dive team, following a period of reduced capability stemming from personnel and equipment challenges. The team undertook a focused rebuild; grow competency and qualifications, enhance diving knowledge and skillsets, and develop SOPs and future concepts to support 7 BDE.

Growing the team's numbers always presents challenges, noting stringent medical requirements, however course through-put was prioritized, growing a number of new divers and supervisors throughout the year. In parallel, the introduction of the ADF SCUBA system provided a modern platform for operations, including full face masks and through-water communications. As with any new capability, there were initial teething issues which were addressed through practical adaptation.

With personnel and equipment in place, the team shifted focus to training and the development of TTPs. These efforts aim to support future integration with the Littoral Manoeuvre Group and broader amphibious operation



Dive Team on Karawatha Quarry, Brisbane

Training was conducted across varied environments to test and refine operational capabilities. Key locations included Karawatha Quarry, Karawatha State Forest, and the Yeppoon region—specifically Farnborough Beach and Keppel Bay Marina. These sites offered diverse conditions to validate procedures and explore adaptations for future operating environments.



2 CER Dive team practice a CASEVAC HOTO with local coast guard at Yeppoon.

Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, the Dive team will continue enhancing capability through the integration of sonar and underwater tracking systems—improving situational awareness and mission coordination. The potential reintroduction of Surface Supplied Diving Equipment (SSDE) is also under consideration, offering extended endurance and safety for complex tasks. Concurrently, the development of robust TTPs remains a priority, ensuring alignment with the operational needs of 7th BDE and the Littoral Manoeuvre Group. These efforts will position the Dive Team as a versatile, mission-ready asset for future amphibious and joint-force operations.



2 CER Divers between serials at Farnborough Beach

Construction Troop, 24 SPT SQN overseas partnering exercises.

In 2025 Construction Troop continued its overseas partnership exercises from previous years. This included many members returning to Fiji, and Tonga.

In April, a small team from 2 CER and 6 ESR deployed on Exercise Coral Sapper 25 to Fiji. They worked alongside the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF), British Royal Engineers, and New Zealand Defence Force Engineers. This included six weeks refurbishing a kindergarden at Queen Elizabeth Barracks (QEB) in Suva, Fiji.



The Exercise Coral Sapper 25 Contingent consisted of multiple trade skills from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

The team in Fiji consisted of a wide variety of specialist skillsets from multiple military forces. A section of RFMF Engineers were integrated into the contingent, and together, they shared knowledge and experience, and worked together towards the refurbishment of the facility.

Exercise Coral Sapper 25 ended with a closing ceremony, whereby all deployed members handed over the final facility to the teachers and children that use it within QEB.

Exercise Povai Sapper 25 occurred over Sep-Oct in Taliai Military Camp, Tonga, as part of a His Majesty's Armed Force (HMAF) and ADF partnering exercise. It saw the renovations of the gymnasium that was built in 2024, as well as demolition of old weapon training sheds, construction of multiple concrete slabs, and various base maintenance tasks. These tasks included stabilising and temporarily fixing the faulty water tower, installing water pumps, fixing faulty lights and fans, and improving ablutions. When things went wrong, late at night, early in the morning, or on the weekends, the engineers were called to help, from fixing toilets, to providing an entire military base with water.



The Exercise Povai Sapper 25 contingent work alongside HMAF engineers building steel frames as part of the gymnasium upgrades.

Throughout the exercise, the contingent had multiple chances to work alongside the HMAF Engineers, as seen above. The construction foreman were also afforded the opportunity to brief the Tongan Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and the Australian Assistant Defence Minister on their key works, which was well received and appreciated.

Overall, 2025 was an excellent year for Construction Troop's overseas exercises, with 2026 promising more challenging opportunities.

Operational Support Squadron – 2CER

2025 was a busy year for OSS. The squadron began the year with the usual surge of tempo during the battle preparation phase, in the lead up to the first exercise of the year, EX Terrier Walk. Shortly after deploying to SWBTA, OSS switched targets rapidly to deploy to Lismore on OP Tropical Cyclone Alfred Assist (OP TCAA). After a rapid turnaround, OSS saw itself operating out of Lismore, providing essential Logistics support to TU Terrier as they provided relief to the local community.



Members of TST conducting recovery assessment

The completion of OP TCAA saw OSS redeploy to Gallipoli Barracks and commence the planning and



45M facilitating bridging relocation

preparation for the upcoming war-fighter season. Conducting three back-to-back exercises in SWBTA, OSS provided critical logistics support to 2 CER as it conducted a range of complex engineering tasks. This culminated with the Regiment participating in EX Talisman Sabre 25. This exercise thoroughly tested the logistic lines of communication across dispersed and challenging environments. A small but adaptive team, OSS was able to provide timely and accurate logistics support to all dependencies from a mobile A2 Echelon.

During the final stages of the year, OSS shifted its focus toward building capability within the Regiment. This included the conduct of a series of driver and

maintenance courses to enhance technical skills and ensure readiness for 2026. These efforts will position OSS to meet future challenges with confidence and maintain its role as a key enabler of engineer operations.



W02 Wilkins dominating fighting Fridays

3RD COMBAT ENGINEER REGIMENT

Forward By LTCOL Ryan Mitchell & WO1 Daniel Bell

In 2025, 3 CER continued to refine and optimise the provision of Engineering support to the 3rd Armoured Brigade operating within the 1st (AS) Division, as the Army's 'unit of action' for Large Scale Combat Operations. This year, 3 CER saw the largest recapitalisation of Army's engineer equipment in generations, through Introduction into Service of the Armoured Breacher Vehicle and Joint Assault Bridge (collectively referred to as 'Combat Engineering Vehicles'), in addition to the refresh of our C and D vehicle fleets. We have strengthened our relationship with the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) through the OLGETTA Series, including the largest scope of work and contingent size for an Exercise PUK PUK to date.

From humanitarian assistance to introduction of new armoured capabilities, our teams rose to meet every challenge. 16 CE Squadron delivered first-class combat engineering support to the Australian Amphibious Force – including both the 2 RAR-led Joint Pre-Landing Force and 1 RAR-led Ground Combat Element – conducting a breadth of activities across the year, including littoral operations and international engagement in the Philippines and Papua New Guinea. Their integration and dive capability development reinforced our readiness for future operating environments. 18 CE Squadron (Armoured) achieved a historic leap in capability with the introduction of the Combat Engineering Vehicles. Through the Heavy Armoured Capability System trials, the Squadron pioneered the SOPs for the Armoured Breacher Vehicle and Joint Assault Bridge—enhancing mobility and breaching power for the Australian Army. 25 Support Squadron led the Ollera Creek Medium Girder Bridge build as part of Defence's response to the 2025 North Queensland floods, a Regimental effort that showcased our responsiveness and resilience to support the community in times of need. Throughout Exercises DINGO FURY, BROLGA RUN, TALISMAN SABRE, and PUK PUK, Support Squadron delivered critical mobility, survivability, and specialist effects, while strengthening regional partnerships in Papua New Guinea. Operational Support Squadron assured, maintained, and sustained our combat power through some of the toughest conditions. From swampy recovery operations during Exercise DINGO FURY to complex logistic support for Exercises TALISMAN SABRE and PUK PUK, OSS proved indispensable in synchronizing logistics with combat operations and supporting new armoured capabilities.

These achievements reflect the dedication and professionalism of every soldier. As we look to 2026, we will continue to build on this foundation—innovating, integrating, and delivering world-class combat engineering capability to the 3rd Armoured Brigade, the Corps, and the Army. The RSM and I are immensely proud of the Regiment's achievements in 2025 – epitomising the adage that 'the whole is greater than the sum of the parts'.



MGB constructed on the Bruce Hwy during NQLD Floods Feb 2025

16th Combat Engineer Squadron

By LCPL Riley O'Hara, 15 Troop

2025 was a busy year for 16 CE SQN, as we integrated with 2 RAR for the “fighting season” and enhanced our dive capability with the new ADF Scuba rollout. From humanitarian assistance during the wet season in North Queensland to Exercise DINGO FURY and our deployment to the Philippines, the troop adapted to any tasks required of us and performed to the highest standard.

To start the year, 15 Troop's training on Exercise YABBY CRAWL involved developing SOPs for our small boat operations for the upcoming fighting season. It saw us spending time at Ross Island Barracks practicing formations and Zodiac landings. On the final day, we conducted a full mission profile at Magnetic Island that tasked each of the three sections to conduct reconnaissance, search and lane markings in order to assess suitable beach landing locations.

Exercise DINGO FURY kicked off the year as the first Regiment-led exercise. It saw 15 Troop operating in wet environments conducting small team military engineering skills, establishing defensive positions and developing a tactical and technical baseline as the first shakeout in the field prior to the high tempo-fighting season. In conjunction with these activities, 15 Troop enhanced their combat shooting skills advancing from individual sneaker lanes through to fire team, section, and troop level attacks preparing the troop for future operations alongside 2 RAR and the Joint Pre Landing Force (JPLF).

Further training cycles demonstrated our integration with 2 RAR was highly effective through operating in Cowley Beach Training Area and Lucinda across EX BLACK CUTLASS, BLACK SPEAR AND BLACK AXE live fire activity. Working closely with 2 RAR elements, the troop provided consistent combat engineering support, enabling efficient manoeuvre through complex scenarios. During EX BLACK AXE, the SQN supported live-fire assaults with rapid obstacle breaching, reinforcing 2 RAR's tempo. EX BLACK CUTLASS further strengthened interoperability, with the troop embedding alongside combined-arms planning and communication. During EX BLACK SPEAR, the troop's mobility and survivability tasks enhanced the battle group's force projection across varied terrain.



Dive training at LAV BKS pool.



16 CE SQN during EX TALISMAN SABRE 25

As the fighting season continued, 15 Troop moved between the Regiment and exercises with 2 RAR before attaching to the JPLF and embarking on HMAS Choules for Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 25. Throughout the activity, 15 Troop delivered engineer reconnaissance and mobility support to both the JPLF and Ground Combat Element (GCE), with the primary task of enabling the GCE's deployment ashore via an LCM8 and transitioning into dismounted manoeuvre through dense, undulating terrain. Early infiltration of the GCE allowed 15 Troop to conduct multiple area searches for potential staging locations and to complete route reconnaissance of the main supply route, setting the conditions for follow-on forces. These tasks enabled the GCE and its attachments to achieve their objectives.



15 TP during EX TALISMAN SABRE 25

Continuing the prolonged attachment with 2 RAR'S Alpha Company, Q3 2025 provided 16 CE SQN members an opportunity to deploy to the Palawan, Philippines on Exercise ALON. The high-tempo exercise was conducted within a 2-week period, consisting of force integration training with the Armed forces of the Philippines (AFP) including search, EHR and awareness training and building search. Concurrently to the force integration training, live fire ranges and jungle survival training were also conducted.



16 CE SQN on Ex ALON 2025.

These skills will contribute to enhancing our survivability in future operating environments. To finish off the EX ALON, days were spent rehearsing the full mission profile, which would see the Australian deployed forces alongside AFP counterparts conducting a beach landing with the end state being all objectives seized.

Our high level of readiness and adaptability to operate in the field as well as littoral environments ensured the success of 16 CE SQN and 3 CER. The troop maintained consistent effort throughout a high tempo year to enhance combat engineering skills as well as further develop the dive capability of the 3rd Brigade.

18th Combat Engineer Squadron (Armoured)

By LT Megan Banaghan, 21 Troop Commander

2025 was a transformative year for 18 CE SQN (ARMD)—a year of tempestuous weather, mud in places it shouldn't be, and ground-breaking progress in armoured breaching that finally brought Combat Engineering Vehicles (CEV) into the fold.



18 CE SQN (ARMD) at Lavarack Barracks post the Heavy Armoured Capability System (HACS) Land Trial, farewelling the CEV Operators moving to Puckapunyal to become CEV Instructors.

The Squadron dominated Townsville Field Training Area (TFTA) on EX DINGO FURY, NQ WARFIGHTER, EX BROLGA RUN and EX TALISMAN SABRE with grit, gear and enough jack rats to make it to the next RTF resupply (barely). Supporting both 3 RAR and 2 CAV, proving once again that engineers don't just 'MAKE', we also 'BREAK!'



SPR Truong enjoying the down time on DINGO FURY while the Troop attempts to recover his bucket from the mud.

DINGO FURY—immortalised now as DINGO 'FLOOD'—tested endurance and adaptability. The infamous recovery of OC 25 SPT SQN's G-Wagon from a bogged MSR just 10 minutes after departing 0A was less a rescue and more a prophecy. Having previously constructed (and deconstructed) the Medium Girder Bridge across Ollera Creek during the North Queensland

floods, the Squadron knew what kind of weather and terrain they faced. Undeterred, the team persisted while the rest of the Brigade sought shelter, developing SOPs for minefields, lane marking, gap crossing, and most critically, breaching. Despite omnipresent VEH-CAS threats from mud, the team laid the groundwork for seamless integration with combat teams and the introduction of CEVs.



18 CE SQN (ARMD) on the last day of Ex DINGO FURY in high spirits.

NQ WARFIGHTER was the Squadron's first integration touchpoint with 3 RAR. Reinforced by Malaysian Armed Forces engineers, it was a great opportunity to exchange ideas on our Armoured Engineering journey. We focused on breaching TTPs to accelerate learning ahead of the M1150 Assault Breacher Vehicle (ABV) and M1110 Joint Assault Bridge (JAB) introduction. CTC, however, gave us plenty of practice respawning at Bishop's Crossing meat grinder. With that nightmare fresh, the Squadron rolled into EX TALISMAN SABRE with sharpened skills and renewed focus.



CEV Drivers and Crew Commanders in Puckapunyal during the first Australian CEV courses.

Meanwhile, our CEV operators pushed the limits of the ABV and JAB at Puckapunyal Training Area, consuming what felt like 100% of Army's war stocks of turnbuckles on the Full Width Mine Plough. The course produced the first CEV drivers and crew commanders in Army. Over months, they mastered shoot-move-communicate-operate, ensuring rapid integration and forming what we now call the Armoured Combat Engineer System (ACES).



JAB launch in PTA during the CEV Operator course.

Just three weeks after CEVs arrived in Townsville, the Squadron deployed to TFTA for the Heavy Armoured Capability System (HACS) Land Trial. After two years of planning and engagement with the US, UK, South Korea, and Germany, this was our first chance to validate ACES. Combat Engineer sections mounted in M113AS4s manoeuvred seamlessly with CEVs to reduce tactical obstacles. The firing of the Mine Clearing Line Charge (MICLIC), with a NEQ of 793kg, literally sent shockwaves from TFTA to Townsville. The RSM recalled seeing “ripples in his coffee,” Jurassic Park-style. The earth-shattering boom left locals speculating on social media—from earthquakes to exploding meth labs to the zombie apocalypse.



The HACS Land Trial culminated in a Combined Arms Fighting System demonstration during a live-fire attack. VIPs from the community and Army observed the devastating effects of the upgraded 3rd Armoured Brigade. M1A2 SEP V3 tanks delivered precision fire and intimate security, artillery rained down overwhelming fire and obscurity, and then Combat Engineers and CEVs rolled in heavy to obliterate obstacles so mechanised infantry could seize the objective. The introduction of CEVs

Townsville Bulletin headline after firing MICLIC's in TFTA.

delivered a leap in capability never before seen in Army—dramatically increasing mobility, counter-mobility, and survivability.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering dedication of all ranks—from Squadron HQ to Troops, Workshops, and Q-Store. Although we've only just begun our armoured journey, the culture developed through sapper-nuity, professionalism, teamwork, and sacrifice has delivered a world-class capability for Army and raised the bar for Armoured Engineering. The Officers and Soldiers of 18 CE SQN (ARMD) should be immensely proud of their role in this historic achievement for the RAE corps.



22 TP on the last day of the HACS Land Trial celebrating their success with RAE HOC and the man that started the Armoured Engineering journey 30 years ago, MAJGEN Mick Ryan, AM, (Retd).

25th Support Squadron

By MAJ Liam Clarke, OC 25th Support Squadron

25th Support Squadron achieved outstanding success at home and abroad, contributing to humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, warfighting training, capability development, and international and community engagement.

The year began with the Squadron leading a combined team to establish a military bridge over Ollera Creek after severe weather washed out the Bruce Highway, isolating Ingham. This task showcased nearly every skill set: technical engineers and reconnaissance developed solutions; combat engineers constructed a medium girder bridge under arduous conditions; Construction Troop provided machinery and operators; Combat Rescue maintained a swift water rescue post; and logistics support came from Operational Support Squadron, 3rd Combat Service Support Battalion, and 4th Health Battalion. It became a Regimental effort, with all Sappers and enablers contributing to enable QLD Main Roads' repairs—a rare opportunity for Support Squadron to be the supported force.

Each Troop played a key role in warfighting training, starting with Exercise DINGO FURY. Construction Troop maintained routes and repaired explosive damage to CP Earthworm; Spec Troop, including Combat Rescue, executed high-tempo combat engineering and search tasks while supporting CE Squadrons with Explosive Detection Dogs; Recon Troop excelled in dispersed communications and live-fire integration with 18 CE SQN. These efforts set conditions for supporting both the Brigade Warfighting Season and Exercise PUK PUK 25.

During the Brigade Warfighting Season, a combined element supported Exercises BROLGA RUN, BROLGA SPRINT, and TALISMAN SABRE (TS). Recon Troop gained valuable experience with Battle Group Eagle and deployed alongside brigade and divisional objectives during EX TS 25. Construction Troop delivered exceptional output maintaining routes and constructing positions and obstacles. Spec Troop introduced the Personnel Decontamination Station – Medium system, advancing technical capability, while Combat Rescue provided real-time effects to ground and air assets, enhancing safety and skills.

Outside major exercises, the Squadron engaged extensively with external units. Explosive Detection Dogs integrated with Queensland Police for search training; Combat Rescue Operators completed Combat Rescue Operator qualifications and trained with 4 HB and 5 AVN. Recon Troop participated in diverse external training, including UAS operations, exploitation tasks with 3 RAR, aerial reconnaissance with 6 AVN, and CBRN medical training with 4 HB.

Spec Troop advanced CBRN capability through pilot courses, while technical engineers supported the Land Technical Assurance Framework. Construction and Recon Troops introduced new earthmoving vehicles and unmanned aerial systems. Personnel deployed on Operation KUDU, training Ukraine's Armed Forces, and Operation RESOLUTE, protecting Australia's maritime borders.



Construction of the Igam Barracks Perimeter road during Ex Puk Puk 25

The Squadron's largest international engagement was Exercise PUK PUK in Lae, leading a 130-soldier contingent from Australia, PNG, New Zealand, Japan, and the UK. Projects included major renovations, new construction, roadworks, and rugby pitch improvements. This milestone coincided with the signing of the Puk Puk security treaty and highlighted PNGDF's outstanding contribution, including a PNGDF officer as contingent second-in-command. We look forward to continuing this partnership in 2026.

Additionally, the Squadron supported Exercise HELICON LUK with a Combat Rescue detachment delivering live crash response for aviation training and deployed a Water Purification and Distribution System aboard HMAS Choules, sustaining Joint Task Group 50 in Lae.

Community engagement included ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, and the 3 CER Fishing Competition, which raised over \$30,000 for Legacy. Within Defence, the Squadron delivered minor construction works for 3 CSSB, 4 HB, 3 RAR, and High Range Training Area—providing both valuable training and enduring outcomes.

In closing, it has been an outstanding year for 25th Support Squadron – our successes and achievements have been as varied as the unique skills and trades that we hold to enable the Regiment and Brigade to live, move and fight. All members of the Squadron should be exceptionally proud of their work in 2025 and we would not have achieved what we did without the individual contributions of every soldier.



Opening of the A Coy Lines on Ex Puk Puk 25

Operational Support Squadron

By LT Ben Gordon, S4A

2025 was a year defined by adaptability for the Operational Support Squadron (OSS). From the rain-soaked tracks of Townsville Field Training Area (TFTA) to the tropics of Papua New Guinea, OSS delivered critical logistic and technical support across multiple exercises, ensuring the Unit's and Brigade's combat power remained sustained and ready.

The year commenced with EX DINGO FURY, where OSS provided logistic and technical support to 16 CE SQN, 18 CE SQN, and 25 SPT SQN. What began as a routine exercise quickly evolved into a battle against the elements. Torrential rain transformed TFTA into a mud pit, with vehicles bogging almost as fast as they could move. Recovery operations became a daily occurrence, testing our persistence. Despite these conditions, OSS maintain the squadrons, enabling them to continue training.

In May, OSS deployed again to TFTA for EX NORTH QUEENSLAND WARFIGHTER, integrating within the 3rd Brigade construct. Positioned in the rear of the fight, OSS provided critical maintenance, recovery support and supplied the Brigade's Class IV. The exercise demonstrated our ability to synchronize logistic effects with combat operations, ensuring supported battle groups maintained tempo.

While the bulk of the Squadron supported domestic exercises, a small OSS detachment deployed in support of 25 SPT SQN to Papua New Guinea for EX PUK PUK. This mission focused on training and interoperability with the PNG Defence Force. Operating in a challenging environment far from home, our personnel demonstrated professionalism and adaptability, strengthening ties with a key regional partner.

July saw OSS return to TFTA for EX TALISMAN SABRE, for one of the largest multinational exercises in the region. OSS delivered essential logistic support, including the provision of Class I, III, IV, V, and IX stores, even supplying rations to French forces. The complexity of coordinating resources across TFTA tested our planning and execution skills.

The latter part of the year marked a significant milestone for the Regiment with the introduction of Combat Engineer Vehicles (CEVs) with the Heavy Armoured Capability System (HACS) Land Trial. OSS played a pivotal role in supporting these activities, providing logistic support during trials at TFTA.

As we look ahead, the lessons learned in 2025 will inform how we continue to evolve. The introduction of new capabilities like CEVs will demand even greater integration between logistics and combat elements. OSS prepares ready to meet that challenge. To every member of the Squadron, your professionalism, dedication, and resilience have been the foundation of our success.

5TH ENGINEER REGIMENT

Forward by Lieutenant Colonel Tom Steel

It was with great honour we received our appointments as CO and RSM of the 5th Engineer Regiment for January 2025. We heard many good things about the Regiment before arriving, especially regarding the quality and calibre of its people. However, nothing could have prepared us for the levels of dedication, professionalism and teamwork demonstrated by the members of the Regiment. The Regiment consists of exceptional people and leaders of our community. I want to thank everyone for their hard work, loyalty and friendship.



Like most years, 2025 was busy and eventful. The Regiment delivered 588 qualifications over 26 different courses, achieving 1,143 qualifications overall. This was an outstanding achievement. The logistic and administration support, and the planning and preparation by SQN and RHQ staff was excellent and these efforts improved the readiness and capability of the Regiment. As well as individual and collective training, the Regiment supported two short-notice responses to floods in central and northern NSW. The Regiment also took part in Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 25, billed as the largest coalition exercise since World War II. Significantly, the exercise involved the deployment of vehicles, personnel and equipment by sea and air to Darwin, a real achievement in the progression of our Homeland defence capability. The Regiment continues to support OP Resolute and sent numerous people to Transit Security Elements 117 to 119.

Other achievements included the renovation of the 5 ER Bailey Panel Bridge outside RHQ. On arriving in the Regiment, we noticed the timber deck was rotten and the metal frame rusty. The bridge has a long history in the Regiment with photos of 4 FD TP and 5 FD SQN constructing the bridge at Majura Range in 1989. The bridge was then removed from Majura by 4 CE SQN in 2009 and re-built at HMAS Harman shortly after in 2010. Finally, the bridge was removed and re-built at Holsworthy in front of RHQ in 2015 following the completion of the new offices.

Whilst many people took part in the bridge refurbishment, WO2 Bridges, SPR Perez and SPR Whitehouse of 101 CONST SQN did a lot of the heavy lifting. They worked tirelessly through winter stripping components, scraping rust, sanding and painting to achieve the excellent result we see today. The bridge is now a symbol of our professionalism and the pride we take in our equipment, work areas and engineering tasks at 5 ER. It is a fitting backdrop to this year's Unit photo.

We have also produced the inaugural 2025 edition of the 5 ER Yearbook. This has been developed to reflect upon and celebrate the hard work across a variety of tasks that our people conducted throughout the year.

Strong and Steady.

4 Combat Engineering Squadron

Squadrons are defined by their personnel, and 2025 saw a major uplift in 4 Combat Engineering Squadron esprit de corp. Some of the major achievements for the year included: running SQN level obstacle and search training through the Canberra winter; enhancing Tuesday night training; and a number of impressive individual achievements.

From 14–15 March 2025, the Regiment kicked off its first field weekend of the year with Exercise TORO SHOOT. Nothing gets a soldier's fingers dancing faster than hearing you'll be spending the weekend on the range firing RP3A. Straight off the bat (credit where it's due) the team from 4 Squadron put on a show, taking home the coveted CO's statement for the best average score across the weekend. But under a blistering Sydney sun, everyone pushed through the heat, showing grit, focus and a drive to beat their personal bests, which is something to be proud of. A special thanks goes to WO2 Kneebone for his tireless efforts in uplifting weapons handling standards across 5 ER, particularly within 4 Troop.

This year In July, August and September the Squadron ran the TORO series weekends at the Majura Training Area. On the July weekend Canberra lived up to its reputation delivering a frigid -4 degrees celcius, sending Sappers for the fire pit and keeping the heat exhaustion risk low on the chainsaws. Meanwhile, the Junior Non-Commissioned Officers spent the weekend on a counter mobility tasks, conducting recces for an abatis/log crib obstacle in the pine plantation. Their excellent work enabled soldiers on the July weekend to use the felled pines for an effective abatis emplacement.

Fast forward to October and the Regiment found itself at Exercise TORO SPRINT, the final tactical training weekend of the year and the ultimate test of a year's worth of soldiering, teamwork, and engineering skill. As E13C, our tasks were no small feat, conducted an occupied building search, build a road obstacle, and responded to every curveball HQ could throw our way, from navigating a minefield to defending a vehicle checkpoint and repelling probing attacks from the ever-persistent Olvanan Special Forces. A special mention to SPR Fu and SPR Morton for their control and composure as the gunners, showing great textbook trigger restraint in the face of a battle-hardened enemy.

In 2025 the Squadron has been a substantial increase in parade numbers, generally by around 40%. A fantastic result for all. Finally, individual achievements have included SGT Watson welcoming his first baby, Sapper Ali receiving Student of Merit (SOM) of RAE mod 1 and two unit weddings. In conclusion, the Squadron has been able to operate and build itself throughout the year and is postured for a great year to come in 2026!

5 Combat Engineering Squadron

This year, the 5th Engineering Regiment sought to de-centralise training weekends down to the Squadron level. 5 Combat Engineering Squadron conducted a Crawl, Walk, Run series at Defence Establishment Orchard Hills and Holsworthy Barracks, focused on Military Engineering and Force Protection within a reserve context.

Operating under an enduring, overarching enemy picture, the Squadron was tested on their ability to fulfill the Emergency Support Force (ESF) role; and forced to apply their 'Sapper-nuity' to defeat contemporary and novel threats, within a simulated 'resource-poor' environment.

TORO CRAWL – 5 and 14 Combat Engineering Squadron

Exercise TORO CRAWL served to develop foundational skills based around the effects of mobility and counter-mobility. This exercise saw sections rotate through stands that simulated activities that could be expected of Engineers in an ESF context. This included field machines and improvised anchorage devices – skills that many had not practiced since initial employment training (IET). Sappers also constructed a Non-Equipment Bridge across a 3.5m gap and conducted route clearance operations, clearing cluster munitions and other UXO along routes leading to an airfield.



TORO WALK – 5 Combat Engineering Squadron

The threat picture for the exercise saw section commander's rearwards of the front line, tasked to design and test replicable survivability measures for frontline forces within a resource poor environment. This exercise led to Sappers using non-standard materials to conduct revetments of Stage 3 pits, build blast screens, structural hardening and defeat of thermal imaging devices with Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS) products and materials in order to provide recommendations for front line forces.



TORO RUN – 5, 14 Combat Engineering Squadron and 101 Construction Squadron

Exercise TORO RUN was the last of Squadron based exercises and arguably, was the most ambitious of them all. It saw the Squadron working under a tactical picture, to develop survivability effect through the creation of a trench system in conjunction with 101 Construction Squadron Plant operator. The exercise was conducted at Defence Establishment Orchard Hills. Sappers used a combination of corrugated iron, HESCO and timber beams to develop approximately a 200m front over the span of three days. The



intent is for trench system to endure as a permanent feature at Orchard Hills for 5 Combat Engineering Squadron to continue working on and to support training for our partner units within 5 Brigade such as 2/17 and 4/3 Royal New South Wales Regiment who have already expressed interest in using the site.

OTHER ENGAGEMENTS

Another enduring effort for the Squadron this year was public engagement and recruiting activities, as seen through ANZAC Day support, and numerous engagements with to Defence Work Experience Program and Defence Force Recruiting.

In addition to the directed support tasks, the Squadron supported displays at the Hawkesbury River Show and the RAAF Base Richmond Airshow; with the intent to bolster numbers at Orchard Hills.

Throughout High Risk Weather Season, the Squadron deployed during Tropical Cyclone Alfred, and supported the New South Wales Flood Defence Aide to Civil Community (DACC) tasking. The Squadron also deployed with the Regiment on Ex Talisman Sabre 2025 where they provided construction support to regional Northern bases.

These recruiting displays and support to Domestic operations provided invaluable engagement opportunities with prospective recruits, and enhanced our presence within the community.



14 Combat Engineering Squadron

2025 saw 14 Combat Engineering Squadron continue to lead the charge within the Regiment, providing personnel for ESF activities, Talisman Sabre, Brigade activities and unit Training.

The physical dislocation of the Squadron continues to create enduring synchronisation issues, in turn affording opportunities for the Junior Non-Commissioned Officers and senior Sappers to develop their technical competencies and leadership skills.



The year demonstrated that the Squadron possesses excellent leadership across all ranks and CE expertise to meet the challenges of tomorrow.



One of the focuses for the Squadron was community engagement, to drive recruitment targets and ensuring we are recruiting the next generation of ARES Sappers in our AO. This has been achieved through recruiting activities, ANZAC day ceremonies and Ex Tropical Cyclone Alfred Assist.

For Ex Tropical Cyclone Alfred Assist 6/3 Troop provided a section and a half as well as

Troop HQ to the TP which deployed north to render assistance to our communities in need, through chain-sawing and clean-up.

The other focus for the Squadron this year was the development of our members to ensure that we can meet the needs of the unit. This has led to many individual and collective training opportunities for our members, with the significant activities where we have had a lead on outlined below:

- Marksmanship Training on Tuesday Night Parades with 3/9 Troop conducting additional training outside of Tuesday Night Parades.
- Army Combat Program training, to develop more instructors and qual members
- Annual demolitions training to maintain skills and competencies
- Counter Mobility training through the development of Vehicle Check Points and Engagement Area development
- Mobility training through non-equipment bridge construction and improvised floatation



- Survivability training through trench development at Forward Operating Base Wombat with 5/101 Squadron
- 6 Troop supported the Brigade Ex – Menin Run, where Non-Commissioned Officers stepped up into positions above their worn rank and performed to a high standard with commentary provided to their commander from units supported



101 Construction Squadron.

The Squadron had a remarkably busy and productive year in 2025, once again demonstrating its reputation as a capable and versatile engineer sub-unit within the 5th Engineer Regiment. From construction projects to joint exercises and community engagement, the Squadron has left its mark across Australia.

This year saw the deployment of a Construction Section to RAAF Base Tindal in support of Exercise Talisman Sabre, where members successfully emplaced a Durabase under challenging conditions. This contribution directly enhancing operational readiness and highlighted the technical mastery and adaptability of the Squadron in complex environments. OC 101 also supported Defence Space Command HQ in an EXCON capacity during this time



Training and development remained a key focus area. The Squadron conducted a Single Code Course to qualify members of the Regiment in the safe and effective use of Compact Track Loaders, and successfully ran Exercise Scorpion Rust at the SME dustbowl, providing plant operators and single code operators with vital opportunities to maintain their skills and technical currency in realistic conditions including low light / blackout operations.

The Squadron also continued to provide outstanding support to external units:

SPR Doggett supported 2 Health Battalion's Exercise Viper Walk, providing power generation and essential support to a Role 2 Basic medical facility. CPL O'Reilly provided her expertise to SME in support of Plant IET plant course, additionally she with WO2 Fawns provided support to 22 ER in the conduct of their plant courses. SPR Laxton was everywhere supporting Exercise Arafura Shield, contributing to Operation Flood Assist, and representing the Squadron at Kurrajong Primary School, engaging with students and inspiring the next generation. LCPL Young also made a strong contribution, supporting Exercise Arafura Shield and deploying with TSE 117.



From Joint exercises to community engagement, 101st Construction Squadron has proven once again that its people are its greatest asset; skilled, dedicated, and ready to provide excellence in any environment. The achievements of 2025 have strengthened both the Regiment's capability and its legacy, setting the foundation for another successful year ahead



At Holsworthy the Squadron took the lead in the refurbishment of the Regimental Bridge, a task completed to an exceptional standard. The bridge now stands proudly once again as an enduring symbolism of engineering excellence at Headquarters 5 Engineer Regiment and the craftsmanship, mateship and professionalism of 101st Construction Squadron.

Other impressive construction achievements included, the building of a Non-Equipment Bridge, a custom-designed suspended bridge, and the refurbishment of three huts within the Special Forces Training Facility's Jungle Village at Holsworthy. These works, completed under strict environmental compliance, substantially increased the usability of the training area and will serve as a lasting enhancement to Defence training infrastructure for years to come. This was complimented by 101 Headquarters participating in the Exercise Menin Spear Command Post Exercise whilst also overseeing the construction tasks at Holsworthy

2025 saw the Squadron re-establishing a presence in Singleton, with the Squadron returning to regular parading and reclaiming facilities. This provides a foothold for future tasks within the area. This also accompanied a recruiting effort to bring back engineers that had left the unit (SERCAT 2 or 3) when the compound was closed two years ago. Already 3 members have submitted paperwork to return.

6TH ENGINEER SUPPORT REGIMENT

Forward By CAPT Elliot Wood, ADJT 6 ESR

The 6th Engineer Support Regiment began 2025 with a strong operational tempo, maintaining its focus on foundation warfighting and readiness for large-scale combat operations. Early in the year, the Regiment stood ready to deploy on Operation Vanuatu Assist following severe cyclone damage in the Pacific, demonstrating rapid response capability, though the mission was ultimately stood down at the request of the Vanuatu Government. This readiness posture set the tone for the year.



Mid-year saw the Regiment's main effort shifted to Exercise Talisman Sabre 25, where 6 ESR deployed the Engineer Task Group Headquarters and the Regiment(-) under the Divisional Engineer function as a DCU to Headquarters 1st (Australian) Division. Operating across the complex terrain of Northern Australia, the Regiment delivered theatre-level engineer effects at echelon. Key achievements included constructing a Line of Communication bridge over the Fanning River to enable Corps sustainment, establishing water purification and distribution points to maintain combat effectiveness, and building hardened command posts for divisional C2. The successful employment of the Divisional Engineer Plans Cell was a highlight, cementing 6 ESR's role as the Divisional Engineers. Capability development continued with the establishment of a new Divisional Engineer Park Troop within OSS, following its successful employment during Talisman Sabre 25.

Beyond Talisman Sabre, 6 ESR projected capability across the region. The Regiment delivered construction effects in Vanuatu during Exercise Engagement Kumunti, supported partner forces in Fiji, Tonga, and Papua New Guinea, and provided EOD expertise on multiple operations, including two iterations of Operation Render Safe in Nauru. Domestically, the Regiment contributed to AACAP remediation works in remote communities and maintained readiness through exercises such as Leadfoot and Wallaby Walk.

The year also marked a significant achievement for the Regiment, winning the Steele Cup for the first time, a testament to the team's mastery of basic combat engineer skills and fitness.

The Regiment closed out 2025 postured for the High Risk Weather Season, AACAP, and multiple operations, activities and investments in 2026. This year once again demonstrated the professionalism, adaptability, and technical excellence of 6 ESR's soldiers, who continue to deliver outstanding results wherever they are called upon.



Steele Cup – Winning Team

17th Construction Squadron (17 Const SQN)

CAPT Matthew Todd, 2IC 17th Construction Squadron

Little Bears on the Move.

2025 was a busy yet rewarding year for the Little Bears of 17th Construction Squadron — a year defined by hard work, teamwork, and leadership at all levels. From field training to regional engagements, our soldiers continued to prove why the squadron remains the most adaptable and capable construction element in the Corps.

Throughout the year, our people successfully delivered divisional-level field engineering and specialist trade works, while maintaining the high levels of personal and equipment readiness demanded of the online Ready Construction Group (RCG). Field training began early, with a deployment to Shoalwater Bay for the annual Exercise Bailey Crawl. The exercise focused on individual soldier skills — field-craft, communications, logistics, convoy operations, demolitions, and watermanship — providing a much-needed reintroduction to field life following AACAP 2024.

After what felt like only a short pause for refit, the Sqn was back in the thick of it. The squadron (minus) — under the energetic leadership of MAJ Chicoutimi Done — deployed to Townsville on Exercise Brolga Run, in support of the 3rd Brigade. Our mission: tactically erect a Fixed Modular Bridge (FMB) over a wet gap in order to provide mobility support to Battle Group Asahi (Japan).



17 Construction Squadron's Fixed Modular Bridge

9 Troop, led by LT William Ladd, commanded a composite team of combat engineers, tradies, and plant operators tasked with tactically clearing the site, establishing security, and commencing near-bank earthworks, before commencing the build. As any engineer can attest, the bridge build didn't go entirely to plan. Operating under direct and indirect enemy threat — and facing critical equipment issues — the team demonstrated genuine *Sapperunity* to overcome obstacles. After forty-eight hours of continuous effort by day and night, the line-of-communication opened, allowing Battle Group Asahi to advance down the eastern axis as part of the brigade's left flank. The

squadron completed a highly successful field exercise, which proved valuable preparation for Exercise Talisman Sabre.

Meanwhile, 8 Troop were busy back at Amberley designing, procuring, and testing. Under LT Zion De Groot, the composite troop deployed to Shoalwater Bay constructing an underground bunker system for the 1st Australian Division HQ. For the first time since the Second World War, divisional headquarters occupied a serviced, multi-node underground bunker complex, enhancing force protection whilst allowing command, control, and communication throughout Exercise Talisman Sabre.



8 Troops bunker (one node), designed and built over Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025.

While 8 Troop were deployed in Shoalwater, the remainder of the Squadron redeployed to Townsville. Initially occupying the divisional engineer equipment park, we once again pushed forward — from the rear to the close — into Battle Group Kapyong's area of operations to provide mobility support. The Squadron tactically erected an FMB across the Fanning River, opening vital rear line-of-communication for 3 RAR.

Plant Troop, led by LT Noah Wright, were as busy as ever, supporting two main efforts on both the FMB and bunker tasks, while also completing several side quests including hasty route repair, quarrying and vehicle recovery – including an M1A1 tank and M88 recovery vehicle, both bogged beyond belief in what could only be described as quicksand.



17 Construction Squadrons Fixed Modular Bridge, erected over a wet gap in Townsville on Exercise Brolga Run.

Returning to Amberley didn't mean slowing down. Our focus shifted, with the Little Bears have supporting multiple regional engagements. Personnel deployed individually and as part of small teams to Tonga, Fiji, PNG, Indonesia, and the Torres Strait, strengthening Australia's regional partnerships and enhancing our reputation abroad. The SQN also contributed to security cooperation through individual deployments on Operation Render Safe and Operation Resolute, with an upcoming deployment over Christmas on Operation Southern Discovery, supporting the Australian Antarctic Program.

The lessons of 2025 have reinforced how we, as engineers, support the land division through both close and general engineering. Perhaps our greatest success this year has been cementing the role of the 6th Engineer Support Regiment and 17th Construction Squadron in showcasing our capability to the division as well as the combat brigades — demonstrating our relevance to warfighting and our place in the bigger picture of Army's mission.

As we look ahead to 2026, the Little Bears stand ready — proud of what we've achieved and confident in our capability. We will take our lessons forward into what is shaping up to be an outstanding AACAP in the far reaches of the Kimberleys.

21st Construction Squadron (21 CONST SQN)

By CAPT Llewellyn New, 1 TP COMD

Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP 2025) in the Torres Strait was more than just a construction task; it was about training the Army's ability to project and sustain a force for an extended duration, in a region that closely mirrored the characteristics of the Indo-Pacific.

Alongside maintaining semi-permanent camps for dozens of personnel, the Scope of Works (SoW) included the construction of community features, amenities, and supply route remediation. The SoW was delivered as part of our commitment to whole-of-government "closing the gap initiatives" improving infrastructure in remote Indigenous communities.

AACAP continues to offer meaningful and operationally relevant training opportunities to Army engineers. The introduction of new capabilities, complex joint logistics, and the opportunity to execute an independent command task enhances our training experience.

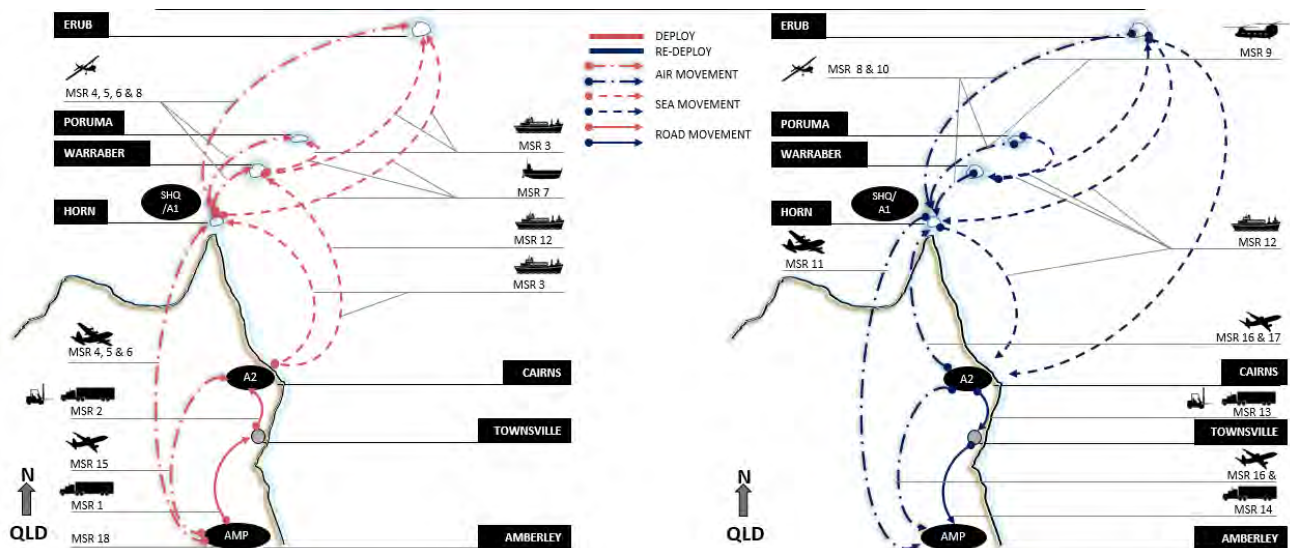


Members of 1 TP constructing the community hall on Erub Island.

AACAP: Infrastructure and Readiness Since 1997

AACAP has operated continuously since 1997 as a joint initiative between the Australian Army and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). Its aim is to close the gap in remote Indigenous communities through the provision of health services, essential infrastructure, and community support.

AACAP 2025 saw the 6th Engineer Support Regiment (6 ESR), under the 17th Sustainment Brigade, combining this program with Exercise Saunders (Ex SAUNDERS) Army's expeditionary basing certification activity (fielding soldiers and sustaining a force to complete a task over an extended duration) under a deployed O4 headquarters, progressing toward ATL5B readiness.



Logistics effects for Deployment and Redeployment to Torres Strait for AACAP 2025.

A Landmark in Army's Training Calendar MAJ Ancel Lupke, OC 21 CONST SQN

Ex SAUNDERS represented the largest sub unit-led exercise conducted in the Australian Army in 2025. Commanding Officer 6 ESR, LTCOL Fabian Harrison, tasked the 21st Construction Squadron (21 Const Sqn) as the lead to execute construction projects across three remote islands in the Torres Strait: Erub, Warraber, Poruma and a HQ and A1 Ech Forward at Horn Island.



1 Troop Flag on Erub.

21 Const Sqn faced the challenge of projecting, and delivering capability across a dispersed area of operations, under a tight budget and significant logistical constraints. The scale of the exercise involved managing over 160 personnel, three separate barge insertions, more than 70 charter flights, and the full integration of new platforms such as the Carmix mobile batching system and an expeditionary wastewater treatment system.

This activity demonstrated Army's littoral and expeditionary basing capability, practices centralised command and decentralised execution, and set the benchmark for distributed command and control. It is a model for how the Army can train, build, and operate in austere, remote and complex littoral environments.

Camps and Culverts: RAE's Expeditionary Engineering History

From the ANZAC's in Egypt to forward operating bases in Uruzgan, the Australian Army has a long history of constructing and sustaining infrastructure in austere environments. During the Pacific campaigns of World War II, engineers supported combat operations across Papua New Guinea by building airstrips, roads, and field hospitals.

In Vietnam, East Timor, the Solomon Islands, and Afghanistan, combat engineers delivered essential support through roadworks, vertical construction, sanitation systems, and force protection. These historical operations emphasise the relevance of training Army's expeditionary basing capability.

Ex SAUNDERS continues this legacy, training to project and sustain capability in distant and remote environments. Tasks such as horizontal works and single story vertical construction will continue to be relevant across the spectrum of combat operations and; humanitarian aid and disaster relief operations.

Construction Projects

Two primary infrastructure projects were delivered by Erub Contingent:

A 200m² single-storey community hall with amenities and a kitchenette, capable of hosting a majority of the island's population for ceremonies, meetings, and cultural events (maximum occupancy of 200 people). This hall was built on low-grade highly saline soil and was supported by concrete-masonry strip footings. Blockwork walls around the amenities and a timber framed wall support the truss roof. Gates and louvers harness the prevailing East South East trade wind to provide natural ventilation.

A single-lane reinforced concrete culvert to replace a washed-out road segment through a watercourse. This restored access to Treacherous Bay fishing grounds and the sacred Coming of the Light memorial site, enhancing the routes resilience to heavy rainfall and reconnecting community to culture. The culvert consists of eight precast concrete barrels and base slabs, utilises articulated concrete matting scour protection at the inlet and outlet, and directs rainwater flow through the culvert barrels aprons and wingwalls. An unsealed carriageway made from local material and imported aggregate runs between the headwalls.



Proposal for works on Erub, AACAP 2025.



1 TP CAMP BIRT on Erub Island.

Training for technical construction

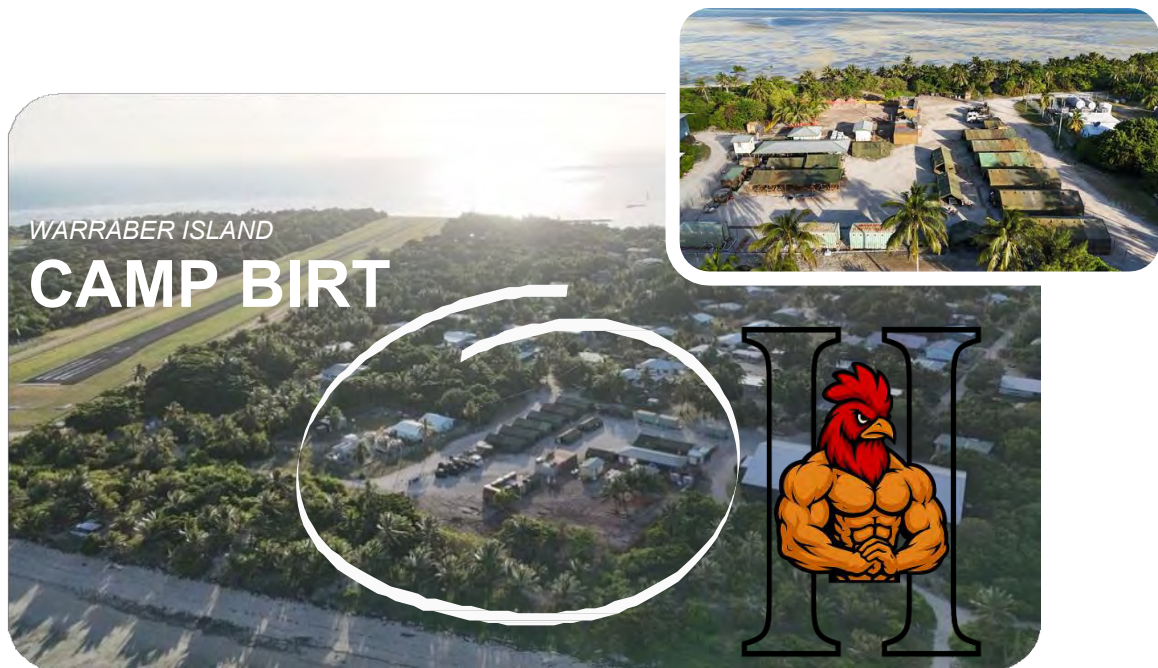
The scope of works introduced construction methods not routinely practised by Army Engineers. To ensure mission readiness, personnel from 1 Troop, 2 Troop, and Plant Troop of 21 Construction Squadron undertook targeted pre-deployment training through the AACAP Skills Program. Delivered in the months leading up to deployment, this training was specifically tailored to the unique technical demands of the task and included:

- Blockwork: calculations and set-out, walls, corners, doors, windows and rectification
- Concreting techniques: Carmix 3.5TT and 1.5TT, batching, quality control, additives and complex form work
- Low Voltage Rescue and CPR qualifications
- Traffic management
- Waterproofing.



1 TPs Construction of Community Hall (Left) and Concrete Culvert (Right) on Erub.

Warraber Island CAMP BIRT



2 TP CAMP BIRT on Warraber Island

2 Troop: Warraber and Poruma Islands

2 Troop, commanded by LT Chen Wang was tasked with delivering consecutive infrastructure projects across Warraber and Poruma Islands, requiring deliberate staging, and littoral coordination to enable construction to occur across dislocated worksites. On Warraber Island, the troop delivered a range of infrastructure tasks supporting both community needs and cultural practice. At the centre was the construction of a multi-purpose cooking area to support a Kup Murri, which is a traditional islander cooking method. The facility includes a reinforced slab with an integrated earth pit, timber framing, with cyclone-rated wall framing on the seaward side, and full fit-out with sinks and preparation benches to enable large-scale community events. The structure was founded on concrete strip footings placed over sandy soils and was achieved under significant site constraints. The refurbishment and restoration of existing infrastructure also took place, consisting of a timber storage shed and brick ablution block. This validated the trade skills to conduct rapid remediation and restoration of critical services infrastructure.

In mid-August, 2 Troop redeployed to Poruma Island, with construction materials already pre-positioned. The redeployment took place across five movement windows spanning 14 days, involving a mix of LCM-8 lift assets and civilian barge transport. The Manitou 10200 and 20-foot containers were moved via civilian barge due to platform and lift constraints, vehicles and personnel were transferred in staged packets between islands. This phase validated Army's ability to project and re-task engineer capability across dispersed islands while maintaining sustainment and C2 on a compressed timeline.

On Poruma, 2 Troop delivered a galvanised steel portal frame roof over the community basketball court, supported by concrete pier footings installed in sandy soil. The structure was erected using scaffolding, and telescopic handling equipment, ensuring safe and efficient work at height. The troop also completed a refurbishment of an existing ablution block, modernising community infrastructure to increase its longevity.



2 TP construction of Kup Murri on Warraber Island.



2 TP construction of the portal frame on Poruma Island.



2TP hosting Community Fishing Competition on Poruma Island (Left). SPR Tavita hauling an impressive 110cm Barracuda (Right).

Throughout the deployment, combat engineers (CEs) from 2 Troop operated the WPDS-Light and Medium on Erub, Warraber and Poruma, generating a reliable supply of water for both consumption and construction activities. The system draws seawater through coastal intakes and produces permeate via reverse osmosis, which is pumped into the local raw water lagoon for chemical treatment to council standards. With daily usage demanding up to 6000L per day, the CEs consistently maintained a water surplus. Production was managed around tidal windows, with multiple staging tanks enabling continuous and efficient operation despite environmental constraints.

Ex SAUNDERS, which is the delivery year of AACAP 2025, tested, refined, and validated Army's expeditionary engineering capability, while delivering tangible benefits to the supported Torres Strait Island communities. This deployment enhanced our technical construction skills, challenged our logistic chains and demonstrated we are an Army in the community.

Task Element Lombrum

By CAPT Sonal Weerasinghe, Contingent Commander

Project 244 Lombrum Follow on Works saw the delivery of multiple infrastructure scope items at Lombrum Naval Base, Manus Island, Papua New Guinea. A task organised element led by 21 Construction Sqn, with personnel from 17 and 21 CONST SQN, OSS and 20 EOD, were tasked to provide a construction force element. The team was designated Task Element (TE) Lombrum, and tasked to deliver engineering effects in support of the PNGDF. 1 JMU enabled the movement of all equipment and personnel via contracted means and all the works were delivered as per the Statement of Requirements from 12 CE WKS.



Contingent complete photo after a job well done.

From late Jul 25 to early Nov 25, TE Lombrum was able to complete the demolition of several redundant structures including a Power Station, Water Treatment Plant, Sailor's Accommodation and Mess, Sentry Post, and a Nurse Officer house. Once demolition was complete, all the waste was placed into a containment cell and capped, by layering soil and a geosynthetic material over the debris. Additional to the demolition items, TE Lombrum completed several tasks of opportunity. The most significant tasks being the remediation of the married quarters ring road, building a new canteen and undercover areas for Lombrum Primary School, and refurbishment of two existing culverts.



An 850J dozer clearing an old accommodation block at Lombrum Naval Base.

TE Lombrum deployed with personnel from each of the four sub-units of 6 ESR, combat engineers from 1 CER and 2 CER as well as a medical team from 2 BDE. During the delivery phase, the team was fortunate enough to conduct significant multinational cooperation activities. The engagements included attaching plant operators from the PNGDF and working together with the USN Seabee Contingent deployed to the island. The team was able to accomplish all assigned tasks in time and under budget, with excellent leadership shown at the most junior level to own problems and develop workable solutions. This task demonstrated the Army Engineers' ability to project, sustain and deliver key infrastructure outcomes in the Indo-Pacific region, providing tangible outcomes for the host nation, as well as providing critical development opportunities for our personnel.



A grader being loaded into a contracted vessel and bound for Australia after completing road remediation.

20th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Squadron (20 EOD SQN)

By CPL Harley McIntyre, aspiring EOD Technician

2025 was another exceptionally busy year for the 20th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Squadron (20 EOD SQN), marked by deployments and collective training exercises across the globe. With 15 overseas operations, activities, and investments spanning the global, the Squadron supported the 1st Division, Joint Operations Command, and the United Nations through a diverse range of missions, exercises, and training activities. True to our ethos, downtime was rare—and that's exactly how we like it.

In addition to these commitments, the Squadron continues to support of the Defence Explosive Ordnance Training School and assist the School of Military Engineering in qualifying new RAE EOD Technicians, ensuring the Australian Defence Force (ADF) maintains a highly skilled and ready capability.

PREPARDNESS

A highlight of the year was the Squadron's flagship activity, Exercise Wallaby Walk saw participation from across the ADF as well as international partners from the United States Marine Corps (USMC), United Kingdom, and New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF). Exercise Wallaby Walk remains the premier EOD exercise within the ADF, providing participants with the opportunity to rehearse and refine tactics, techniques, and procedures in combat EOD operations in support of manoeuvre forces across the land domain. This exercise continues to set the benchmark for interoperability and operational excellence in the ADF EOD community.



EOD Technicians from 20 EOD Sqn approach a suspect "Technical" surrounded by UXOs.

The SQN also contributed to Exercise Talisman Sabre, providing close support to the combat brigades across three distinct AOs. Our teams provided direct support to the live fire activities of some of the army's new long-range fires capabilities. Preparatory works with 1 CER at Bradshaw training area saw the UXO clearance of 12 "gold top" 40mm HEDP rounds by Wallaby 22. Additionally, during the live fire in Shoalwater Bay W21 disposed of a 2000-pound bomb, 120mm SABOT and a 155mm HE artillery round.

The Sqn supported each Combat Brigade with EOD Planners in the Headquarters, with EOD teams integrated with the Brigade main effort throughout the activity and worked closely with the CERs and the Brigade battlefield clearance teams to great effect.



6 ESR, 20 EOD Sqn members with a Republic of Korea soldier and Multiple Launcher Rocket System at the Combined Joint Live Fire Exercise prior to Talisman Sabre.

Members of 20 EOD SQN, joined by international EOD and medical specialists from the United States, Canada, France, and United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Japan deployed on OP Render Safe to East New Britain, Papua New Guinea to conduct a technical reconnaissance of unexploded ordnance. Working in close partnership with the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF), the team conducted extensive search, survey, and reconnaissance across Rabaul, Gazelle and Kokopo the contingent identified over 1600 items in various states. During World War II, East New Britain had a large Japanese presence. With vital assistance from the Royal Papua New Guinean Constabulary, the Provincial Disaster Centre, and local guides, the team traced a network of ammunition storage sites, coastal gun positions, and tunnel systems hidden deep within the jungle. This collaborative effort between 20 EOD SQN, our international partners, and PNG counterparts has laid the foundation for a large-scale disposal mission planned for 2026.



USMC EOD Technician during OP Render Safe MRE.

Deploying to Rabaul, East New Britain, for Operation Render Safe was an unforgettable experience. Alongside EOD teams from our international partners, we trekked through dense jungle to locate WWII-era ordnance sites buried throughout the terrain. One moment that stands out was climbing steep slopes on the eastern side of the district, chasing reports of sea mines and torpedos hidden in caves high on the mountain, or deep re-entrants near the coast. Sweat, mates, and mozzies all in one place. The teamwork across nations and with local help made every task more effective. From locating hidden ordnance to navigating difficult terrain, everyone played a role. It was a rewarding deployment that highlighted the importance of teamwork, adaptability, and the shared goal of making communities safer through skilled, coordinated foundational engineer search and EOD efforts.



OPERATION RENDER SAFE contingent.

20 EOD SQN had an outstanding 2025 supporting activities across the globe with focus on our regional partners. An incredible year working with mates in the SQN, the Corps and around the world.

Operational Support Squadron (OSS)

By **CAPT Lou Loughton**



The 6th Engineer Support Regiment's Operational Support Squadron (OSS) has played a critical role in supporting multiple exercises and operations throughout the year, including Operation Render Safe, Lombrum, the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP), and Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025, among others.

OSS consistently goes above and beyond, whether operating within Australia or overseas. Our personnel have demonstrated adaptability and initiative, even assisting local communities with tasks outside our usual remit—such as repairing a council garbage truck to keep essential services running.

While our primary role is operational support, OSS members are always ready to lend a hand to our engineer brethren, stepping in to assist with sapper tasks whenever needed. This willingness to contribute beyond defined responsibilities reflects the squadron's professionalism, teamwork, and commitment to mission success.

OSS prides itself on being approachable, reliable, and mission-focused—always ready to support, no matter the challenge.



Forward Repair Team (FRT) in action during AACAP 25, delivering critical maintenance and keeping the mission moving in the Torres Strait.



Our FRT working side-by-side with the troops and supporting the community. Skilled, adaptable, and always mission ready.



OSS providing critical maintenance support to the local rubbish truck.



OSS providing community engagement, winning hearts and minds.



LCPL McGrath is supporting the troop to keep the mission moving.

11TH ENGINEER REGIMENT

Forward by LTCOL Peita Fraser

An exceptional year of achievement for the 11th Engineer Regiment, marked by operational success, innovative training, and strong engagement with our communities and partners.

The Regiment demonstrated its hallmark adaptability and professionalism, supporting numerous operational deployments and leading JTU 629.3.1 on OP TC ALFRED ASSIST. Engineer elements rapidly responded to the communities of southeast Queensland and northern New South Wales to provide access and assist in the restoration of essential services. Our Sappers ability to get out the door quickly, alongside Brigade elements and the 6 RAR RBG, is testament to their readiness and interoperability.

Training and Regional Engagement

Our training program remained rigorous and relevant, ensuring our Sappers are prepared for the full spectrum of operations – from foundation warfighting to advanced engineering tasks, we continued to validate our ability to deliver mobility, survivability, and counter-mobility effects in complex environments. Regional engagement activities strengthened ties with local communities and showcased the professionalism of our people. The re-raising of our watermanship capability in preparation for trial on EX AUSTRAL SHIELD 26 as part of the Security and Response Task Group (SECRES TU) was a highlight of the training year, as was the MGB Constructors Course where Sappers returned to bridging after a long hiatus.

Honouring Our Heritage

2025 was a landmark year for the 11th Brigade, marking the 109th anniversary of the formation of the 11th Field Company on 29 April 1916 and commemorating the beginning of active service at the Battle of the Somme and the Hindenburg Line in France.

This year we farewelled long-time Sapper, SGT Nick Garlin as he headed off to retirement after 44 years' service. Good luck Nick.

Looking Ahead

Although our origins stretch back over a century, the essence of our mission remains unchanged. We are Army's problem solvers—relaxed professionals who thrive on cognitively challenging and physically demanding tasks. Our strength lies in our people: adaptive, resilient, and courageous leaders who gain strength from disorder.

As we look to the future, regardless of structural changes or new platforms, our most important task is stewardship of the next generation of Sappers to ensure they develop the 'sappernuity' the Army needs.



It has been my privilege to command the 11th Engineer Regiment, a team of professionals exemplifying Defence values and sharpening warfighting skills to meet tomorrow's challenges. I would like to thank my RSM, WO1 Rob Dolan for his leadership, loyalty and investment in the Unit and welcome the incoming Command Team under the leadership of LTCOL Clinton Shiell and RSM WO1 Kelly Harding.

"Lead with Integrity, Empower People, Win the Fight." 11ER stands prepared for the challenges that lie ahead

Follow the Sapper.

11th Combat Engineer Squadron ***By LT Tom Parker, 27 TP COMD***

2025 has been a year defined by tempo, adaptability, and professionalism for the soldiers of 11 Combat Engineer Squadron. Operating within 11 Engineer Regiment, 11 Brigade and the 2nd (Australia) Division, the Squadron has delivered across a diverse range of tasks, from Brigade-level exercises to domestic operations and capability development, all while maintaining readiness for emerging contingencies and supporting the wider Defence mission – *Defence of Australia*.

Training, Exercises and Domestic Operations

Our Sappers demonstrated their versatility during EX ARRAS SPRINT 25, integrating seamlessly with supported combat teams and refining foundation warfighting skills under realistic and demanding conditions. These activities reinforced our ability to deliver mobility, survivability, and counter-mobility effects, while also strengthening interoperability with other units. All Units across 11 Brigade were represented, and it was great to see how highly our Sappers performed in a combined arms environment. The exercise provided an excellent opportunity to validate SOPs and enhanced our confidence in our ability to operate as part of a combined arms team. Funnily enough, the DS commented that the Sappers consistently had the best Section attack of the whole Exercise!

The Regiment also proudly led Joint Task Unit 629.3.1 during TC ALFRED ASSIST, with a full Troop from 11 CES providing critical support to communities impacted by severe weather events across South East Queensland. Integrating seamlessly with QPS and SES, our Sappers provided an important capability at short notice. This task highlighted the resilience and professionalism of our people, who responded quickly and delivered meaningful outcomes for Australians in need. Their efforts not only supported restoration of essential services, but also strengthened public confidence in Defence's ability to respond rapidly and effectively during times of crisis.

Capability Development and Looking Ahead

2025 marked the reintroduction of key capabilities, including Watermanship and Medium Girder Bridge construction, ensuring the Squadron remains ready to support manoeuvre across complex terrain and contested environments. Concurrently, the Sqn managed a significant volume of Training Support Requests, reinforcing our reputation for responsiveness and technical expertise. These initiatives positioned the Squadron to deliver enhanced effects across southeast Queensland and domestic contingencies in the years ahead.

The Squadron completed 2025 by preparing for the High Risk Weather Season, while also setting conditions for a successful 2026. Priorities included sustaining our expanded capabilities and introducing new ones, including the very small UAS (vsUAS) and support to major activities including EX AUSTRAL SHIELD and EX ARRAS SPRINT 26. Members of the Squadron will also support RCB 150 over the Christmas period. These efforts ensure the Squadron remains agile and relevant in an evolving operational environment, while continuing to invest in our people and their professional mastery to meet future challenges head-on.

Shout outs

I would like to take a brief moment to thank the outgoing command team, LTCOL Peita Fraser and RSM WO1 Rob Dolan for their hard work through the year, along with the Regimental OPSO MAJ Zavia Tiplady, OPSWO WO2 Daniel Trevena and TRGWO 11 CES, WO2 Daniel Jarrett for their dedication and support to excellent training throughout the year. If we did not have their ongoing support and effort, we wouldn't have achieved half the things we did!

I am immensely proud of the way our soldiers met every challenge with competence, commitment, and an unwavering sense of purpose. Their efforts underpin the Squadron's success and reflect the enduring ethos of the Corps. 2026 promises to be another busy and rewarding year—one where we will continue to innovate, adapt, and *Follow the Sapper* in everything we do.



11 CES Members upon completion of MGB construction



11CES Members conducting TCCC serials



11CES Members upon completion of Watermanship training

35th Combat Engineer Squadron

By WO2 Ryan Greene, TRGWO 35 CES

2025 was a remarkable one for the 35th Combat Engineer Squadron (35 CES), distinguished by operational excellence, advanced training, and steadfast support to both the Army and the community. The Squadron honed its combat engineering skills while capitalising on opportunities to strengthen ties with local communities and aid Defence recruitment. Key community engagements included participation in the ADF Careers *Night in the Army Reserves*, fundraising for *Run Army*, and 3 Troop manning a stall at *The Old Station Fly-In and Heritage Show*.

Training That Tests, Transforms, and Unites

- **Exercise BUNA ROAD.** The year commenced with a range weekend in Townsville, testing foundational warfighting skills, fieldcraft, and shooting. The RP3A shoot was a resounding success, complemented by Non-Formal Education (NFE) courses that reinforced combat behaviours and proficiency.
- **Exercise PARAPET ATLAS.** Focused on green role search capabilities, this exercise featured realistic scenarios with adversarial parties employing booby traps and battle noise simulations—keeping the Squadron sharp and vigilant.
- **Exercise STORMY TRENCH.** 3 Troop seized the opportunity to advance dismounted minor tactics and NCO development, including observation posts and section-level infantry skills.
- **Exercise MESSINES RIDGE.** The Squadron's most anticipated event united the dislocated teams at Townsville Field Training Area for demolitions range practices. NCOs and officers requalified in Royal Australian Engineers demolitions. The exercise was honoured by visits from the 11th Brigade and Regimental Command Teams.
- **Exercise CLAUDE MALONE.** Concluding the year, this construction-focused exercise involved relocating a sentry post for Range Control at TFTA. The weekend doubled as the Squadron's Dining Out event, fostering camaraderie and esprit de corps.
- **Exercise SPARROW FORCE.** A section from 35 CES collaborated with 104 Squadron in the annual 11ER section competition, demonstrating flexibility, quick thinking, and resilience.

Why It Matters

After years of supporting bushfire, flood, and pandemic operations, these exercises were more than training—they were a reset, reaffirming the Squadron's ability to deliver when the stakes are high.

From disaster relief to high-tempo exercises, 35 CES continues to set the standard for adaptability and mission success, ensuring operational readiness while fostering a strong sense of camaraderie.

104th Construction Squadron

By MAJ William Bowes, OC 104 CS

104 Construction Squadron – Building Capability, Shaping the Future

A year of transformation was the catchcry for 104 Construction Squadron, marked by the return of the Squadron to its spiritual home in Ipswich and a renewed focus on readiness and field construction. The Squadron continued to deliver military engineering, trade, and plant capabilities in support of 11th Brigade, its future role within the broader Brigade mission being refined in the evolving post–Defence Strategic Review era.

Some key events of 2025 included:

- **Ex CLAUDE MALONE I** which saw the troop command teams recce a potential bridge crossing point at Kokoda Barracks Canungra, while the sections completed plant refresher training and construction tasks.
- The build up to, and then conduct of a live firing range weekend at Purga Range.
- Support to a number of Brigade and Army events.
- **Ex CLAUDE MALONE II** where the troops conducted separate tasks across the Greenbank Training Area. Plant Troop, led by LT McIntyre reconnoitred and then repaired a road including the installation of a improvised water course; and Construction Troop, under the command of LT Choy, completed the erection of a hangar structure to provide future covered storage space, in addition to upgrading a non-equipment bridge. The exercise also saw SHQ stand up to practice command in the field, operated by SQN 2IC CAPT Pratt and SQN OPSO CAPT Cosgrove.
- A number of recruiting events led by Lt Stokes, including an ADF Careers *Night in the Army Reserve* event at Ipswich with over 50 potential recruits in attendance.

2026 will continue our transformative changes, including the resurrection of the Squadron's third Troop and the loss of one of its stalwarts, WO2 Fierinck, who will depart on posting after five years of dedicated service to 104 CS. It will also mark a transition of sub-unit command, with MAJ Will Bowes handing over to MAJ Laurie Green who returns after being a former Plant Troop Commander.

Ubique.



12TH CHIEF ENGINEER WORKS

Forward By LTCOL James Scott, Commanding Officer, and WO1 David Gibbons, Senior Works Manager

This year saw 12 Chief Engineer Works truly represent the CEW motto – *Plan Design Deliver* – by managing a large portfolio of strategically significant projects across all phases, from inception to closure. Notably, with the support of key specialist reservists, our teams successfully reinvigorated the RAE design capability. Their work included certification of structural, pavement, foundations and services designs. This achievement marks an important step forward for the Corps, enabled by strong cooperation between units and close collaboration between full-time and reserve members. I am extremely proud of the teams' highly professional outputs and am optimistic that we will continue see more internal design opportunities in the future. I encourage anyone interested in developing their technical skills in this area to seek involvement in future projects.

On the construction management front, our teams had great success with new contract forms. Initially, I was skeptical that the Early Contractor Involvement Head Contract would deliver on its promise, given the effort invested last year. However, after witnessing its success during delivery of the Western Border Outpost in the Solomon Islands I am now a convert and look forward to RAE becoming polished practitioners in managing this contract form. We also trialled a modified medium works contract on the Solomon Islands Eastern Border Outpost, which used a cost-plus fee structure. While Defence has recently received some scars using this payment approach, the team undertook excellent work in setting up controls and incentives with the contractor, resulting in outstanding on-site performance and value for the Commonwealth by mitigating excessive risk for prospective contractors. This approach will gain relevance as continue to deliver works in remote areas and on projects with uncertain security environments.

I would like to congratulate LTCOL Josh Neldner on his appointment as Commanding Officer and Chief Engineer in 2026. The CEW is a small capability in terms of numbers, but is powerful in its ability to force multiply the ADFs construction effects. I wish him and new look team all the best; may you continue to do great things which will support Australia and our partners for decades to come.

Finally, thank you to the members of 12 CE Works with whom I have had the privilege to serve with over the past two years. Working alongside you in a culture defined by cooperation, professionalism and dedication has been an honour. Together, we have delivered infrastructure that is both meaningful and enduring – projects that make a real difference to the people of our region. As you move forward, may you continue to plan with clarity, design with precision and deliver with confidence.

18 Works Section

By MAJ Xavier Vasta, OC 18 Works Section

18 Works Section had another busy year managing the Development and Delivery of projects in Papua New Guinea. The main projects being delivered in 2025 were Project 230 in Wewak, Project 234 in Port Moresby and Lae, and Project 244 on Manus Island.

Project 230 – Moem Barracks LIA and Essential Services

Project 230 is an initiative to restore and enhance the operational capacity of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) 2nd Royal Pacific Island Regiment (2RPIR), at Moem Barracks, Wewak. The project represents a significant investment in Defence cooperation, delivering a 100-person Live-In Accommodation (LIA) building, completed in December 2023, as well as the remediation of critical services including potable water, sewer, power, and stormwater.

The project team, led by CAPT Max Cubis with WO2 Matthew Pfingst, was strongly supported by 18 Works Section members and an ARES Internal Design Team, whose combined expertise enabled design and delivery of Project 230 in one of the Pacific's most challenging operating environments.

Those challenges were considerable: a hot and corrosive climate, cultural and language barriers, a developing safety culture and construction workforce, and the logistical and procurement constraints associated with Wewak's remoteness. Yet the rewards were equally significant. Project 230 not only delivered essential infrastructure but also advanced the PNG—Australia Defence partnership, supporting local training and employment, and strengthening the resilience of the PNGDF. The result is fit-for-purpose facilities that will support 2RPIR and the wider PNGDF for decades to come.



CAPT Max Cubis and CPL Andrew Ramiro with Mr Eric Carumba during the construction of the 1ML water tank at Moem Barracks

Project 234 - PNG Essential Services

Project 234 - PNG Essential Services Infrastructure Upgrade is delivering critical sustainment for base residents at Goldie River Training Depot (GRTD) and Igam Barracks, including power, water, and sanitation services. According to UNICEF, over 76% of Papua New Guineans lack access to safe toilets, and 66% do not have access to clean drinking water. It is deeply rewarding to provide these essential provisions within our project scope to our PNGDF partners.



*CAPT Luke Connolly and CAPT Nicholas Filla
with local contractors at Goldie River
Training Depot*

Spearheaded by CAPT Nicholas Filla, CAPT Luke Connolly, WO2 Phillip Harris, and SGT Chris Renew, the project is enhancing both the quality of life for PNGDF members and their families, and the operational capability of the bases. At GRTD, the infrastructure upgrade includes a bore field, water treatment plant, storage tanks, and a new reticulation network servicing the entire base - including the school. These systems are supported by an uninterrupted solar power supply, independent of the unreliable mains grid.

There were a number of challenges in delivering this project, including managing a diverse group of stakeholders, upskilling local contractors to meet Australian standards, and contending with relentless wet-season weather which continually impacts civil works. 2025 saw the completion of the potable water delivery at GRTD, the finalisation of the design for the GRTD waste water system, and the resumption of the Igam Barracks sewerage design. Although 2025 was a busy year, significant outcomes were achieved supporting the PNGDF and their families. 2026 is shaping up to be even better!

Project 244 - Lombrum Follow on Works

12 CE Works were requested to return to Lombrum Naval Base on Manus Island to deliver a series of small refurbishment works under Project 244 Lombrum Follow on Works, building on the unit's successful integration into the Lombrum Infrastructure Project in 2024. The key objective of the Project was to enhance the operational capability of the PNGDF through the refurbishment of infrastructure at HMPNGS Tarangau. The Project Management Team, led by CAPT William Guelen and SGT Timothy Kesby worked with two local PNG Contractors to enhance the Guardian Class Patrol Boat Maintenance and Warehouse Facility and to restore the magazine complex. The team also worked with the 6th Engineer Support Regiment Task Element to remediate the wider base area. The Project enhanced the operational capability of the PNGDF, and through working closely with local industry, the team supported the growth of the Manusian construction capability.



*Refurbished Magazine at Lombrum Naval Base on Manus
Island*

196 Works Section

By MAJ Ian Brooks, OC 196 Works Section

196 Works Section remains firmly committed to delivering Defence infrastructure projects across the Solomon Islands and Tonga, with significant progress achieved in 2025. Eastern Border Outpost Works Package One was completed and the main construction works for Western Border Outpost made substantial progress. A new project was initiated in Tonga to deliver a replacement aviation hangar at Taliai Military Camp, which is set up nicely for RAE tradespeople to partner with Engineers from His Majesty's Armed Forces of Tonga in 2026. Throughout these efforts, the team consistently represented the Corps and Australian Defence Force to the highest standard within this strategically important regional environment.

Project 236 - Eastern Border Outpost project

The Eastern Border Outpost (EBO) project consists of the design and construction of a multi-agency facility to enhance the Solomon Islands Government's capability for border security operations, providing a key Point of Entry function within its most eastern region at Lata, Temotu Province.

The EBO consists of four Works Packages that will be progressively delivered as land acquisition is confirmed. Works Package One consists of the refurbishment of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force Station and the National Disaster Management Office, which was successfully completed and handed over in May 2025.



CAPT Ryan Mouws and WO2 Simon Young conduct the hand over of Police Station and National Disaster Management Office with the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and local contractors in Lata

Works Package Two (marine infrastructure) and Works Package Three (land buildings) will provide new Customs and Immigration facilities within Lata.

Works Package Four is a border security detachment based out of the remote Vanikoro Island to enable berthing of the Guardian Class Patrol Boat. Internal design development of the remaining Works Packages is progressing to maintain project momentum ahead of construction in the next few years.

Delivering projects in the Indo-Pacific region is a rewarding role, but it is not without its challenges. The remoteness of the projects and the resource availability within country requires the Project Management Team to be continually adapting to the changing environment.



CAPT Oliver Phillips and CPL Sam Kelly conduct surveying tasks on Vanikoro Island

Project 238 - Western Border Outpost project

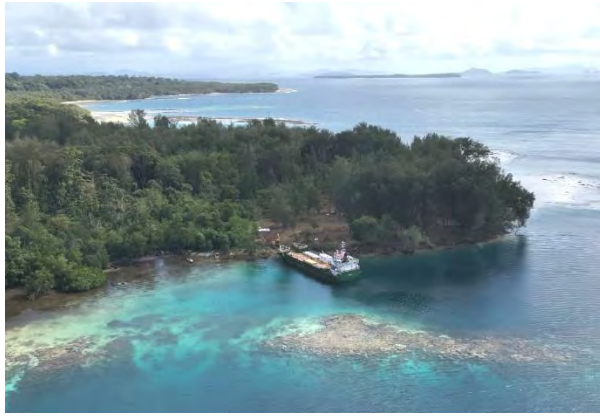
The Western Border Outpost project is a significant initiative delivered in partnership by the governments of Australia and the Solomon Islands. Located at Lofung, in the Shortland Islands, the project supports regional security and enables the Solomon Islands' maritime capability.

The remote setting of Lofung has presented considerable logistical challenges. All machinery, construction materials, and supplies are transported by barge from Honiara or Australia.

Once complete, the Western Border Outpost will provide a permanent facility enabling the Guardian Class Patrol Boat to moor in Western Province; extending the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force's reach to enable safer and more efficient patrols across the country's maritime boundaries.

The Outpost is designed to enhance a multi-agency approach to border operations. In addition to the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, the facilities will accommodate personnel from Customs, Immigration and Biosecurity, promoting coordinated efforts in national border management and regional security.

Beyond its operational purposes, the Western Border Outpost project contributes to broader development goals, providing a foundation for social and economic growth by generating local employment and training opportunities.



Aerial view of site clearance works for the Western Border Outpost at Lofung, Shortland Islands



Construction activities in full swing with the first stage of working accommodation and the GCPB wharf emplacement

Project 246 - Tonga Air Wing Hangar project

The Tonga Air Wing Hangar project will deliver a new aviation hangar at the Taliai Military Camp on the main island of Tongatapu. The project will support His Majesty's Armed Forces (HMAF) Air Wing to provide new working accommodation and a secure hangar for their future airframe. The project will also enhance operational capability in support of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations across the region, providing storage facilities for materials and equipment with access to the Fua'amotu International Airport.

12 Chief Engineer Works has planned the project to offer maximum training benefits to the Corps. Army Reservist specialists have helped reinvigorate the internal design capacity of the Chief Engineer Works for the first time in many years by conducting internal design for the blockwork fuel shed and office space. While challenging, this has proven to be an extremely positive experience, fostering professional growth and reinforcing technical capability within the team.

The hangar structure will be designed and fabricated by an Australian supplier then shipped to Tonga, ready for construction by Royal Australian Engineers alongside the HMAF Engineers in 2026. This will provide valuable training opportunities for our tradespeople and partnership opportunities with our Pacific friends, delivering lasting benefits in capability, interoperability, and regional resilience.



LCPL Tate Bennett collects survey data for the Tonga Air Wing Hangar project

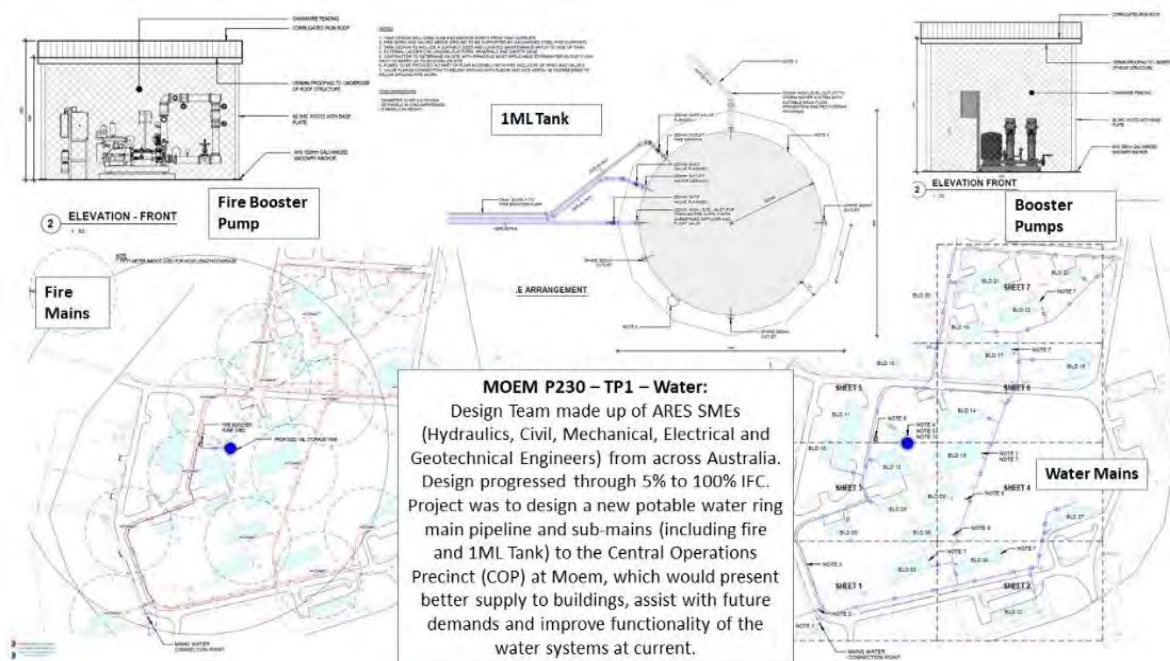


CPL Phil Druvins and Mrs Temmony Hahn from IPINFRA discuss hangar orientation during the initial site reconnaissance

202 Works Section

By MAJ Richard Penman

2025 marked the reintroduction of a dedicated design capability within 12 CE Works. This was a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing in-house design and project delivery. 202 Works Section provided significant design (including civil, structural, geotechnical) and project management support.



In-house design for the P230 Moem Barracks Potable Water Ring Main

Two projects were selected to pilot this renewed in house design focus. These were the P230 Moem Barracks Potable Water Ring Main and the P246 Tonga Air Wing Hangar. The projects were chosen for their scope including level of technical complexity, schedule, and alignment with available personnel capabilities. Due to limited design resources within 202 Works Section, additional support was provided from Army reserve engineers spread across multiple units

including CAPT Matilda Austin (Defence Careers), CAPT Matthew Palmer (Aviation Command), CAPT Robert Cirillo (19 CE Works), and CAPT Scott Robinson (11 ER).

Critical to the design process for the two projects were the geotechnical investigations and survey inputs. SGT Stuart Folkard deployed to Moem Barracks to conduct terrestrial surveys for P230, while CAPT Matthias Falzon led a geotechnical reconnaissance comprising test pitting, DCP testing and soil sampling. The translation of geotechnical data including design inputs for slab, footing, and road design, subgrade preparation requirements, and construction safety controls were crucial to the constructability and implementation of the 12 CE Works in-house design.



Reserve Geotechnical Officer CAPT Falzon (left) with Surveyors CPL Kelly and LCPL Bennett at the location for the Tonga Air Wing Hangar

The P230 Moem Barracks Potable Water Ring Main design will be completed by the end of 2025, with construction forecast to commence in April 2026. Slab construction for the P246 Tonga Air Wing Hangar is forecast to commence in November 2025, with hangar erection planned for mid-2026.

Beyond international projects, 202 Works Section also contributed to several domestic activities. This included design support for 104 Construction Squadron's container dome installation, structural design for a plinth for 7 Brigade's ceremonial cannon relocation at the entrance to Gallipoli Barracks, and town planning assistance for 104 Construction Squadron's relocation to the Ipswich Depot. Town planning support was also provided to 19 CE Works for AACAP 2025.

The section was fortunate to deploy a number of personnel across the South West Pacific in 2025. This included supporting projects such as the P224 Lombrum Naval Base Redevelopment including demolition activities in Papua New Guinea, project reconnaissance for the P246 Tonga Air Wing Hangar, and a scoping study for a disaster relief facility in the Solomon Islands.

A key enabler of the design capability revival was the revitalised 12 CE Works Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program, led by MAJ Don Robertson. The program was tailored to support the two in-house design projects and featured contributions from 12 CE Works personnel and guest lecturers such as from the UNSW ADFA. This initiative has laid the groundwork for continued design capability growth in the unit into 2026.

In addition to engineering and design, 202 Works Section remained active in community engagement and extracurricular activities. The section supported ANZAC Day services, including school and main ceremonies, and participated in the Roma Careers Fair (CAPT Jarvis Black).



CAPT Matt Doolan on Exercise White Mouse

Sailing also featured prominently with CAPT Matt Doolan representing Army at the ADF Sailing Championships as part of the 12 CE Works team. Army won overall with the 12 CE Works unit team receiving the bronze medal. Section members also participated in the unit's adventure training activity, Exercise White Mouse, which included challenging open ocean legs between Bundaberg and Southport.

As 202 Works Section looks ahead to 2026, the foundations laid in 2025, particularly the reintroduction of design capability, sets the section up for another busy year.

Technical Support Section

By CPL Samuel Kelly, Surveyor

The Technical Support Section (12 CE Wks Exercise Green Week champions) has played a pivotal role in the success of various projects this year, utilising their specialised expertise in drafting, surveying, and multimedia. Their collective efforts resulted in tailored solutions and products that have significantly enhanced project outcomes. This displays the unique value of their diverse skill sets and the power of their collaborative approach.



Members of the Technical Support Section together with Reserve Geospatial Officer, CAPT Falzon, winners of the 12 CE Wks Exercise Green Week competition

Survey

Surveyors CPL Sam Kelly and LCPL Tate Bennett played key roles in supporting projects across Tonga and the Solomon Islands throughout 2025. Their survey work laid the groundwork for ongoing and future initiatives, including the planned upgrades to the Tonga Police Academy. CPL Kelly was also instrumental in developing standard operating procedures and

safety protocols to ensure construction projects remain efficient and safe when surveying equipment is being operated in the area. A highlight of the year for SPR Zachariah Hunt included the processing of 3D point cloud data and creation of a detailed site plan of a World War I battleground in Bullecourt France as part of the effort to bring home two fallen Australian soldiers.

In addition to their continued support for 12 CEW projects, the 12 CEW survey team concluded its Army Minors Project trial of Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) technology. The results demonstrated the significant capability enhancements UAS LiDAR provides, offering exciting potential as the capability progresses past the trial phase into 2026.

Multimedia

CPL Luke Warwick delivered a range of high quality graphical and virtual reality products in support of 12 CE Works, while also providing specialist multimedia capability to 6 ESR and 19 CE Works for AACAP 2025 and in PNG.

His outputs included professional construction banners, project placemats, high quality posters, aerial and ground photography, and 360° Virtual Reality walkthroughs of Lombrum Naval Base and Goldie River Training Depot. These multimedia products strengthened industry engagement, enhanced the visibility of projects within the works sections, and supported timely decision making and approvals. CPL Warwick's work continues to deliver tailored communication effects for Army infrastructure projects & future projects across the South West Pacific.

Exercise White Mouse

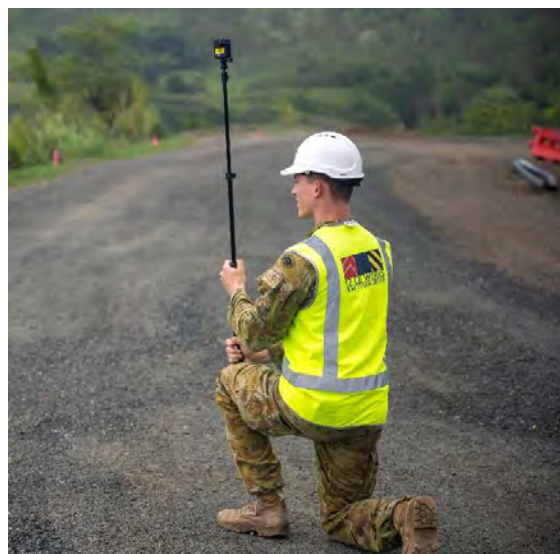
By MAJ Richard Priestly, Executive Officer

Exercise White Mouse is the annual adventure training activity for 12 CE Works. In 2025, the unit integrated with FORCOMD's Exercise North Sail 2025, contributing to two of the sailing passages as part of the broader exercise.

Exercise North Sail involved the Army Sail Training Craft "*Rising Sun*" sailing from Sydney to Townsville and return, divided into 13 legs of approximately one week each. 12 CE Works participated in the Southport to Bundaberg passage on the northbound leg and the Bundaberg to Southport passage on the return journey.



CPL Kelly with the UAS and LiDAR



CPL Luke Warwick taking 360 imagery of Goldie Barracks to be used in a virtual reality product



WO2 Simon Young steers Army's training craft "Rising Sun" during Exercise White Mouse

As a small unit with personnel deployed overseas throughout the year, 12 CE Works scheduled two passages to maximise opportunities for participation. Each leg was further divided into mini-passages, with crew rotations every two to three days. The *Rising Sun* carries a crew of eight, supported by two experienced staff — a Skipper and a Mate. In total, 34 members of the unit took part in Exercise White Mouse 2025. Additionally, two veterans joined the activity through Mates4Mates, along with four members from 1st Military Police Battalion.

During the exercise, each crew received hands-on training in rope and knot tying, man-overboard drills, tacking, hoisting, gybing, pilotage, tide calculations, and close-quarters navigation — an essential skill when sailing through the complex channels of Southern Moreton Bay. Every participant took turns at the helm and in navigation duties, gaining practical seamanship experience.

Conditions varied significantly throughout the passages. At times, rough seas prevented open-water sailing, and the *Rising Sun* followed the sheltered channels under motor power. Other crews faced 2–3 metre swells, with some members battling seasickness, while others enjoyed ideal conditions that allowed for spinnaker runs under full sail. Highlights included dolphin sightings, swims in the cool coastal waters, and the simple pleasure of stepping onto solid ground after days at sea.



A beautiful sunset aboard the Rising Sun

Ultimately, most members of 12 CE Works got a valuable introduction to sailing. While not everyone enjoyed the rolling seas, all participants gained insight into the littoral environment — a key operational domain the Army continues to develop capability in. Understanding tides, wind and weather effects, and navigation on a moving platform provided a new and challenging perspective for soldiers more accustomed to land-based operations.

As with any good adventure, there were a few humorous stories and colourful characters — though, as the saying goes, what happens on the boat, stays on the boat.



Members of 12 CE Wks, 1st Military Police Battalion and veterans from Mates4Mates onboard the “Rising Sun” at Bribie Island

13TH ENGINEER REGIMENT

Forward By LTCOL Geoffrey Small, Commanding Officer, and WO1 Ian Hallt, Regimental Sergeant Major

RHQ

2025 was a year of realignment and growth for 13 Engineer Regiment (13 ER). Building on the foundations laid in previous years, the Regiment shifted its focus to align with key operational tasks under the National Defence Strategy and the re-role of the 2nd (AS) Division. Our thematic priorities are now centred on support to the Security and Response Task Unit (SECRES) and Emergency Support Force (ESF), supported by innovation and growing the regiment. These changes ensure that 13 ER will remain agile and relevant as part of the Integrated Force.

13 ER's mission is clear: to provide engineer and innovation effects to achieve 13 Brigade's theatre requirements. This mission is simple, understood across the Regiment, and firmly nested within the Brigade Commander's intent. It reflects our commitment to operational readiness and our role in enabling theatre requirements.

Throughout 2025 we fostered a culture of growth and development, investing in our people through Professional Military Education and targeted professional development opportunities. Recruiting remains a priority, and we engaged strategically with organisations to attract new talent and build capacity for the future.

13 ER continues to lead 13 Brigade's innovation efforts through the Innovation and Experimentation Group (IXG), driving new ways to deliver effective and efficient engineer effects. This work ensures we remain at the forefront of capability development and integration.

13 Field Squadron

By CAPT Jason Greenwell, Acting Officer Commanding 13 Field Squadron



A Year of Excellence and Endurance for 13 Field Squadron

2025 was a year defined by purpose, precision, and progress for 13 Field Squadron. Through a series of demanding exercises and operational commitments, the Squadron demonstrated resolve and mastery of its craft - reinforcing its reputation of delivering quality engineer effects in support of the integrated force. 13 Field Squadron as part of 13 Engineer Regiment remains responsible for the Force Generation in support of Security Response Task Units (SECRES) for Theatre Mission One. This clarity of role has created a significant boost to the feeling of purpose amongst our sappers, and seen a corresponding increase in both attendance to activities and efforts when on the job.

Training for 2025 SECRES requirements commenced in March with Exercise TARAKAN STAND, a Combat Engineer Search training activity that sharpened the Squadron's ability to detect and neutralise explosive threats. This exercise provided opportunity for junior officers and SNCOs to demonstrate expertise garnered on the recent Search Advisor Course conducted through SME. The weekend proved a great return to form for the Regiment – readying it for the conduct of future Combined Arms training Activities. In April, the Squadron advanced its operational versatility during Exercise TARAKAN STABLE, which encompassed complex building search operations and a combined arms activity alongside the 16th Battalion, Royal Western Australia Regiment (16 RWAR). This integration underscored the indispensable role of engineers in shaping the

battlespace and highlighted the Squadron's capacity to deliver decisive effects in concert with infantry partners.

The tempo intensified in May, as 13 Field Squadron provided Combat Engineer support to 16 RWAR in the protection of vital assets at the Henderson Ship Building Precinct. 13 FD SQN's support to the activity reinforced the principle that engineers are the enablers of operational success. The activity saw our Sappers emplace tactical obstacles shaping threat force movement in the urban-industrial battlespace, and denying key ingress and egress routes. The Squadron additionally conducted high-risk search across the area to enable essential industrial/maritime works to continue within the exercise context. Operating alongside Navy, the Australian Public Service, Army, and civilian personnel outlined both the complexity of such tasks, and the Army's responsibility in defending nationally critical infrastructure.



Members of 13 Field Squadron constructing HESCO barriers as part of the wider-area defence plan in support of 16 RWAR at the Henderson Shipbuilding Precinct.

In June, a troop-sized element deployed as part of 13 Brigade's, Joint Task Unit 629.6.1 to Geraldton for Exercise ARRAS SPRINT, supporting the protection of the Australian Defence Satellite Communications Station (ADSCS) and the wider-City. Operating in austere conditions, the Squadron demonstrated its ability to force project regionally, and sustain engineer effects across vast distances - a capability vital to national security and strategic resilience.

August brought a return to the fundamentals with a dedicated demolitions weekend, where theory met practice in a controlled yet demanding environment. This back-to-basics approach ensured every member achieved a high level of competence in explosive techniques, reaffirming the Squadron's readiness to deliver mobility and counter-mobility effects whenever and wherever required.

Throughout 2025, these activities not only honed technical proficiency but also cultivated leadership, resilience, and esprit de corps across all ranks. From junior soldiers mastering essential skills to leaders refining tactical decision-making, the Squadron has embraced every challenge as an opportunity for growth.

As our Officer Commanding proudly states:

“This year was about sharpening our core skills and strengthening our ability to work as one team in a combined arms environment”.

13 Field Squadron stands ready and prepared to deliver mobility, counter-mobility, and survivability effects in support of the integrated force. Our achievements this year reflect not just training completed, but a continued legacy of excellence built through dedication, discipline, and purpose.

22 Squadron

By Major, Paul Sanders, Officer Commanding 22 Squadron

22 SQN had an exciting year transitioning from a STEM focus to a dedicated Emergency Support Force with a secondary effort of support to the Security Response Task Unit. The IXG component relocated to RHQ and we picked up a CE TP, while retaining our works section of civil engineers. This restructure resulted in a lean agile mission focused organisation with clarity of purpose.

The year saw a heavy focus on upskilling the work force with multiple vehicle and plant courses. The Sqn also gained their own dedicated facility which enabled the caching of all ESF stores in the one compound with space to grow. This contributed to SQN identity. The Sqn provided members to AACAP, Arras Sprint and supported multiple community facing events such as Legacy, Anzac Day, Soldier on and many more.

The Kingston Barracks redevelopment showcased the integration of the works, trade, CE TP and HQ to deliver significant benefit to the community. Last renovated by Royal Australian Engineers during World War II, this project enabled 22 SQN to leave its mark on history and generate positive media attention.



Kingston Barracks, Rottneest Island post refurbishment by members of 13 ER

The beating heart of the SQN is its people with the Ryan club as its gathering point. The SQN has welcomed five new members this year with SGT Le Bron, CPL's Ross, Da Souza, SPR's Hall and Ansell all contributing to our long term recruiting plan.

Innovation and Experimentation Group (IXG) - Innovation where it matters, understanding where it counts.

By Captain Aaron Ivers, Officer in Charge IXG

2025 was a year of bold ideas and hands-on experimentation for our Innovation Cell. From littoral manoeuvre to robotics and AI, the team worked tirelessly to deliver capabilities that will keep soldiers safer and more effective in the fight. Here's how it unfolded.

Operating in northern littoral environments presents unique challenges. Traditional propeller systems restrict manoeuvre in shallow waters and create acoustic signatures that compromise ISR operations. To address this, the team trialled jet propulsion and electric outboards, aiming to improve stealth and agility. These trials are setting the stage for quieter, more versatile watercraft that can operate where conventional small boats cannot.



IXG members at Garden Island for the LiDAR project Test and Evaluation serial

Speed and accuracy in engineer reconnaissance can make or break a mission. The LiDAR project integrates handheld sensors with drones to deliver precise 3D mapping, even in GPS-denied environments. This capability reduces risk to personnel and accelerates planning. Initial trials were highly successful, and the project is on track to close by EOFY 2026.



IXG members at Garden Island for the LiDAR project Test and Evaluation serial

Safety remains paramount, and the Light Engineer Robot (LER) is a modular robotic platform designed to tackle hazardous tasks such as search operations and CBRN detection. Built from commercial off-the-shelf components, this prototype aims to keep soldiers out of harm's way while enhancing operational efficiency.

Innovation thrives on collaboration, and this year's Exercise Western Dawn brought Defence, academia, and industry together in an innovation sprint with Curtin University. The focus was persistent situational awareness and emerging technologies, with concepts moving rapidly from whiteboards to working prototypes.

Unexploded ordnance poses a persistent threat, and the Enhanced AI Area Search for UXOs project combines artificial intelligence with unmanned aerial systems to accelerate detection and

reduce risk to personnel. This initiative is already delivering promising results thanks to strong partnerships with Curtin University.

Looking ahead, 2026 promises even more innovative work. The Biological and Chemical Air Sampling System (BCASS) will deliver a portable device for real-time hazard monitoring and spatial threat mapping. Phantom Link seeks to develop secure, RF-free communications using encrypted QR codes transmitted via infrared light, ideal for EMCON Black environments. Finally, GUS2 Recon, an amphibious 4x4 unmanned ground vehicle, will undergo limited trials during Exercise Austrashield 26 to validate autonomy, amphibious performance, and integration with ATAK.

Innovation isn't just about technology it's about protecting our people and staying ahead of the threat. 2025 has set a strong foundation, and 2026 will take us even further.

19TH CHIEF ENGINEER WORKS

Forward by LTCOL Andrew Hansell

19 Chief Engineer Works (19 CE Works) is an active and highly capable unit comprising 45 SERCAT 7, supported by an additional 20 SERCAT 3/5 members. Our enduring role remains an active one as we deliver facilities and infrastructure projects in support of Defence and Government, as well as providing standalone technical engineering advice and capabilities. Our continuing contributions to international projects in Fiji, Vanuatu, and other locations within the near region, as well as the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP), exemplify our strategic relevance and operational utility.

In recent years, 19 CE Works has focused on re-invigorating its internal design capabilities, something that has continued this year with the execution of a two-way industry secondment program as well as specific Continuous Professional Development training activities. However, training through doing remains a central pillar of 19 CE Works' employment as we seek to prepare our personnel concurrent to providing strategic effects.

Having returned to 19 CE Works in 2025, I am very fortunate to be part of this exceptional Unit for a third time. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to LTCOL Michael Woods for his stewardship and leadership as the previous CO, which left the unit well-positioned for continued success in 2025. I also acknowledge the tireless efforts and dedication of key HQ staff moving on at the end of the year; Senior Works Manager WO1 Kelvin Baulch, Executive Officer MAJ Steve Loftus, and Operations Warrant Officer WO2 Tim Young – thank you gents for your valuable contributions to the Unit.

11 Works Section – AACAP

MAJ Caitlin McDermid

As the lead for the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Programme (AACAP), 11 Works Section continued to deliver the complex, yet rewarding suite of projects across the country. In December 2024, the team bid farewell to MAJ Tim Doust as the Senior Project Engineer, who was recognised in the 2025 King's Birthday honours for his outstanding efforts at the helm, congratulations again Tim.

In farewelling the previous Senior Project Engineer, the command team saw MAJ Caitlin McDermid promoted into the role following her time as the Project Engineer for the Development of AACAP 2025. WO1 Liam Wardle remained the Works Manager; however, the Works Sections saw a considerable turnover of staff.

Despite the challenges that accompany a change of command, leadership and staffing, 11 Works Section wasted no time in hitting their straps across four projects in four States and Territories, working alongside Army's partner organisation (National Indigenous Australians Agency) to plan, design and deliver meaningful projects with real-world and permanent training outcomes for the beneficiaries.

AACAP 2022/3 – Gapuwiyak and Baniyala, NT

This project has a well-documented history, which is complex and spans many years. 2025 did not break the trend! An early wet in late 2024 extended right through to beyond ANZAC Day in East Arnhem Land, which hampered the contractor's efforts to complete in-ground works. This caused some delays to completion, which was ultimately achieved in June, much to the joy of all who took part in the project.

An official opening ceremony for the Arts Centre was conducted by the people of Gapuwiyak, attended by Senator Malarndirri McCarthy (Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians), Minister Jinson Charls (multiple NT portfolios including Minister for Arts) and BRIG Rebecca Talbot, Commander 17 Sustainment Bde. The ceremony was an excellent display of talent and appreciation by the community. The project now enters a 12-month Defects Liability Period managed by CAPT Marika Boelen, our welcome SERCAT 6 addition to the team this year.

AACAP 2024 – Amata, SA

Delivered on time and under budget in 2024, Amata is nearing the end of its project lifecycle with the Defects Liability Period expiring in November 2025. CAPT Marika Boelen took the role of Project Engineer for this project, and we bid farewell to WO2 Benjamin Michalk following 18 months of dedication to the project bound for duty on Operations, go well Chalky!

In what was a good reminder for project teams at 19 CE Works and 6 ESR that projects aren't finished at completion, there were a number of defects in the Flood Management System (FMS) following periods of heavy rainfall. Defects are a natural part of project work, and not considered a failure at all, conversely, the system worked as designed with no reported damage to any community infrastructure during the extreme weather event!

A team from 6 ESR's, 17 Construction Squadron accompanied by WO1 Liam Wardle travelled to Amata to rectify some washouts within the FMS, as well as some minor work on the Service Provider Accommodation (SPA) which has been booked out for 80% of the time since it's opening in January, a remarkable and valuable outcome for the community.

AACAP 2025 – Torres Strait, QLD

It was foretold that AACAP 2025 would be a logistical challenge to rival any project ever delivered within the programme. These predictions came to fruition, and some!

Teams from 6 ESR's, 21 Construction Squadron commenced the delivery year very early, with A2 elements sent to Cairns in March to support the first waves of trucks that would ultimately supply three civilian barges to the islands. Force Insertion Teams arrived on Erub, Poruma and Warraber from May, with construction commencing soon thereafter.

CAPT Nathan Duncan, in his first appointment as a Project Engineer, headed up the team from 11 Works Section. Supported by rotations from WO1 Liam Wardle, WO2 Christopher Fallon, WO2 Darren King, WO2 Benjamin Michalk, WO2 Alan Rowell, CPL Harley Bolis, as well as Multimedia support and surveying support from CPL Shannon Gordon and LCPL John Entwistle; a true team effort to see the delivery of works across all three islands.

The end of the year focused on execution of the second most challenging phase – returning home!

AACAP 2026 – Yungngora, WA

For those who believe a return to a ‘traditional’ mainland AACAP will be easy, think again! AACAP 2026 scope has firmed, with the delivery of an airfield upgrade requiring some 80,000 cubic meters of imported material, and construction of a new shop covering 750 square meters. A large and relevant scope for Army in 2026.

In 2025 the team was led by CAPT Believe ‘Muks’ Mukungunugwa, a Project Engineer new to the team and the Australian Army, joining us from the British Army’s Royal Engineers in late 2024. WO2 Christopher Fallon and WO2 Darren King supported CAPT Mukungunugwa through the all-important development phase of the project. The team worked alongside the community, WA Government and a Design Services Consultant to ensure high quality plans were produced for 6 ESR’s, 17 Construction Squadron before the end of 2025.

Just three hours’ drive from Broome, with a complex and large scope, tradespeople across Army will be climbing over each other to take part in what will surely be an AACAP for the ages.



Image 1 – After a long wait, the Gapuwiyak community finally get to celebrate the opening of the Arts Centre.



Image 2 – CPL Volta, SPR Bell and SPR Carbone battle the flies whilst conducting defects rectification works on the Flood Management System in Amata.



Image 3 – The finished Kup Murri Cooking Area painted in “happy yellow” on Warraber, Torres Strait.



Image 4 - CAPT Believe Mukungunugwa ‘Muks’, WO1 Liam Wardle and WO2 Benjamin Michalk talk to stakeholders in Yungngora.

108 Works Section – Technical Effects

MAJ Cameron Laing

2025 brought a variety of tasks and changes to 108 Works Section, which consolidated the Unit’s Technical Support Section (Survey and Drafting capability) within its team.

Scoping study in the Solomon Islands

The year commenced with a rush out the door to the Solomon Islands to conduct a scoping study reconnaissance in support of IP INFRA for a potential new project. The Section sent across the SPE, WO1 Craig Fairweather, CAPT Charlie Cocks, SGT Phil Bosker, LCPL Glenwyn Go, and SPRs Joe Trevillion and Grant Rawson. The scoping study analysed the vision for the growth of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF), and developed infrastructure concepts to enable their future recruit training model alongside the Australian Federal Police.

Supporting the CERs

Following the team's work in the Solomon Islands, the Works Section sent a small detachment to support 3 CER on Exercise PUK PUK 25 in Lae, PNG. The detachment comprised WO1 Fairweather, LCPL Go, and SPR Trevillion, and contributed great value to the project and the exercise. Later in the year, the team headed out again in support of 1 CER's Ex Hari'i Hamutuk in Timor Leste. Once again, WO1 Fairweather had the opportunity to provide mentoring and guidance on construction activities, and was joined by CPL Harley Bolis, LCPL Allan Channels and SPR Grant Rawson. Their involvement demonstrated engineering at echelon through the provision of project mentoring and technical reach back.

Force Protection Engineering

Back in Australia, the Weapons Effects and Force Protection Engineering Course (WEFPEC) commenced, which saw both participation and instructor support from the Works Section. As the Army's lead for the provision of Force Protection Engineering (FPE) effects, 19 CE Wks supports the course alongside RAAF subject matter experts to develop new RAAF Airfield Engineers and RAE FPE practitioners. The course, typically a highlight in a junior officer's development, exercises (at times) dormant technical abilities and develops relevant practical engineering skills alongside a deep dive into risk assessment and communication. 2025 students had the opportunity to apply these skills immediately on returning to the Unit post-course.

Following WEFPEC, 108 Works Section commenced real FPE planning to support the National Defence Strategy across Australia's Northern Bases through the design development of shelters to protect against indirect fire. The task was a great opportunity to further develop the teams applied FPE skills, and highlighted the importance of this capability for the broader Defence enterprise.

Survey and Drafting

In the Technical Support cell, the team supported all of the Unit's tasks from AACAP, to the South-West Pacific, to supporting wider Army with tasks such as the redevelopment of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery Memorial at Mount Pleasant, Canberra. The Technical Support cell also built on their capabilities, further expanding their drone capabilities, integration of blast modelling software within the Unit, and further development of the Engineer Works Environment (EWE) systems.

This year also saw the deployment of CAPT Tom Darzins and CPL Paden Dryden to the Middle East, representing the unit and providing valuable engineering capability to our efforts over there. Overall 2025 was an excellent opportunity for 108 Works Section to apply its broad array of skills across the widest range of tasks and functions that the Unit provides to RAE, Army, JOC and the broader Defence Enterprise.



Image 5 – WEFPEC Course Photo, DEMS Range Day.



Image 6 – LCPL Glenwyn Go maintaining his drone flying capabilities.



Image 7 – SPR John Entwistle’s first isolated tasking, providing survey support to 6 ESR AACAP 25 delivery – great job John!



Image 8 – 19 CE Works members supporting the Sydney Run Army Event; CPL Subramanian, CAPT Chilvers, WO2 King, PTE Drinkwater, LCPL Go, LCPL Dryden, CPL MacDonald and SPR Entwistle.



Image 9 – CPL Stewart Cox conducting a survey of the Royal Australian Artillery National Memorial upgrade project.

198 Works Section – Indo-Pacific

MAJ Amrinder Ghuman

Operating at the intersection of strategy and operations, 198 Works Section was trusted with some of Defence's most challenging works. The year's achievements were significant in scale as well as spirit. In total, 198 Works Section oversaw a program valued at \$215 million, with 227 days deployed across the Indo-Pacific and Australia.

A secure build in the region

The Section's, and Unit's, main effort for 2025 was the delivery of a sensitive project overseas. Managed by CAPT Jake Finnane, CAPT Brittany Harris and WO2 Euclid Rodriguez, the work demanded innovative engineering solutions as well as cross-agency coordination in a highly complex activity. Overall it was a very challenging but rewarding project to be involved with, with an additional challenge for CAPT Harris, who joined us from industry through the Defence Industry Partnership at the start of the year on an initial 12-month SERVOP C contract.

Closing works in the Pacific.

198 Works Section also closed the loop on long-running tasks in Vanuatu and Fiji. Both tasks had their genesis the last time the CO was at the unit in 2018. The Cook and Tiroas Barracks Redevelopment project in Vanuatu was completed at the end of 2025, whilst the Maritime Essential Services Centre in Fiji completed the Delivery phase in March 2025. CAPT Aman Shriyan, LT Jake Barry, WO2 Namron King, and WO2 Joel McEwan finalised handovers, certifications, and defect closures on these major facilities, ensuring enduring value for both Defence and regional partners. The process was as much about relationships as it was about concrete and steel. Coordinating with local authorities, contractors, and communities, the team demonstrated how engineering can reinforce trust and partnership.

"The statements and quality assurance practices have been great to witness—its evidence of knowledge sharing and capacity building." – WO1 Moore

Team of teams.

The Section's strength is derived from its people. The team—comprising permanent and reserve members—includes engineers, project managers, works supervisors and specialists who combine their civilian and military expertise into a formidable capability. This year, key contributions from the Unit's reserve workforce came from CAPT Brett Adams, CAPT Robert Cirillo, LT Sudeep Desaraju, and WO2 Scott White.

"The camaraderie and teamwork is the reason I am extending my contract with Army." – CAPT Harris, 2024 Defence Industry Partnership participant.

Looking ahead.

As the Unit looks forward, so too does 198 Works Section. The team is adapting projects in line with Defence's commitments to resilience and minimum viable capability, ensuring infrastructure supports readiness from day one.

John Holland Secondment

CAPT James Boidin

A posting to 19 CEW offers individuals valuable opportunities to gain construction experience through industry placements. This provides a dynamic environment to develop project management skills while contributing to the successful delivery of complex projects under the guidance of skilled professionals.

Prior to posting into the Unit as a Project Engineer in 2026, I had the opportunity to participate in the John Holland Secondment, a unique 12 month industry placement with a Tier 1 construction company. This program is designed to enhance project management skills on large-scale projects and provide first principles engineering experience, enriching the corporate knowledge of the 19 CE Works. The secondment aims to provide both on-site project management experience and technical design exposure.

In the first six months of my secondment, I was allocated to the Advanced Water Recycling Centre (AWRC) construction site in Kemps Creek, NSW, as a Project Engineer. My responsibilities included managing major civil scopes, such as process pipelines within the plant, and incoming rising mains. I also developed temporary works designs, staging plans, cost forecasts, procurement strategies, and managed quality on site. Overall, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to build strong foundations in critical project management areas.

In the latter half of my secondment, I joined John Holland's "Lift and Shift" team. This team specialises in solving technical design challenges for heavy crane lifts and demolition tasks across various construction sites. It's actually not too dissimilar to military planning in many ways, including the detailed planning that goes into river crossings. Collaborating with the temporary works and geotechnical teams, I gained valuable insights into construction engineering and "big" (physically) problem solving. My work included feasibility assessments for machinery use, technical designs, and pre-contract planning.

During this part of the secondment, I managed night shift operations at a water treatment facility and executed a critical lift design for upgrade works. I also contributed to planning the use of heavy lifting equipment, such as the Manitowoc MLC 650T crane, for a major bridge project. My responsibilities extended to calculating loadings, bearing capacities, and other technical designs for projects across NSW. These experiences honed my construction management skills and deepened my technical expertise, preparing me for future success at the unit in 2026.

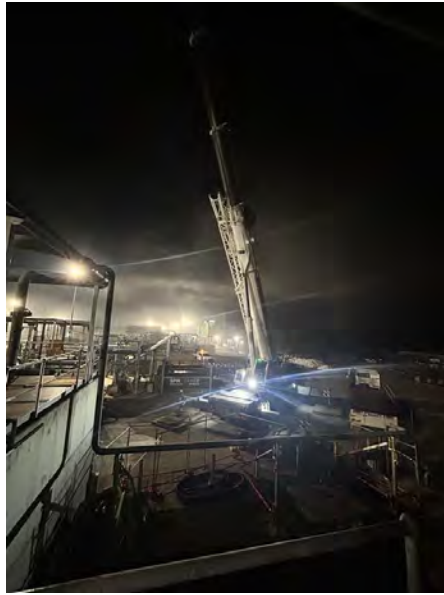


Image 10 – Water Treatment Facility night operations.



Image 11 – Upper South Creek, Advanced Water Recycling Centre 19 CE Works Site Visit.



Image 12 – CAPT James Boidin on site at the M1.

22ND ENGINEER REGIMENT

***Forward By LTCOL Russell Collins, Commanding Officer, and WO1 Clint Matheson ,
Regimental Sergeant Major***

The year 2025 presented significant challenges and opportunities for the members of the 22nd Engineer Regiment, marked by numerous combined arms activities and internally conducted courses. The year commenced with several personnel returning from Rifle Company Butterworth, others deploying on Transit Security Element, and CAPT Michael Plant participating in an Army History Unit staff ride to Borneo.

In April, the Regiment contributed to the JTG 629.2 exercise EX ARRAS FLASH in Sale, Victoria. Sappers from 22 ER executed a range of tasks including cordon and search operations, dismounted and mounted patrols, vehicle checkpoints (VCP), vital asset protection, and urban assaults. The team also collaborated with local law enforcement in the clearance of unoccupied buildings.

In June, the Operations Cell delivered a DMEO course at Dutson Bombing Range, RAAF Sale, for soldiers from 8/7 RVR, 5/6 RVR, 12/40 RTR and 4/19 PWLH. This qualified members throughout the 4th Brigade so they can safely dispose of Misfires and UXO from their HE weapons.

July saw members from 8 and 10 Combat Engineer Squadrons deploy on EX TALISMAN SABRE in Darwin. Activities included snap VCPs, area searches, vital asset protection and hardening, breaching operations, post-blast incident drills, and camp construction. The exercise culminated at the newly commissioned Enhanced Urban Operations Training Facility (EUOTF).

Also in July, the Regiment Training Troop conducted a five-day Field Craft and Battle Craft course at Puckapunyal Military Area (PMA) for ab initio trainees from 22ER, 8 OSU, 2/10 Battery, and 108 Signal SQN. The course entailed big challenges for the trainees with a number of them have never having slept in a field environment, 4 days of intense rain made it interesting. This course successfully qualified 24 trainees throughout the 2nd Australian Division.

In August, 22ER hosted its annual Section Competition, featuring multiple sections competing in a series of demanding activities. These included a BFA race, a falling plate shoot on the PMA classification range, tactical navigation legs, search lanes utilising the FLAIM system, and demolitions fault-finding tasks. After a closely contested event, 6 Section, 2 Troop, 8 CE SQN, led by CPL Benjamin McFadyen, emerged as the winners.

October involved participation in the Brigade-level exercise EX ARRAS WALKS, which spanned locations across Victoria, including PMA and the Greater Bendigo Shire. 8 and 10 CE Squadrons conducted search operations and provided engineering advice to SRTU 8/7 RVR. 105 Construction Squadron delivered construction capability and field engineering support to the SRTU HQ. This exercise offered an excellent opportunity to collaborate with 4th Brigade counterparts and deliver mobility, survivability, and specialist engineering effects to the JTG.

As the year drew to a close, December was marked by preparations for the stand-down period, the Commanding Officer's Handover-Takeover parade and bringing ESF 22 ER online. After two years of leadership, LTCOL Russell Collins handed over command of the Regiment to LTCOL Jason Eltham during a formal parade at Oakleigh Barracks.

The Regiment now looks forward to working under the leadership of LTCOL Eltham in 2026 and embracing the challenges that lie ahead.

1. Members of Training Troop at the conclusion of their PACT courses



2. Sappers from 22ER conducting LUEB drills at PMA



3. Sappers from 22ER prepping charges to conduct demolition range practices



SPECIAL OPERATIONS ENGINEER REGIMENT

Forward By Commanding Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major

The men and women of the Special Operations Engineer Regiment (SOER) continued to achieve significant milestones through 2025. The unit enhanced the development and employment of Technical Effects (TE) to counter complex and emerging chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) threats on behalf of SOCOMD and the ADF. This saw the continuation of training and operational engagements with our allies and partners of choice in the Indo-Pacific, North America, Middle East and Europe. SOER contributed to key ADF exercises and contingency response validation activities, reaching significant milestones of development.



The strategic environment continues to be characterised by the increased proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), and advanced conventional weapons, the persistent threat of violent extremism and terrorism and other crisis response and support tasks. SOER continues to build and maintain readiness for a range of contingencies with a focus on long duration unconventional operations outside Australia to enable the maintenance of protracted conflict if required.

This year has been busy with an unprecedented level of operations, activities and investments, individual and collective training activities, that have focussed on setting and preparing our operational environment, SOCOMD integration and partner force interoperability. It was also a watershed year for several personnel and workforce associated initiatives. These included the implementation of the Special Forces 'Integrator' selection course and the commencement of work to establish an Integrator Employment Category, leading to generational changes to the way that SOER personnel from all services (Army, Navy, and Air Force) trades and backgrounds are recruited, screened, selected, trained, employed, career managed and remunerated.

What's next for SOER and Special Forces Engineers?

The next few years will see significant levels of investment and continuous support in technical effects to enable continued support to SOCOMD units, which will most importantly include investment in the ongoing personnel and workforce initiatives that commenced this year.

Interested in a career at SOER?

We solve complex problems and provide enhanced technical effects through multi-disciplinary teaming. Service within SOER is now possible as either a Special Forces Engineer, Signaller or Medic. The ADF School of Special Operations (ADFSSO) screens candidates for service within SOCOMD and assess candidates' suitability for service in SOER and SOCOMD. The Special Operations Information Tour is the best forum to gain information regarding service in SOER from current serving Soldiers and Officers.

Further information on the application process, screening and key contacts is on the ADFSSO Sharepoint page accessible through the Defence Protected Network.

3 FIELD SQUADRON

By **SGT MJ Sweeney, Squadron Sergeant Major**

The year 2025 proved to be a dynamic and rewarding period for the members of 3 Field Squadron, with diverse training activities, exercises and community engagement. From foundational soldiering skills to complex engineering tasks, the Squadron consistently demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and professionalism throughout the year.



SPR Bui, CPL Carpenter and SPR Farrelly prepare to lay an improvised Bangalore during a breaching exercise

The year commenced with a series of battalion-led training weekends designed to strengthen core capabilities. Training Weekend 1 focused on section, troop, and company-level tactics, reinforcing fundamental skills in austere conditions. Training Weekend 2 concentrated on demolitions, ensuring members maintained proficiency in one of the Squadron's critical skill sets. Training Weekend 3 was dedicated to search operations—a key capability for 3 Field Squadron and an area earmarked for further development in future activities. Training Weekend 4 saw the Squadron deploy from Warradale Barracks to Murray Bridge, where members occupied a Forward Operating Base (FOB) and undertook a series of demanding tasks, including excavation of a

platoon-sized trench system, rejuvenation of the MUTA Enemy Village and rehearsals of engineer-specific tasks and skills.

The highlight of the year was the battalion-level exercise Rhino Run 2025, which showcased the Squadron's versatility. Key achievements included the qualification of five backhoe operators, provision of two Combat Engineer sections to Security and Response Task Unit (SRTU), remediation of six village huts, clean-up of the Dems Range and development of a trench network. Special recognition was extended to SPR Easson, LCPL Lowe, and CPL Carpenter for their outstanding efforts, as well as SGT de la Rue and WO2 Nicholls for their meticulous planning and leadership throughout the activity.



SPR Brian Bui assaulting a trench during EX RHINO RUN 2025

Throughout 2025, 3 Field Squadron addressed key trainee training shortfalls by conducting in-house courses, including Navigation, Field and Battle-craft, F89, advanced first aid and tactical combat casualty care (AFA/TCCC) and backhoe. With external training the focus has been on driver qualifications with B Vehicle Docs and G-Wagon, and promotional courses, with a strong focus on JNCO qualifications. The Squadron now has a strong core of senior Sappers and Lance Corporal fully qualified for Corporal.



SPR Smith and Construction Troop members SPR Ebert and CPL Malic, clad a hut on EX RHINO RUN 2025

Beyond training, 3 Field Squadron, as a part of 10/27 RSAR, proudly supported the community through the short notice Yunta DACC tasks in October, assisting in the search for a missing child. This priority task reflected the Squadron's enduring commitment to providing engineering support to local communities when required.

Ceremonial duties also featured prominently during the year. The Squadron played a significant role in ANZAC Day commemorations, contributing to catafalque parties, wreath laying, and speeches at Mt Compass, Aldinga, and Marion. On 14 June 2025, the Squadron hosted a Memorial Service

and Family Day at the Stan Watson Building, Warradale Barracks. The event included a formal service, a Squadron update, and a barbeque lunch accompanied by activities for all ages, Attendance included current and ex-serving Sappers, family, and friends—reinforcing the strong sense of community within 3 Field Squadron.

In September, the Squadron experienced the loss of serving member CPL Steve Williams—a colleague, and an easy-going mate whose dedication to the Unit for over 30 years was second to none. As the Squadron's Q Store Clerk, he played a pivotal role in keeping the Squadron functioning day-to-day. His professionalism, reliability, and unwavering support to all ranks is sorely missed. The Squadron, with Battalion support, rallied to provide support to his family and to each other during this difficult time.

International engagement was also a highlight, with participation in SUMAN Warrior, a two-week, five-nation planning exercise hosted by New Zealand. The Australian contingent included members from 9 Brigade, three of whom represented 3 Field Squadron as part of the engineer component. The exercise commenced with cultural exchange activities before progressing to planning discussions, capability integration, and a staff planning and simulation. SUMAN Warrior provided an invaluable opportunity to combine cultural exchange with multinational planning and interoperability.

The year included with two significant social events with the RASigs. Officers and SNCOs attended the Waterloo Dinner, commemorating 100 years since the Signallers separated from the Engineers, while the Soldiers' Dinner, held in conjunction with 144 Signal Squadron at the Latvian RSL, celebrated shared history and camaraderie in a memorable evening.

3 Field Squadron now looks forward to 2026, embracing new challenges and continuing to deliver excellence in combat engineering and community support. The Squadron will also undergo a restructure aimed at prioritising the preparation and training of qualified Combat Engineers, while ensuring the efficient management of an increasing number of trainees. This evolution positions 3 Field Squadron moving towards again being an independent unit and progressing towards a regimental structure.

LAND SURVIVABILITY PROGRAM – JOINT COUNTER EXPLOSIVE HAZARDS

The Joint Counter Explosive Hazards (CEH) sub-program has made some good progress with integrated force CEH capabilities in 2025. The team has a broad remit and is responsible for the delivery of the legacy Land Project 154 (L154) Joint Counter Improvised Explosive Device (CIED), approvals for Defence Project 8101 (DEF8101) Counter Explosive Hazards, and the sustainment and joint force capability management of Search, EOD and Force Protection Electronic Counter-Measures (FPECM). Additionally, the Land Counter Measures and Reprogramming Cell (LCRC), based in Edinburgh SA, moved under command of CEH in 2025 to align with FPECM capability management.



This year L154 continued the introduction into service (IIS) of new equipment across Defence. 2025 saw delivery and training for explosive initiators (DCTX and DFRD), Dragon runner SPUR, L3Harris T4 RPV, L3Harris T7 RPV, new Manual access Kits, Remote In-Extremis Pull Line, Device Manipulation and Render Safe kit, Immediate Action Pouch and the CEIA CMD/DW Detector. The 2026 schedule expects to see the finalisation of RPV IIS, continued roll out of Vehicle Mounted Joint Radio Controlled IED Electronic Warfare (JCREW) FPECM, replacement handheld GPR, replacement Deep Search detector, new Hook and Line Kits, Novo radiography systems and new Method of Entry Systems.

The DEF8101 project went to the Defence investment committee in Q3 2025 and received early access funds approval to start the scoping and requirements setting phase. The project seeks to procure next generation capabilities to enable, find, analyse, neutralise and exploit future explosive hazards. This includes threats from mines, IEDs, unexploded/abandoned ordnance, anti-access and area denial weapons, and explosive remnants of war. The first step of the project was to develop a robust Operational Concept Document, which included the conduct of workshops across Australia that received good buy in from the RAE community and the broader joint force stakeholders. 2026 will see the AHQ and CASG teams conduct risk reduction activities for remote find and neutralise capabilities, Personal ECM and next-generation FPECM, to inform a Government submission for approval to move to acquisition.

Within the capability management space, the CEH team continues to conduct regular touch points with end users to identify friction areas, capability needs and modernisation. This includes the ongoing review of user requirements for equipment nearing Life of Type, in order to enable replacement through sustainment. The management of FPECM remains a key priority, with the team turning around a validation and roll out activity for an urgent operational requirement in just 48hours this year. CEH has also been sponsoring the user evaluation of the FLAME Virtual Immersive Search Trainer (VIST) across ADF units. This is a simulation system programmed for F3 Mine detector training, with the initial usage of the system occurring in 2025 and an expanded user evaluation occurring in 2026.

The CEH sub-program will have another busy year in 2026 and build on the capabilities delivered in 2025. We look forward to championing the Corps' and broader Joint Force's requirements for CEH.

DIRECTORATE OF OFFICER CAREER MANAGEMENT

By MAJ Tom Wickham

I want to take this opportunity to thank all members of the portfolio and the Corps more broadly for the flexibility and positivity you have brought to our engagements in Career Management Cycle 2026 (CMC 26). The willingness of the portfolio to consider posting options outside their preferences has made my role as the Career Manager infinitely easier.

Throughout 2025 the standard of our officers competing for Command appointments and other critical roles has been consistently impressive. While this is due in no small part to the approach taken within our Corps to furnish junior officers with sufficiently broad experience; it is also due in large part to the willingness of our people to take up challenging roles across the force in a variety of locations in Australia and abroad.

While retention within the RAE is generally good, we face long-standing shortages of senior Captains and Majors affecting the availability of officers to fill challenging roles at Unit and Brigade level. The high rates of success of our officers in progressing out of the Foundation Group into the Advanced & Technical Group. As a result, early promotion to Major and Captains fulfilling challenging higher appointments is common across the portfolio. The preparedness and willingness of our people to step up in this fashion is commendable and only possible where an officer has a solid baseline of experience and performance history.

For junior officers reading the above and wondering how these factors may affect their own career planning observe that foundational experience remains critical in an officer's development. It is becoming increasingly important that Officers hold relevant qualifications, currency and experience to fill the varied roles of the RAE. Particularly in light of increasingly specialised roles across each unit of the Corps. When making your career plan, look for roles that will provide you experiences which best support your eventual performance in a Command role. These will clearly differ depending on your goal, be that as an OC of a Combat Engineer Squadron or a Senior Project Engineer, but the principle remains the same.

As we enter 2026, I offer my congratulations to all officers who have been promoted and those who have been selected for a Command appointment at any level. For those officers competing for promotion and selection for Command in 2026 I wish you all good luck!

SCHOOL OF MILITARY ENGINEERING WATERLOO DINNER 2025

By LT Jessica Reid

The 2025 School of Military Engineering Waterloo Dinner was held on 13 June inside the historic halls of the Australian Army Museum of Military Engineering (AAMME), Holsworthy Barracks.

130 guests attended the dinner, comprising of ex-serving and current serving RAE Officers, Warrant Officers, international partners, and a number of distinguished guests, including COMD FORCOMD MAJGEN Duncan, HOC RAE BRIG Say and HOC RASIGs BRIG Limmer. The Commanding Officer of SME, LTCOL Whale welcomed attendees from atop the Medium Girder Bridge, linking the proud heritage of the Corps with the modern capabilities on display at the Museum.

SME was honoured to host representatives from interstate Brigades and Units. Their attendance reinforced the collective identity of those who rely upon, support, or serve within the engineering community.

This year's Waterloo Dinner was a fitting blend of history, camaraderie and Corps identity. With the AAMME as its backdrop, the event honoured the rich traditions of the Royal Australian Engineers while celebrating the partnerships and shared capability that continue to define the modern Corps. SME looks forward to an innovative and ambitious year ahead, ensuring Waterloo 2026 is set to be another memorable occasion.



SAPPERS ASSEMBLE! STEELE CUP 25

By CAPT, Tom Griffiths, 2IC SEW

Ex Steele Cup 25 was conducted over 03-07 November 2026 with its aim to holistically assess RAE Corps sections Engineer skills, knowledge and C2 within a complex environment, to understand the strengths and opportunities across the entirety of the Corps. This year's Steele cup evolved with participants deploying into a field environment and have the 2 ER from the NZDF competing and performing well.

This was achieved through having the sections deploy into the field for 72hrs and conduct section level tasks across the three different operating environments by day and night. This activity concluded with final PT culminating activity test leadership and teamwork. A snapshot of the stands and scoring is:

AO Bronze

AO Bronze was designed to simulate tasks expected of section to conduct within a RASO environment. This saw the sections conduct CBRN decon, field fortification construction and practice of soldiers skills.

Stand 1: Section defence

This stand saw competitors conduct RP3A shoot and progress through and conduct a live fire section defence range. Test each sections individual skills and ability to effectively develop and defensive a position.



Stand 2: Field Fortification construction

This stand saw competitors construct timber frames for firing trenches by day and emplace the field fortifications by night. This looked to test the ability of the sections to work from a simple design in force protection pam and construct fortifications.



Stand 3: CBRN Decontamination

This stand saw competitors be in acted as a CBRN QRF and look to hastily establish a decontamination line and decon ten members from a unknown contamination. This looked to test the sections procedures and control of the decon as well testing a skill set that crucial within the corps role.

AO Silver

AO silver was designed around an asymmetric threat focused on a non-state actor producing and using drones to conduct strikes against vital assets within the area to further their agenda.



Stand 4: CBRN Survey

This stand was designed to test the recon technique and survey procedures of the section. The sections were tasked to conduct a survey of a village that had been contaminated with an unknown substance from a drone strike that hit a chemical storage facility.



Stand 5: High Risk Building Search

This stand supported the night reconnaissance task with the conduct of high-risk search on a suspected homemade explosives (HME) labs and drone facility. This tested the sections search procedures and individual explosive hazard reduction abilities within a complex scenario.



Stand 6: LUEB and exploitation

This stand was designed to test the sections drills as well as presenting a problem set to test innovation in improvised charges. This stand saw members conduct an urban assault onto an enemy compound and secure the building. The sections then proceeded to explosively, penetrate a safe to extract intelligence.



Night task: Close Target Recon

This task saw the sections tasked with answering a set of PIR's within an eight-hour period onto a village believed to be used as HME and drone facility. This tasked assessed the quality of the recon reports and ability for the report to be utilised for a follow on task.

AO Gold

AO Gold was designed to present a conventional threat with an enemy position dug in protecting an airfield with protective obstacles emplaced around the positions.

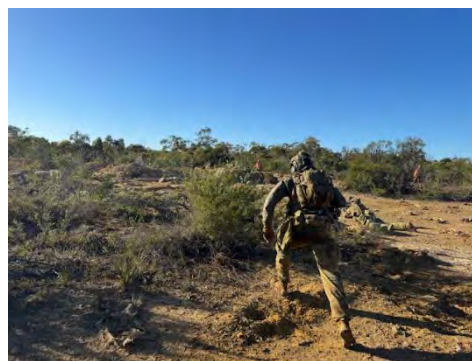
Night task: Minefield Reconnaissance

This task saw the sections conduct an eight-kilometre infill followed by a technical minefield recon, to understand the density and composition of the minefield.



Stand 7: Minefield Breach and Assault

Upon completion of the minefield recon, the sections were tasked to conduct a minefield breach on their lane. Once breached the sections assaulted the defensive position and secured it. This tested the C2 and sections ability to communicate with other call signs within the assault.



The final four criteria that contributed to the final score was the exfill, PT activity, Section commanders C2 and Individual Combat behaviours

Position	C2	Combat behaviours	Exfill activity	PT culmination activity
1st	6 ESR	2 CER	2 CER	3 CER
2nd	2 CER	6 ESR	3 CER	2 CER
3rd	3 CER	1 CER	2 ER (NZ)	6 ESR
4th	2 ER (NZ)	11 ER	11 ER	1 CER
5th	11 ER	2 ER (NZ)	6 ESR	2 ER (NZ)
6th	1 CER	3 CER	1 CER	11 ER

COLONEL COMMANDANTS AND RAE ASSOCIATIONS

Colonel Commandants

The Colonel Commandants play an important role in ensuring continued engagement and community in the corps for past and present Sappers. They are members of the Corps committee and provide advice and advocate the associations and sappers. The Corps would like to recognise and thank MAJGEN Day, MAJGEN Williams, COL Mostafa and COL Murray for their significant contribution to the Corps. It would also like to welcome MAJGEN Ryan, BRIG Galton, BRIG Carey, BRIG Wainwright and COL Madden to these important roles.

- Representative Colonel Commandant. MAJGEN Ryan will assume this appointment from MAJGEN Day
- Colonel Commandant Northern region. BRIG Galton will assume this appointment from MAJGEN Day
- Colonel Commandant Eastern region. BRIG Carey will assume this appointment from COL Mostafa
- Colonel Commandant Southern region. BRIG Wainwright will assume this appointment from COL Murray
- Colonel Commandant Central region. BRIG Galton will assume this appointment from MAJGEN Day
- Colonel Commandant Western region. COL Madden will assume this appointment from MAJGEN Williams

RAE Associations

Throughout the year our RAE associations across the country play an important role in bringing Sappers past and present together. The ongoing support the associations provide to our Sapper community is immeasurable and all Sappers are encouraged to join a local association or branch. Below is a summary of some of the activities conducted by associations this year.

Association points of contact:

NQ Sappers	secretary@nqsappers.org
NSW Sappers	sappersnsw@gmail.com
VIC Sappers	secretary@raevictoria.com
WA Sappers	raeassocwasec2017@gmail.com
SA Sappers	raeassnsa@gmail.com
TAS Sappers	andrew_monty@hotmail.com
SOER	secretary@soerassociation.com.au
Tunnel Rats	tunnelrats.vietnam@gmail.com
Trackers	secretary@aussietrackers.org
RAE Legacy	jhutcheson@sydney-legacy.com.au
Retired Officers	davedufall1939@gmail.com

32 SMALL SHIP SQUADRON RAE ASSOCIATION INCORPORATING RAE TN

The Australian Army has a long history of being responsible for the operation of watercraft. From the end of World War 2 until the early 1970s this was carried out by the Transportation Service of the Royal Australian Engineers.



32 Small Ship Squadron was raised in 1959 to provide increased mobility for the Army's Centurion tanks. Prior to this the tanks of 1 Armoured Regiment located at Puckapunyal, had to be moved by sub-standard road and rail facilities. To overcome this the Army purchased four World War 2 ex-US Navy Landing Ships Medium (LSM) to be crewed by soldiers of the Transportation (Tn) Service of the Royal Australian Engineers. These ships were named after prominent Army generals:

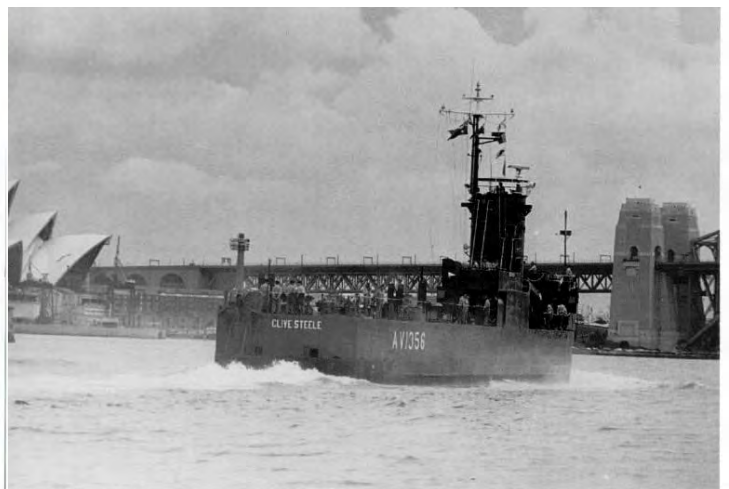
AV1353 Harry Chauvel
AV1355 Vernon Sturdee

AV1354 Brudenell White
AV1356 Clive Steele

The Squadron also operated the cargo / training vessel *AS3051 John Monash*

During the 1960s all ships spent considerable time operating in Papua New Guinea waters assisting in 'Nation Building' prior to that country's independence. The ships spent long periods there carrying out such tasks as delivering and withdrawing vehicles, machinery, stores and plant equipment for RAE Construction Squadrons that were developing roads and airfields.

LSMs *AV1353 Harry Chauvel* and *AV1355 Vernon Sturdee* were deployed to Borneo in 1964 during the Indonesian Confrontation. All ships served in Vietnam from 1966 to 1971 with at least one ship 'on station' throughout the period of Australia's involvement in the war.



The Association is made up of ex-soldiers from the following Engineer units:

32 Small Ship Squadron	Transportation Training Centre
Port and Terminal Squadrons	Water Transport Squadrons
11 Movement Control Group, and the then CMF units aligned with these units.	

Currently the Association has over 200 members. New members are recruited from time to time during reunions and social functions. There is an ANZAC Day march in Sydney, followed by a reunion lunch. Also, a Water Transport reunion is held annually at various locations in Australia. Further information on the Association can be found on its website at www.32smallshipsqn.org.au

Ten years ago, the Association published a pictorial history of the Squadron, and is currently writing the history of RAE Water Transport. It publishes three newsletters per year.

RAE RETIRED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (NSW)

by Colonel (Retd) David Dufall, Association Chairman

The Association holds a list of approximately 80 members from across the State - contact is maintained via regular emailed newsletters or direct involvement in the following major Association or directed events:

- ANZAC Day March through Sydney;
- RAE Waterloo Dinner * and The Corps Birthday;
- Vietnam Veterans Day at SME;
- Duchess of Richmond Ladies Dining Night **;
- HOC Conferences, SME/On-line.

*The Annual Waterloo Dinner is now conducted with strong support from the Royal Automobile Club of Australia (RACA). Over the past few years, attendance has firmed at around 25-30 attendees including Staff members from the SME and invited non-Corps officers from the monthly gathering of the Army Officers Luncheon Club which has similar strong connections with the RACA.



Waterloo Dinner 2025

The Association conducted the annual Duchess of Richmond Ladies Dining Night, borne from the original Duchess of Richmond Officers Ball held in 1815 to honour GEN Wellington and his officers prior to the Battle of Waterloo. It has become a key Association event held at the RACA and non-Corps officers and their partners are also made welcome.



Duchess of Richmond Ladies Dining Night 2025

As a consequence of the RACA existing historic relationship with the ADF, the RACA Board has consciously pursued a much stronger bond with ADF personnel and units within the Sydney region with the aim of fostering the Imperial Services Club (ISC) Dining Room and Bar as the equivalent of an old-style “Officers Mess” with 1930’s colonial and military atmosphere. Last October the Club completed a lengthy, upgrade to enhance the ambience and historic status of the ISC for the benefit of all users.

The Association Committee is working with other Associations to explore options for a Corps on-line capability be established to allow better coordination between all Corps units and ex-service associations.

RAE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

A fresh Victorian sapper history, *Forests, Fires and Fortifications*, captures the recent operational challenges facing military engineers in Victoria and explores the contribution made by the professional engineering expertise found within the reserve.

In 2025, 22nd Engineer Regiment (22ER) celebrated its Diamond (75th) Anniversary.

This unique Regiment was originally raised in 1950 as a result of one of the critical lessons learnt in WW2 by the Engineer in Chief of the Australian Army, Major General Sir Clive Steele:

“Citizen Military Force (CMF) or Supplementary Reserve (SR) is a vital part of the Army, particularly in RAE.”

In essence, this lesson highlighted the need for Army to be able to call upon individuals or sub-units possessing certain skills in short supply.

Current reserve sapper units help fulfil this need by contributing to an overall enhanced military engineering capability for the nation. They bring critical civilian skills to the fore.

As with Sappers from around the country, Victorian Sappers have earned an impressive reputation for “stepping up” to recent challenges and battles with bushfire, flood and other weather events, coupled with the devastating COVID pandemic.

These challenges have highlighted the diversity and array of skills needed by a 21st century sapper.

The Victorian people are proud, and owe much gratitude, to their sappers in combating these recent events.

Victorians also enjoy a rich military engineering heritage boasting some of the most elaborate coastal fortifications in the southern hemisphere.

As a result of the gold rushes in the 1850s, and the subsequent Russian threat, Port Philip Bay was known as the *Gibraltar of the South*.

Recording sapper history and heritage, such as with *Forests, Fires & Fortifications*, along with conducting commemorative and social activities, are the core purposes of the Association.

These underpin, and reinforce, the overall wellbeing of this important national capability.

Warmest regards & UBIQUE,



Army Reserve engineer, Lance Corporal Alana Speir, in civilian life an operations officer with Forest Fire Management Victoria, deployed to the Dandenong Ranges with 22ER when called upon by the Victorian State Government in the aftermath of the devastating storm events of 2021. (Sapper Summit July 2021, p.8)



This 80-pounder muzzle loading gun stands guard at Fort Queenscliff protecting the entrance to Port Philip Bay in Victoria. Known as “Gun No 5” with a year of manufacture of 1861 by Wm Armstrong Company, it has a 6 inch bore with a range of 2300 yards. The gun carriage was restored by 91st Forestry Troop, the remaining legacy of the 91st Forestry Squadron RAE (The Woodpeckers), in 1993. (Sapper Summit December 2021, p.22)

Editor’s note:

The history of 22ER **Forests, Fires and Fortifications** was released on Remembrance Day 2025 and will become available during 2026. Watch the RAE Victoria website for details:
www.raevictoria.com

Strengthening Engineer Unit Capability with more Specialist Service Officers (SSOs) – By COL Simon Ridgway

"To secure the Defence APS and ADF workforce requires an innovative and bold approach to recruitment and retention ... risk appetite and approaches to recruitment must change..."
(Defence Strategic Review, 2023).

Strategic Guidance

Australia's Defence Strategic Review (DSR) in 2023 and subsequent Reserve Forces Review in 2024 set out changes to the ADF to achieve an integrated force, focussed on the region and approaches immediately to the North of Australia, with a suite of changes impacting Army and the Army Reserve. The Army Reserve role in this is provision of Brigades for area security to the northern base network and other critical infrastructure and providing an expansion base for the ADF in times of crises^{1,2} and provide Army's primary response to extreme High Risk Weather Season (HRWS). A key element of the DSR and the Reserve Forces Review is improved recruiting in both Regular and Reserve forces to ensure units reach established manning levels.

Meeting the strategic demand of refocussing the Army Reserve on these primary tasks with preparations for infrastructure protection leans heavily on the Royal Australian Engineers (RAE). RAE Reserve units and personnel must prepare for undertaking distinctly military functions working with the civilian crisis response sector. The Reserve RAE Units must also retain capability in all combat engineer skills to provide expansion in support of full-time forces at short notice.

The RAE Corps operates in an environment that requires a prompt correction to employment and training to achieve a large increase in effective personnel resources.

Delivering the Strategy

As with other Corps, recruiting and retaining Officers for the Royal Australian Engineers (RAE) is a continual challenge. Officer recruitment and development for both full-time and part-time personnel presently aims to achieve similar training standards via quite different routes. This is tough to achieve and collectively we are not matching the current strategic demands and outlook beyond. This paper seeks to explore an alternative plan for an effective and enduring approach to deliver the part-time Officer strength needed within the RAE.

Recruiting and training a General Service Officer into a Reserve RAE Unit

A SERCAT 5 applicant with RAE General Service Officer (GSO) officer potential will typically see four to five years elapse between application and completing the Regimental Officer Basic Course. Extended training periods are not always easily accommodated by most industry employers, especially so for those with the civilian skills that the Corps could best benefit from, shunning many potential recruits. The Army also needs to avoid Reservists employed in essential roles, considerably shrinking the remaining pool from which to draw recruits. Recent improvements in the processes and conditions have provided an increase in recruits and greater retention³, however there remains a shortage of junior officers, sizable in the case of the part-time workforce, less so but still significant in the full-time workforce. The "equivalent standards" approach between part-time and full-time workforces aims to achieve greater capability and supports the flexible workforce model for our Army personnel. The serious shortage of Officers in Reserve units heavily burdens Unit and

¹ DSR 2023 The DSR 2023 calls for "urgency" and "a move away from a business-as-usual approach" to its recommendations, with the Army Reserve in an infrastructure protection role, extreme weather related emergency call-out and providing the basis for rapid expansion in support of the Regular Army.

² Reserves Review 2024 The Reserves Review emphasises the need to move away from "business as usual".

³ <https://theconversation.com/after-years-of-backsliding-the-adf-is-growing-again-whats-behind-the-recruitment-uptick-262597>

Sub-unit leadership, compromising training and capability delivery. To meet the expectations on the Reserve, an urgent priority is to fill established leadership positions. Adding to this, the shortage of full-time staff in support of Reserve Units must be promptly mitigated, needing an innovative approach to break out of “business as usual”.

Looking to the future, rapidly increasing reliance on modern battlefield technology promises to increase fighting capability but requires new and higher specialist skill levels. The current Officer training continuum for the part-time workforce will struggle to adapt adequately to rapid introduction of new technology and systems.

The Need to do Something Different

Dynamic environments often lead to a mismatch between personnel, resources, skillset and organisational needs. Adjusting the organisation to match the resource numbers and skillsets available can change shortages in skilled personnel into a management problem, with an available solution. We have the opportunity to build our Corps strength by expanding the use of SSOs to provide greater capability in an environment of perpetual GSO shortages.

Use of a part-time workforce in specialised Engineering roles has much precedence. A notable example being the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) utilising the part-time workforce civilian skills for full-time specialist postings, openly stating the aim as filling USACE needs and concurrently strengthening ties between full-time and part-time components. The Russia-Ukraine war also is delivering important lessons on using civil qualified Army specialists outside of traditional Army roles.

The RAE is trialling Specialist Service Officers (SSOs) for a small number of positions within 13 Engineer Regiment with a view to introducing a higher level of science and technology into the Corps. Lessons from this are valuable in informing further steps. This could encompass not only civil/construction engineering but the other disciplines that support complex weapons systems delivery at pace we have not experienced before. There is clear evidence that using SSOs to meld professional engineering skills and experience strengthens the Corps, and promptly.

Officers for 2 Div RAE Units

Each of 2 Div's Brigades can be expected to be responsible for a very large area of operations (AO). We can anticipate that Engineers will be in high demand to deliver effective infrastructure protection. Engineers will need to cover vast distances with an increased emphasis on provision of advice to local commanders and civil organisations, - Ubique indeed! At present there is limited exercising of close interaction with the civil community incorporated into Reserve Unit collective training. Reserve RAE Engineer Units are typically tasked to support a Brigade's fighting units during exercises.

Of the eight Fundamental Inputs to Capability (FIC), personnel remains the key challenge for Army Reserve Units where generating sufficient numbers of Officers remains the most difficult challenge. The challenge starts with establishments that are designed for peace-time activity and rely on being fully populated to properly function even during low-tempo periods. Endemic under-recruiting for the established positions leads to increased workload for the remaining leadership and reduces effectiveness of collective training. It also compounds poor retention levels and hampers development of Officers for more senior ranks. Breaking out of this cycle cannot be achieved without a stark change in approach, enacted quickly to start delivering results. How we employ and prepare SSOs is an opportunity to have a positive impact on increased engineer capability.

Present Army recruitment policy requires that RAE SSOs are qualified in civil engineering with the expectation that those officers will primarily be used in construction or related administrative roles. Many major Defence or Army related construction projects are undertaken by civil contractors, with limited direct control from Army. Shortage of Corps personnel is likely to see this continue resulting in an environment where typically a full-time GSO can expect a low interaction with the civil community. Reserve Officers typically have a matching civilian career, including some with professional engineering qualifications specialising in managing complex military programs. Notably the skills that the Reserve RAE leadership can be anticipated to need for their

primary roles does not always rely on a civil engineering career but can readily encompass other engineering disciplines.

Part-time RAE GSO career planning aims to parallel a full-time Army career, that envisages employment in all areas of the Corps and preparation for eventual senior Officer appointments. That career model is only loosely matched to most RAE Part-time Officers' motivations for serving⁴.

Unit workforce planning is exacerbated by part-time GSO training taking around four years between signing-on and being posted to an Engineer unit. The shortage of full-time staff adds further pressure to Reserve Units, yet that too stands to be improved by using SSOs to release GSOs for such postings. Part-time GSO's are able to undertake Continuous Full Time Service Contracts using the DA-26 process. Recent recruiting and retention data points to improvements but still far short of what is needed: the indication is that we need a different model for recruiting and retention of Officers in RAE Reserve Units that matches an enduring model for the future.

Specialisation is not new and although lightly used by the Australian Army there is precedent that it can provide expertise⁵. An increase in SSOs within Engineer Units provides an opportunity to release GSOs for their career development.

Solving the Personnel Problem – an Enduring Model

Ensuring sufficient personnel requires many factors to work together. An enduring solution to Officer numbers must incorporate consistent recruiting that matches the profile and desires of recruits. Much wider use of Specialist Service Officers (SSOs) offers one change that can bring many benefits. SSOs are already used to bring in technical skills to the Corps. Part-time Officers are already being used in full-time positions for specialist roles based on their civil experience.

The general service training that an SSO needs to support performing their specialist-service, is provided through Corps courses, Unit training and on-job-experience. Initial specialist area postings for SSOs would be selected to build RAE core skills and developing those through longer time in rank than might typically be applied to a GSO. This notes a considerable difference in full and part-time careers. Motivation for many in the part-time Force is not strongly connected to attaining military promotion and given the anticipated age of SSOs being late 20's to 40's these members are demonstrably not strongly motivated to attain higher ranks. The SSOs motivation is hugely important to Army in simplifying career management and allowing the SSO to stay in postings that maximise skill development and delivery.

Part-time Sappers could provide an additional pool for SSO appointments as many are well educated including qualified engineers serving within the Sapper ranks. This deserves separate consideration for the part-time force as being distinctly different to the full-time force. The long-standing precedent for promotion "from the ranks" is for WO2 appointment at the CAPT level. Using a more flexible model of entry into SSO postings could, for example allow a suitably qualified SGT or CPL with engineering qualifications to be appointed an SSO at LT or even 2LT level.

MAJGEN Laidlaw⁶ highlighted that for the typical Reservist GSO, civilian experience of leadership starts to converge with Regulars at the senior-Captain level. The typical senior Captain Reservist having around 15 or more years of civilian experience. Consideration for SSOs to be employed at Lieutenant level or even

⁴ Use Them or Lose Them? Australia's Defence Force Reserves. Hugh Smith and Nick Jans at Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society on April 12, 2011 provides comprehensive discussion on Reservists' motivations.

⁵ UNSW Australians at War Film Archive Peter Gratton - Transcript of interview Date of interview: 13th July 2004 <http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/2151> , "The Americans train their soldiers to be specialists in some area and if you get into their specialist area boy, they'll leave you for dead, they're the world's best on whatever their speciality is."

⁶ Laidlaw, D. L. CSC, The 2nd Lieutenant – a Necessary Development Pathway for Part-Time Officers (2019)

reintroduction of the Second Lieutenant rank would recognise that this is an introductory appointment and to allow additional time in-rank for Army skill development⁷.

Growth of 3 Field Squadron in South Australia

An example of using SSOs in building unit capability is 3 Field Squadron, presently under command of 10/27th Battalion within 9 Brigade. 9 Brigade is the only one of 2 Div's five Brigades not supported by an Engineer Regiment. Expanding the Engineer resources to meet the Brigade's needs seems desirable and would match the construct of the other Brigades. Such growth would require at least five years with around five GSOs provided to the Squadron annually which is not feasible with 'business as usual'.

Adding additional Troops to the Squadron is an approach for immediate increase Unit capability but likely adding to the already burdened workload of the existing Officers within the Unit. The critical resource for growth is having sufficient Officers to provide leadership and management. 3 Field Squadron has been particularly pro-active and has sought to recruit SSOs to help mitigate impacts from the current GSO shortfall. There is a long experience in 3 Field Squadron for use of SSOs including some of whom have gained sufficient training and experience to meet GSO standards, including deployments on operations, to become highly effective officers and OCs. This is an example where SSOs with a carefully managed individual career and development plan can make a positive impact to engineer capability.

Conclusion

The RAE offers a wide variety of roles to develop skills and leadership within the Australian Army. Some pragmatic changes to how we consider RAE careers can leverage that advantage to benefit the Corps and individuals alike. We know that increasing the use of SSOs within Engineer Units can work. We can build on our experience to deliver prompt results towards strategic directives and strengthen Corps capability. Broadening the SSO eligibility pool for both part-time and full-time roles to encompass all tertiary engineering disciplines will provide a greater recruitment pool and introduce a skills mix anticipated to be heavily in demand to support an influx of new and advanced weapons and equipment.

It will delivery far greater capability than "business as usual" and it is entirely up to us to manage.

⁷ Ibid



COL A Mostafa RAE Writing Prize Eligibility

- All RAE Members
- Veterans
- Civilians



The Challenge

Generate ideas about how the Corps of the Royal Australian Engineers can contribute to the land force in order to tackle the security challenges within its primary area of military interest.

The intent of the writing prize is to generate debate and/or contribute to ongoing work areas to support the implementation of the land contribution to the integrated force.

Submissions can be constructive, critical and challenge conventional wisdom, current policies, and practices.

This is your opportunity to contribute to the future of the Corps or improve how we currently undertake our work.

Submission Guidelines

- Maximum of 2500 words (excludes endnotes/footnotes/sources).
- Must be original, not have been previously published (online or in print) or being considered for publication elsewhere.
- Email essay as a Microsoft Word attachment with RAE Writing Prize on the subject line.
- Include word count on the title page of the essay, but do not include your name on the title page or within the essay.
- Provide separate attachment to include biography and complete contact information i.e. work, home, and mobile phone numbers; and home mailing address.
- Submissions are to be forwarded via email to russell.peel@defence.gov.au by NLT 01 Sep 26.

NOTE: Nominations will not be accepted after this date.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS CORPS FUND

The Corps of Royal Australian Engineers has a collective responsibility to our predecessors, and ourselves, to ensure we preserve, protect and develop our heritage, as well as continue to build our identity into the future. Your contribution, along with all the other serving and retired members of the Royal Australian Engineers making a similar commitment, is extremely important. This ensures your Corps Committee can support the fostering of our esprit-de-corps, and the unique 'Sapper identity' remains a fundamental part of Army's culture and traditions.

During the last financial year, the Royal Australian Engineers Corps Fund saw a total of 255 financial members contributing over \$20,000.

The purpose of the RAE Corps Fund is to raise and manage finances to support the aims of the RAE Corps Committee and provide funding for, but not limited to:

1. The research and publication of Corps History
2. Assistance to Army History Unit to manage historical items relevant to RAE
3. Grants to all RAE Units relating directly to:
 - a. RAE Heritage
 - b. Esprit de Corps activities
 - c. Corps sporting teams
 - d. Remembrance type events
4. Recognition of achievement and enduring service.
5. Support prizes and awards.

The RAE Corps Fund subscriptions have now moved to a one-off annual payment due on the 1st of July every year through the TryBooking system. If you are still contributing allotments or not making payments through the TryBooking system, it is requested that you cease payments immediately and commence your one-off annual payment. Payment amounts are as per below:

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To make your contribution, visit <https://www.trybooking.com/CJRTF> or scan the QR code.



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The Corps thanks the following people for their contribution to the RAE Corps Fund this year. Please note the Corps subscription payment mechanism has changed to TryBooking IAW the above information therefore the below list is not exhaustive of those who contributed via direct debit.

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