

SOCER

A S S O C I A T I O N

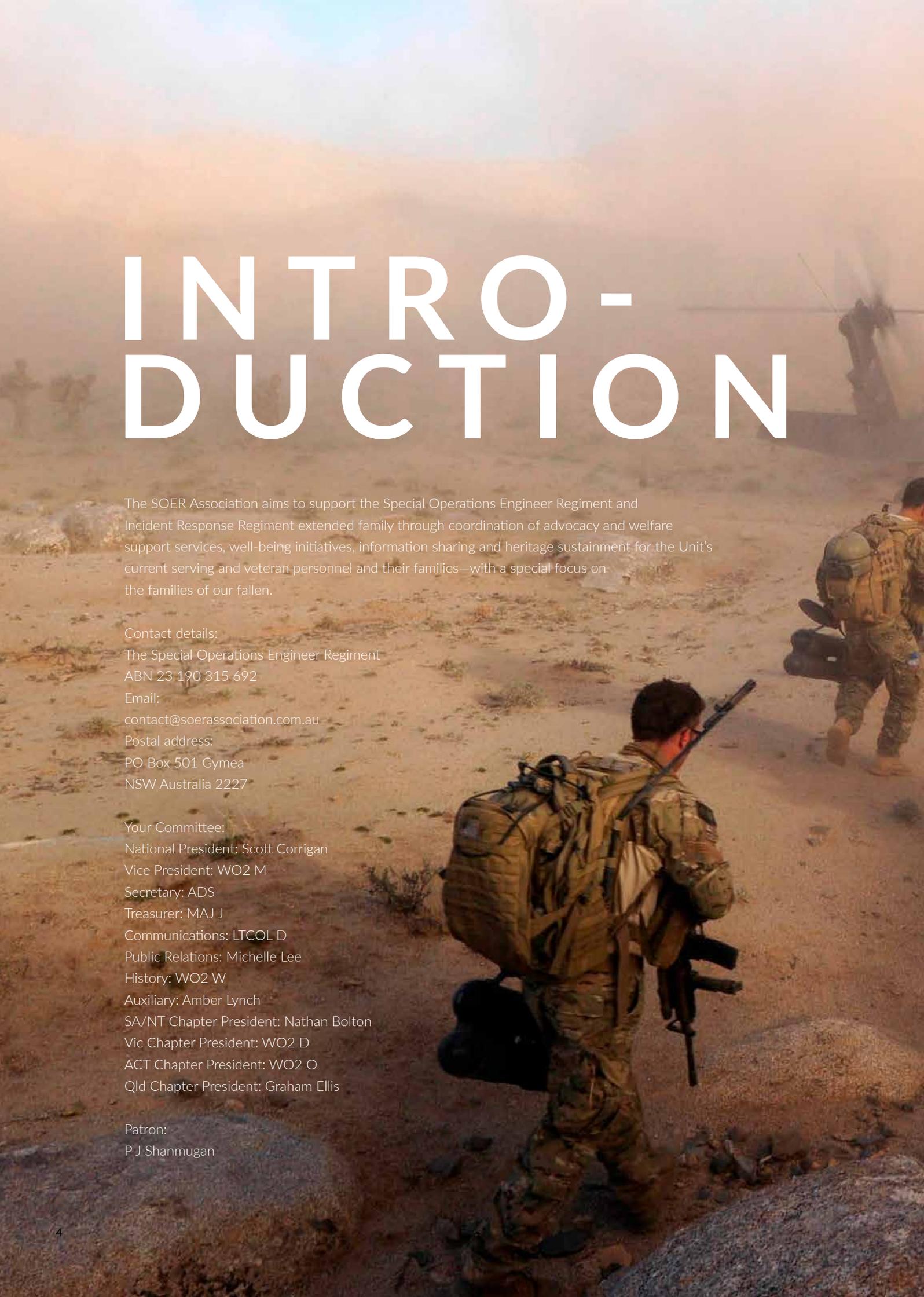
MAGAZINE 2019



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INTRO - DUCTION



The SOER Association aims to support the Special Operations Engineer Regiment and Incident Response Regiment extended family through coordination of advocacy and welfare support services, well-being initiatives, information sharing and heritage sustainment for the Unit's current serving and veteran personnel and their families—with a special focus on the families of our fallen.

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Treasurer: MAJ J

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History: WO2 W

Auxiliary: Amber Lynch

SA/NT Chapter President: Nathan Bolton

Vic Chapter President: WO2 D

ACT Chapter President: WO2 O

Qld Chapter President: Graham Ellis

Patron:

P J Shanmugan





Introduction

Dear SOER Association Members and Friends,

I have been overwhelmed by the level of support that has been shown for the Association—reinforced by the tremendous turnout at the inaugural event; and the number of Membership applications received since last December. Thanks to everyone for your contribution!

With our first six months passed, the focus has been on system refinement to ensure we provide professional and enduring support to our Members into the future. Most notably, this has been the development of a professional database for accurately recording Membership details and status; and establishing communications platforms for effective information passage.

Concurrently, several key initiatives commenced during this period, and I will cover them briefly:

- The PR team have commenced planning in detail for the 17 August 2019 SOER Association Ball at the SCG. I encourage everyone to get involved in what promises to be a spectacular event.
- We were proud to extend invitations for Honorary Membership to the families of our fallen; and to key influential people in our Association's Community. Our Honorary Members represent a significant part of the Association's reason for being, and we treasure their continued involvement in our organisation. You can see our Honorary list later in this Newsletter; and their names will be proudly displayed on the website.
- We announced the first Patron of the Association — Mr PJ Shanmugan. He has been pivotal in assisting several initiatives to date; and has committed to continue his support through access to his extensive support network.
- The Auxiliary had its first meeting and has proposed several initiatives to foster family engagement and spouse support.
- The History and Heritage team has commenced work on a dedicated museum piece for SOER/IRR.
- We have gained both Company and Charitable (Not-For-Profit) status— which will provide additional benefit and protection for our Members.
- We have begun work with Special Operations Command Headquarters to ensure mutual support and deconfliction across the welfare support organisations of the Command. This will allow us to leverage the access and influence that these organisations have for support to our Members and their families; whilst ensuring that we retain our own unique identity and SOER/IRR focus.

In the second half of the year the Association has commenced to deliver on

(next spread)

Feature articles, containing real stories from SOER soldiers in Afghanistan.

its mandate to coordinate the provision of services to our members, their families and the families of our fallen. In this regard the network that we have created in the establishment of our Association has been excellent. As a Committee we have been made aware of a number of personal and family issues so we have been able to either reach out and offer support or actually work with other ESOs to ensure needed support is delivered. We have been able to successfully advocate for, and follow through on, support from the Commando Welfare Trust, Legacy and other ESOs. We have established a functional relationship with the Unit where a formal handover for responsibility of welfare monitoring and support transitions from the Unit to the Association for members separating and families in need.

Scott Corrigan
President





FEATURE ARTICLES



[Image 1]
Sapper Nathan Bolton
in Afghanistan.

Russian Fighting Pit

It was around 2am...and I can still feel the dread rushing over me as I stared into this 4-foot-wide trench system stretching out before me...just the blackness of it, pushing itself across the top of the hill. The condensation of your breath reminding you of the subzero temperatures as it drifts past the lenses of your night-vision. Climbing into the trench...the feeling of death lingering at every movement. The lives of those around me...at the mercy of my abilities. The intelligence brief was like a broken record on repeat...screaming inside my mind...“the enemy know our search procedures and have adjusted accordingly”. So, here I am in a trench with known IED’s in it...using a metal detector to find IED’s that have no metal in them. You know you are knocking on deaths door with every second that goes by.

Inch-by-inch I slowly dragged myself forward, the surface of the earth has snap frozen in the -10 degree temperatures. Bashing at the ground with my Bunnings Special gaff hook...I still remember seeing this large chunk of frozen icy dirt giving way and the opportunity I felt being able to capitalise. However, in the backwards motion of dragging the dirt away with my gaff hook, my world stood still as I committed the biggest sin in dealing with IED’s. Flying out of the wall from about 1m in front of me came this package the size of a small tissue box and

"I froze...no training can prepare you for such a moment."

landed directly in front of me.

I froze...no training can prepare you for such a moment. I can still see the red tape wrapped around the distinct shape of D Cell batteries sitting before me. Then I remember taking note of the command wire as it ran running out of the battery pack in this perfect loop. As I continued to trace it...I watch it disappear into the earth...running directly underneath me.

The pressure plate was somewhere underneath me, and I had missed it.

The feelings associated with this moment are difficult to describe. I laid there with no thoughts, just blank, my eyes probably wider than the black of night...helpless. Thoughts like “this is it” and “your number is finally up” poured through my mind. You want to move but you know you cant. You are alive right now but in a second you may not be. Move and die.

Moments later, I finally concluded that this situation is going to play out whether I like it or not. With a glimmer of clarity amidst sheer internal chaos, I

[Image 2]

Some of the items found during a search.



[Image 3]

Nathan Bolton on patrol in Helmand Province.





[Image 4] Aftermath of an IED.



[Image 5] Friendly locals.

slowly braced my elbows and feet out as wide as they can on the edges of the trench. If the pressure plate was going to be anywhere...it was gonna be central. With all my strength, I slowly eased my body up ever so slowly in this awkward pushup position and eventually managed to through myself back onto my knees.

I can still vividly remember the moment I turned around and saw 5 Commandos sitting in the trench just behind me. Huddled amongst themselves they waited for me to finish...but also completely oblivious to what had just transpired. As calmly as one can...I remember just saying..."Guys, I'm laying on an IED, move away now". I can still feel the tightness of my jaw trying to get the words out. Through the green tinge of my night vision...I will never forget the moment it registered and seeing this jaw just drop and hit the floor. Obviously, the need not be told twice...and they abandoned ship with little hesitation. And with that, I managed to get to my feet and leaped into a roll out of the trench.

After first light, my Team Commander (an EOD Tech) began doing the clearance. It turned out that there was a carbon rod pressure plate buried fairly deeply underneath my chest area...and another foot further forward, I potentially could have set it off. However, the main charge was not directly underneath me. I may have lost my legs...but the main charge turned out to be under the 5 Commandos sitting behind me. And that was a price I struggled to deal with.

I found two IED's in that trench that night...and is forever a night that I will never forget. The fear, the dread, the unknown, the end...rattled me right to my core. However, it is funny how life works sometimes...in that, by committing the biggest sin and disturbing the IED...inevitably stopped me...and pretty much saved our lives.

Source:

A. <https://www.lifeonthelinepodcast.com/podcast/2019/4/2/49-nathan-bolton>

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Cache Find

It was the 31st May 2012. Myself and my EDD Digger were part of the MST attached to FE Alpha (SASR) in TK. The rest of the team was SGT W, Dog, Duggy and Q. This rotation had been very busy and we had a lot of good cache finds, but this day was something else.

The target was a 'Quartermaster', he was in a valley not far from TK base. On this job the MST was split up into two, Dog, Duggy and Q was one half and then SGT W, EDD Digger and I were the other. The valley was a rough Y shape and we were sent to opposite ends to sweep the villages and hamlets.

We choppered into the valley and soon started to search the Qualas. Once they had been cleared of FAM's by the SAS, SGT W, Digger and I found a few small caches of rounds but nothing to write home about. Over the radio we could hear that Dog and his blokes had found some RPG's, first it was 10 then 20, 30, 40, it seemed that they had found a large cache, and with time it was getting ever bigger.

SGT W suggested to the SASR TP Comd that we make our way over to Dog and his lads as they had limited explosives to deal with the ever growing cache. We were given the green light so we started to make our way across the valley, it would have been a 3-4 km trek, so we bimbled along having a bit of a laugh, taking pictures, walking into Qualas along the way and giving them a quick search. After about an hour and half we bumped into one of the SAS patrols. One of the guys asked 'how we had got there.' We said 'we had walked over.' He started to laugh and I asked 'what's so funny?' He replied 'no one had cleared any of the villages we had been through and we was F@%king lucky we hadn't been brassed up.'

Eventually we got to the Qualas where Dog and his boys were. By this time they had found a couple of hundred RPG's, about 50 assault weapons with CES and thousands of rounds of ammunition. SGT W, me and Digger went to the adjacent Qualas and started searching. It was almost farcical as everywhere I looked I could see things like binoculars and pistol holsters hanging out of a trees in the centre of one of the compounds. SGT W went into a room and ran his MIMID over one of the walls, it went off its head, so he gave the wall a whack and discovered a false wall and behind it a doorway. This room was stacked from floor to ceiling full of ammunition, RPG's, 3 Blowpipe Surface to Air guided missiles and 3 Milan wire guided Anti-tank missiles.

While this was going on Digger and I went through more of the rooms and cowsheds. Pretty much every room we went into there was a positive indication from Digger. The best find he had that day was in a living room full of cushions, mattresses etc, where he indicated to a pile of cushions. I chucked them on the

[Image 1]

Q with weapons & magazines found in cache.



[Image 2] Preparing explosives.





[Image 3] (left)

MST1 Outside the Ready Room is from left to right Q, Duggy, Pom, EDD Digger, Sgt W & Dog.



[Image 4] (right)

Pom & EDD Digger with the targets pink G-string found with his pistol.

floor so he could go over them, again he picked one out. I got my knife out and opened it. Inside was a pistol wrapped in a pink G string and tucked into the holster, AA batteries, a mobile phone and a plastic bag full of documents (refer to Picture 9). I had a quick look and it was 2 passports one Pakistani and the other Afghani, also two A3 photographs of the target and his brother, and two small note books, one black and one blue. Apparently the black one was a ledger of who had been given weapons, where and when. The blue book was a code book with numbers that represented phrases, this was used over the ICOM radios between Taliban Commanders. This all belonged to the target.

The cache was getting bigger and bigger. A call was made back to TK to send out some more Sappers and bring a stack of bang to get rid of this cache. When the 3 choppers turned up the Taliban in the hills opened up, so unloading the choppers was a bit dodgy. The Qualas were about 250 meters form the LZ, so it was a good old fashioned Brownie stores carry!! Except we were being shot at instead of having to listen to Brownies crap 80's tunes. It was great to see the lads, WO T, Bolts, Bergs, Krackers.

In the end the final count was
 140,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition
 432 RPG's
 5 x RPG launchers
 Approximately 50 assault weapons
 3 x Blowpipe Surface to Air guided missiles
 3 x Milan wire guided Anti-tank missiles
 Approximately 50 x 82mm mortar's
 Little black and Blue code books, passports and photographs of the target
 A mass unknown number of weapon CES, magazines, bayonets etc
 1 x Size 16 pink G string.

The net result was a huge explosion that destroyed two complete Qualas. The intelligence suggested it put the Taliban campaign back 6-12 months in the valley and the TK bowl.

Sources:

- A. In Dogs We Trust, author George Hulse
- B. Tunnel Rats VS The Taliban, authors Jimmy Thomson & Sandy Macgregor
- C. No Front Line, author Chris Masters



[image5]

Q holding one of the Blowpipes. In the background can be seen the three Milan Anti-tank Missiles and also the hundreds of RPG's.

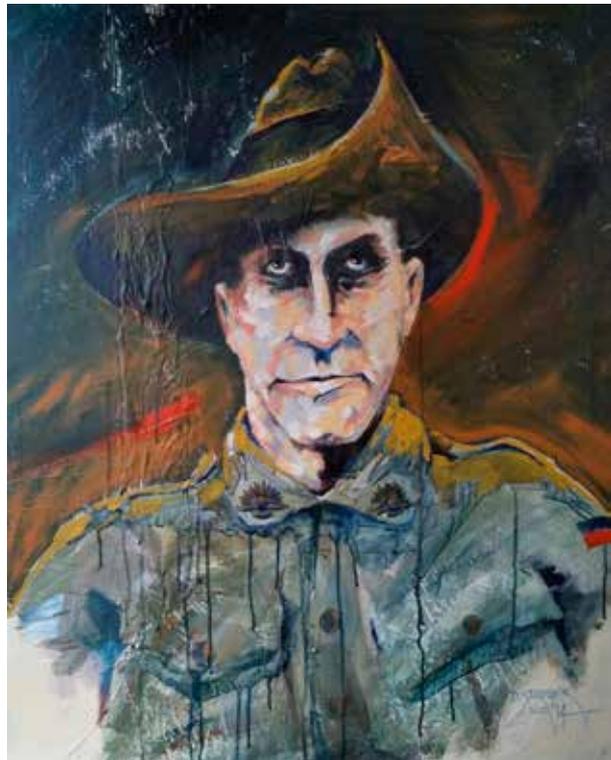


[Image 7] Dave Sturmer

Art as Therapy

Dave Sturmer, <https://www.davesturmer.com>, served as a Tunnel Rat in Vietnam and his experiences on his tour were both dramatic and traumatic. For further reading, a four page story of his experiences, his resultant PTSD and the art therapy that pulled him back from the brink has been published in issue 33 of the Tunnel Rat's Holdfast newsletter, <http://tunnelrats.com.au/pdfs/newsletters/Holdfast-33.pdf>

Dave is keen to help in any way he can to make 'art as therapy' available to Association members. If you believe you could benefit from this generous offer please contact us on: contact@soerassociation.com.au



SOER

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BETWEEN
SPEARS & ENEMIES


BAUSELE
AUSTRALIA



A person in military gear is shown from the waist down on the right side of the frame, holding a rifle. The background is a vast, arid desert landscape with sparse, low-lying vegetation under a clear sky. The ground is sandy and rocky.

ASSOCIATION UPDATES



ON

SOERA Launch Event

The Special Operations Engineer Regiment formally launched on the 8th December 2018 via its inaugural Annual General Meeting followed by a cocktail function attended by current and former Unit members, their families and our affiliates.

Key Dates and Activities

In business speak, the administrative architecture, policies and procedures that underpin the Association have been implemented ensuring we are a legal and functional entity. Key Association activities since the Committee selection have included identification and announcement of our Honorary members and registering the Association as a legal business and not-for-profit organisation. These developments are allowing us to set up our social media presence (including our Website) for not just awareness but also support in the form of donations (goods, services and/or funds). We have deepened our relationship with some key External Support Organisations to ensure we can coordinate support for our members and their families when they require a helping hand. Already this year we have been instrumental in the coordination of support for a number of members and families.

- 08 Dec 18 – SOER Assn Committee elected
- 19 Mar 19 – Brett Till 10 year anniversary memorial
- 30 Mar 19 – Inaugural Committee Meeting held at North Bondi RSL
- 06 May 19 – Honorary Members Letters Distributed
- 07 May 19 – SOER Assn Ltd. Company Registration
- 06 Jun 19 – Rowan Robinson Memorial
- 23 Sep 19 – SOER Assn Non-for Profit Registration
- 21 Oct 19 – Scott Smith Memorial
- 22 Oct 19 – SOCOMD ESO WG
- 25 Oct 19 – Greg Miller Funeral
- 04 Nov 19 – RAE Associations Conference led by RAE HOC
- 03 - 09 Nov 19 – RAE 80th Birthday Week and RAE Ball at Warwick Farm (09 Nov)
- Dec 19 – TBC Unit and Association Chapter functions and activities
- 07 Feb 20 – SOER Association AGM (all encouraged to attend)



[Image 1] LTCOL D speaks at Holsworthy's Museum of Military Engineering.

[Image 2] SOERA President Scott Corrigan





[image 3]
SOERA launch event at the Museum of
Military Engineering.

Introducing your Patron

Prashanth Shanmugan is an entrepreneur, philanthropist and internationalist. He is a prominent and highly respected member of the Australian community and a long standing friend of the Australian Army. In the past PJ has supported the Commando Welfare Trust, SOER welfare and RTF functions and a range of other Veterans initiatives. PJ accepted our invitation to the Patron of our Association in June this year. We thank PJ for his acceptance and the generous commitment of his time and advocacy.

Previously, his diverse career has encompassed roles with international organisations such as the World Bank Group, Royal Dutch Shell and Egon Zehnder International. He was the founding president of the UNSW United Nations Society and was vice-president of the Australian Institute of International Affairs. He has sat on several government advisory boards.

A recipient of numerous honours and awards including the Centenary Medal, awarded by the Commonwealth Government, which acknowledges the contributions made by individuals to the success of Australia's first hundred years as a federal nation.

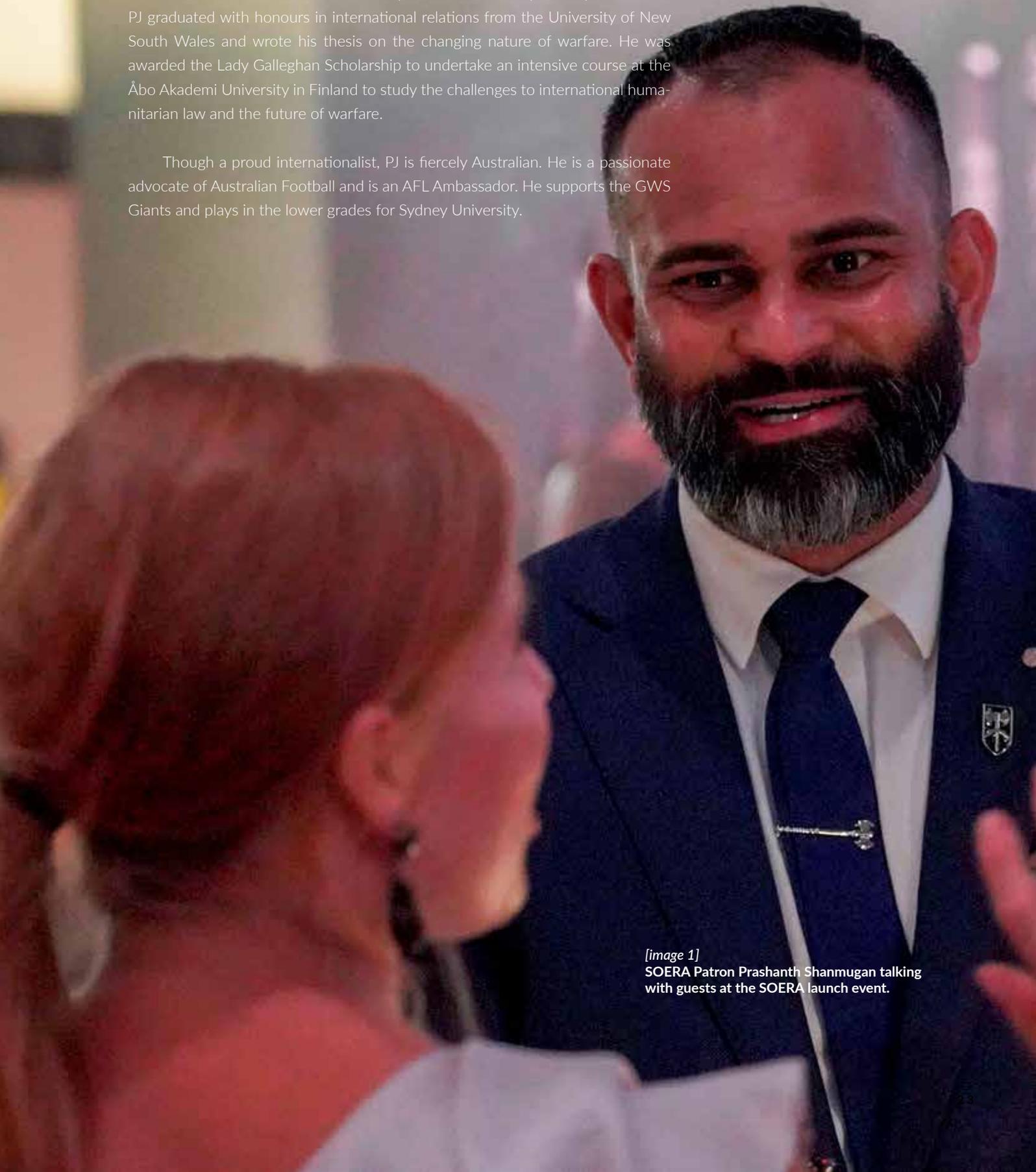
PJ was recognised as a 'Face to Watch' by The Sydney Morning Herald and praised as a "fire-bellied visionary who puts his ideals into action." The Human Rights Commission awarded him the inaugural Human Rights Youth Medal, he was named Young Citizen of the Year, and was selected by the United Nations as a Global Ambassador for the United Nations Global Atlas of Human Rights. He was a finalist in the Young Australian of the Year Awards and was awarded the Australian Humanitarian Award.

He co-produced and presented the weekly radio current affairs programme Perspectives on EastSide FM and was a commentator on the urban music and culture programme Alchemy on SBS Radio. His writings have appeared in several international publications.

He was invited by the U.S. Government to take part in its premier exchange program, the International Visitor Leadership Program. He was also selected by the U.S. State Department to participate in the Professional Fellows Program and he was invited by the French Foreign Ministry to take part in Le Programme d'invitation des personnalités d'avenir.

In addition to a number of other professional development qualifications, PJ graduated with honours in international relations from the University of New South Wales and wrote his thesis on the changing nature of warfare. He was awarded the Lady Gallegghan Scholarship to undertake an intensive course at the Åbo Akademi University in Finland to study the challenges to international humanitarian law and the future of warfare.

Though a proud internationalist, PJ is fiercely Australian. He is a passionate advocate of Australian Football and is an AFL Ambassador. He supports the GWS Giants and plays in the lower grades for Sydney University.



[image 1]
SOERA Patron Prashanth Shanmugan talking with guests at the SOERA launch event.

Regiment and Association Ball

The Unit and Association members were honoured to attend the 2019 SOER Unit and Association Ball at the prestigious Sydney Cricket Ground. It was a magnificent evening and a wonderful opportunity to spend time with friends and the Unit family at an iconic Australian venue.

The evening commenced with drinks on the famous grass of the SCG. Amidst an eerie silence of a completely empty stadium, we were treated to a spectacular light show of the Unit's emblem flashing across both the ticker barriers on the boundary fence and grandstands; as well as a tremendous and humbling projection on the southern hemisphere's largest screen! It was a proud moment and provided a great backdrop for the evening to come.

Once inside, with images of our fallen proudly displayed against the same SCG backdrop, we commenced a small formalities piece and then the night began. Commencing with the Padre performing admirably in his role as MC – working harder than ever to control the rowdy flock – the XO then took over, regaling the relevant background of the SCG and its important historical linkages with the military. He then proceeded to present a lovely piece of Unit memorabilia to Mr Phil Heads and the SCG Trust for their ongoing support to both the Unit and the evening.

Settling into some drinks and a nice meal, the entertainment commenced. While we were exposed to a markedly higher level of comedic entertainment than the group had experienced in previous years, even they couldn't compete with the enthusiastic chatter (and surprising commitment by all to the themed photo booth) of a group of people with a shared passion. It was great to see past, present and future Unit personnel mingling with family and friends in such a positive and supportive environment.

Whilst the night continued with a few shenanigans (which will remain unprinted!), as a whole it was a magnificent event. The only shortfall of the evening (well ... pre-evening) was the fact that some of the Associations membership received late notice of the event due to our ongoing work on our encrypted database, and this caused some frustration. We apologise for this and undertake to ensure that this aspect is rectified in the future – with a hope to see as many people as possible at future events.

Lastly, there were a great number of people who worked tirelessly to ensure that the night was a success. Thanks goes to Michelle Lee, Kristy-Anne Patterson, Amy C and Andrea P who – with the Ball Committee and Association's Comms team – did a tremendous job in creating the whole evening; Mr Phil Heads and the Members of the SCG Trust for access to such a great venue; the North Bondi RSL, Vietnam Tunnel Rats and We Happy Few Wines for their donations and magnificent ongoing support; and of course the wonderful families of our fallen who once again took the time to be with the Unit's family and to reinforce the importance of such gatherings. We look forward to many such special events in the future.

SYDNEY CRICKET GROUND

2019
AXE &
SHIELD BALL

OPERATIONS

ASSOC

DAILY MESSENGER STAND



Service History

Greg had served in the Army for nearly 21 years, at the time of his tragic death, mostly in the Royal Australian Engineers. He enlisted on the 3rd of March 1998 and completed recruit training at Kapooka. After his Initial Employment Training (IET) for Engineers, his first posting was to the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment (1 CER) in late 1999. Whilst at 1 CER he deployed on Op TANAGER to EAST TIMOR between Apr and Oct 2000. He continued to serve at 1 CER until he was promoted to LCPL in Jan 2003. He then deployed to the SOLOMON ISLANDS on Op ANODE with Construction and Resources TP (1 CER) from Nov 2003 to Mar 2004. In 2006 he promoted to CPL, completed the Explosive Ordnance Reconnaissance Course and posted to the School of Military Engineering (SME) to an IET TP and later to Watermanship and Bridging. From SME he deployed on Op SLIPPER with the first Reconstruction Task Force from Sep 2006 to Apr 2007 with the Husky Route Clearance Vehicle. Upon Return to Australia in 2007 he posted to the Incident Response Regiment (IRR) and remained until the end of 2011. During this time, he deployed again on Op SLIPPER with the Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) between Feb and Jul in 2010, returning to the IRR until the end of 2011 and achieved the rank of SGT the same year. He posted back to SME in 2012, fulfilled a number of roles, promoted to WO2 in 2014 and posted back to the Special Operations Engineer Regiment (SOER) at the end of 2015 into an Operations role in the Regimental Headquarters. Greg was selected as the Squadron Sergeant Major for B Squadron for 2018 and 2019 but was tragically killed in Sep of his second year. It was during this second year that he applied for the Army Senior NCO and Warrant Officer Commissioning Scheme (ASWOCS) for which he was successful and as a result earmarked for commissioning to CAPT in 2020. In his initial appointment he was to remain in SOER and deploy as a Troop Commander to IRAQ on Op OKRA.

Greg was awarded the following Honours and Awards

- Australian Active Service Medal (AASM) with Clasps EAST TIMOR and ICAT
- Returned from Active Service Badge (RASB)
- Australian Service Medal (ASM) with Clasp SOLOMON ISLANDS II and CT/SR
- NATO Non Article 5 Medal with Clasp ISAF
- Meritorious Unit Citation – Task Force 66 (SOTG IV-XX)
- Defence Long Service Medal (DLSM) with First Clasp (20yrs)
- Army Combat Badge

A Tribute to WO2 Gregory Miller and Jocelyn Villanueva

On Good Friday, the 4th of April 1969, Jocelyn was born in the family home in the coastal town Bolinao, in the Philippines. Jos – or Joce – as we called her growing up - was named after my father Jose and was supposed to be the 3rd and last child – until my sister Eufracia came along. Dad was a teacher and knew that for economic reasons his family would have a better life overseas and applied to migrate to either America, Canada or Australia. Australia replied first. He journeyed ahead in July 1971 to prepare for the arrival of his wife and 4 young daughters, and in September 1972, Caringbah in Sydney became Jos's first Aussie home with schooling at Burraneer Bay public school, in the Cronulla Shire.

The following year teaching opportunities in Darwin, in the Northern Territory beckoned, which meant another move for the family of six, where I popped up soon after. It was here that Dad bought our first family car, a two-tone bronze Ford Fairlane station wagon affectionately called Pumpkin, after the coach and carriage from the fairytale, and ever since then Jos was a devoted Ford fan for life.

But living up north was not without its perils. On Christmas Eve, December 1974, Cyclone Tracy struck and destroyed the city. Fortunately, we were on the first of many school holiday road trips and resting in Townsville at the time. Now homeless and refugees, it was back to Sydney for a second time in Jos's life. The Salvation Army and free hostels helped provide relief during the 6 months spent there. It was also during this period that a young 5-year old Jos was pushed down a slippery slide by a boy, and hit the concrete at the bottom at speed. She fractured her left arm with bone breaking through the skin. My parents quickly rushed her to Concord Hospital where she was operated on by an army surgeon.

Upon our return to Darwin we discovered the two storey house was now a single storey, with only the toilet surviving up top in the now well ventilated open-air bathroom. In the early days after Cyclone Tracy, the whole family slept in one room.

Despite this setback we had an amazing childhood. With 5 sisters all born within 7 and a half years, we were as close as sisters could get. Weekends were spent exploring the neighbourhood, especially along Nightcliff and Rapid Creek beaches. We had so many friends, including the neighbours' kids who often joined us on adventures. We would only return home when we were hungry or it was dark.

Hanging out with Dad, we learnt to love watching sports on TV such as 5-day cricket test matches, rugby union and rugby league – ever loyal Jos followed the Cronulla sharks. And on one weekend every year, we would watch the Bathurst 1000, supporting Ford racers, of course.



Jos's life was brilliant and accomplished, and she was beautiful both inside and out. But beneath the bright, beaming and effervescent smile, hid personal pain and heartache that moulded Jos into the person we all knew and love.

Jos's first relationship – with Tom, her high school sweetheart from the age of 16 – endured for 17 years, and ended after 2 years marriage. Jos never saw this coming and it was the start of a long downward spiral of low self-esteem and depression. Our big sister, Athena, reached out and became Jos's best friend and vital support from that point on, with their sisterhood compared to that of twins. Through self-help books, and other resources, she gained a new lease on life.

Jos belatedly ventured out into the Darwin nightlife with her friend Yagoda, and would dance the nights away without a care in the world. In 2006, her life was set to change when she was invited by friends to a barbecue at Robertson Barracks. Sitting off to one side, by himself, was a cute looking guy named Gregory James Miller. He and Jos struck up a conversation and from that initial encounter they quickly became a couple. Greg's career in the Army meant a posting interstate to Holsworthy Barracks, and Jos chose to follow her heart to join him in Sydney, with the uncertainty of overseas deployments.

Jos and Greg wanted to start a family. Heartbreakingly, Jos suffered from endometriosis, making pregnancy near impossible. Jos and Greg tried IVF for many years, and had hoped to give it another try.

Fur babies replaced the babies Greg and Jos were unable to have. Their huskies Teska and Storm were spoilt rotten. Greg and Jos couldn't bear to be away from them for too long and often cut short much needed holidays, preferring to stay home instead. Kennels were an absolute no-go as far as Greg was concerned, especially after footage emerged of both dogs scaling the 2-metre kennel enclosure at Holsworthy. At least they were smart enough to stick around for breakfast the next day. And as Jos said: Can't cage a husky!

Family members were frequently asked to fly into Sydney to fur-baby-sit Teska and Stormy if Jos and Greg were away for more than one night. While Teska sadly passed away this May at 19 years of age, we are taking Storm to live with us here in Brisbane.

Careerwise, Jos always wanted to work for Qantas and in Darwin she enjoyed 17 years overseeing corporate sales and marketing. In Sydney, Jos secured other roles within Qantas, as an Account Executive managing a portfolio of 4 international European airlines, and at the Flight training centre she coordinated the training of pilots on the flight simulators, such as the 737's, 747's and A380's. Jos had a long and enduring career with Qantas. Many of the staff became lifelong friends, and her Qantas family, which is still strong to this day.

Jos left Qantas after 24 years of faithful service and found herself in the unfamiliar role of being unemployed. Jos sent off hundreds of jobs applications over 4 years, often being told again and again that she was overqualified. Many employers refused to believe Jos wanted a less taxing job. She eventually found a solution and new career path that encompassed all her skills, with a company called Sirrus, conducting and assessing security vetting of Commonwealth employees, and undertook a course in Cert IV Investigations. She set up her home office and became self-employed for a while.

Jos was eventually offered a temporary position with the Australian Securities Investment Commission (or ASIC in short). They were soon impressed with her knowledge, skills, motivation and drive, and offered her a permanent position. She was quickly promoted within 12 months, and took on new roles and responsibilities. Jos's last role was as team leader. After the accident, we visited her work and met with her now ASIC family. We are told Jos's work contribution couldn't be measured; she helped build her team up from virtually scratch, and introduced the wonderful and weird world of spreadsheets, and all the immense possibilities spreadsheets have to offer; her warm hearted nature also endeared her to all who knew her, and her team are missing her greatly.

Jos always stayed back, well beyond late, to finish reports and tasks, and for her efforts was recently rewarded with a 2019 Australia Day Award with her ASIC team.

Interior designing and woodwork were favourite hobbies. Jos made tables, bedside drawers and other furniture, and soft furnishing for the house. And one Christmas requested electrical tools for woodworking. Jos and Greg often travelled to Bowral to pick up old or unusual furniture for their house.

Greg also loved to cook for Jos and dinner would always be ready whenever she came home late from work. He could do a mean Sunday roast and would often barbecue in the backyard, tempting the neighbours over the back fence.

As many of you know, Greg also had a love of muscle cars and collected a few over the years. Jos helped carry on the family tradition of giving cars pet names, and Greg named some of them Clancy, Nugget, Goldie, Bruce, Norman, Blue, Deadpool. His British Land Rover is called Harry, and Richie the Sunbeam Alpine.

Aside from Greg, one of the greatest influences in Jos's life was Star Wars. As a young girl Jos was introduced to a galaxy far, far away... Jos lived her life according to the Force – the light side of the Force that is. Even Jos's first car, a little white 2-door Toyota Echo, had personalised number plates A.R.T.O.O. or Artoo. Master Yoda was her mentor and Jos took to heart many of his saying: "Do or do not. There is no try." and Jos applied her all in everything she did – including her love for Greg.

Their plan was to eventually move to Brisbane where our family members live, but history now records a tragic helicopter flight that crashed into Anna Bay on the 6th of September 2019, taking all five lives on board. We lost five extra-ordinary people on the night that broke the hearts of so many families and friends.

We pay tribute to Jos and Greg, as well as David John Kerr, Jamie John Odgen and Grant Kuhnemann.

While we waited painfully during the long 3-week search and hopeful return of our loved ones, we had the dilemma of where Jos would be buried. Dad is resting nearby at Nudgee Cemetery and Mum wanted Jos to be laid to rest with Dad. We also wanted Jos to be buried alongside Greg. Yet again, Jos came up with her own unique solution and made the decision for us. Jos won't be buried anywhere. Instead, she will rest gently in our hearts, and we will carry Jos with us everywhere.

We miss Jos and Greg so much. Their absence has left a permanent and empty hole in our lives. We still cannot fathom and comprehend their loss. We wish to add as unusual as it may sound: that we take some comfort that Jos and Greg died together. Had Jos not gotten on that helicopter, we know in our hearts that a part of Jos would have died too.

We know Jos and Greg are together. Forever.

Niza Villanueva



Good morning, as Greg's sister Elizabeth, I stand before you today, the representative of a family in grief of losing a beloved Son, Brother, God Father, Uncle, Nephew, Cousin and Friend. To make our pain more unbearable the loss of his beautiful fiancé Jocelyn.

We were proud to welcome Jocelyn into our family, Jocelyn was kind, caring, understanding and loving with qualities that complimented their relationship perfectly. They will forever be together in eternity and we will always love her as our own.

We are all united today, not only in our desire to pay our respects to Greg, but rather our need to do so for the extraordinary life he lived and what he did for this country. Today is our chance to say thank you for the way Greg brightened our lives and be grateful for the time he spent with us.

I believe that every person in their own unique way, creates a legacy in their lifetime by which others can live through long after that person has left us. For those of us who remain, Greg has truly created a legacy to uphold and fulfil in our daily lives.

On behalf of our Family, I want to thank you all for coming. Your attendance here today speaks volumes about the impact he had on us all.

Greg was born on the 24th January 1980 at Redcliffe Hospital, surrounded by a loving family. Living the very best life a child could live, his childhood was full of activities such as camping, sailing, woodworks and of course building model helicopters. Mum said we were the only house in the street that bought super-glue in bulk.

Throughout his earlier years he had a wonderful and very close relationship with his older cousins; Anthony, Adrian and Rhonda who would lead him astray bush bashing in poppy's ute, bouncing around in the tray much to Greg's delight. Poppy would always watch on saying "That's my boys".

From the moment Greg could walk he had a strong interest for the Army, he would be the only kid in camouflage, whilst sitting at the dinner table with a ration pack as everyone else ate a Sunday roast. I know from my experience he would make me march up and down the hallway with a broom stick as a rifle, practising my TLV turns to attention.

As Greg started school at De La Salle on the Peninsula, mum always knew he was destined for greatness. He had a passion for sport, especially basketball and golf. In his senior years as Prefect and House Captain at St Theresa's, Greg was always given special leave to attend the weekly Ingham Golf Competition with the Sports master, who quickly realised he could only win with Greg as his partner. Mum was so proud and classed this as fine academic achievement.



Outside of school, most of Greg's spare time was spent in every Army disposal store between Redcliffe and Brisbane where he was happiest having a yarn with anyone and everyone about the army. It has been suggested that at some stores they didn't need to do a yearly stocktake, they'd just ask Greg.

When Greg turned 17, Dad took him to Townsville to undertake the Army entrance exam, which he passed with flying colours and was enlisted whilst still doing his senior year.

During his time living in Darwin, he met his soul mate Jocelyn before his posting to Afghanistan and it was clear they were inseparable. Jocelyn was by his side, always, moving from Darwin to Sydney when Greg was sent to Holsworthy where they purchased their first home together.

Not many people would know that his kitchen was his haven. He had beautiful grapevines cascading over the window and boy did he cook a magnificent curry. The memories for most of his nearest and dearest was sitting around the fire pit on a cold winters' night with his much-loved dogs, Storm and Teska. A memory that will always bring a tear and a smile to us.

During Greg's downtime, he had a love for vintage cars and GT Falcons. He became an expert wheeling and dealing, identifying the genuine cars on the market. My fondest memory is flying down to Sydney Port with mum and dad, watching his first Shelby GT 500 being loaded off the ship. There's no denying we tried to do a few burn outs in the street with an unregistered left-hand drive vintage collector.

But his true love from being the little boy in camouflage was helicopters. His proudest moment was gaining his licence to fly last year. He told dad "you don't fly a helicopter, you feel it and become a part of it".

When I visited Greg's house after the accident, I spent some time in his room. On his mantel piece was a wedding favour from my wedding and resting on that was a fortune, which read "use your wisdom to influence others". I couldn't help but smile as those 6 words were a true reflection and the perfect personification of the man that Greg was. The conversations we had with people we met along the way after the accident and the devastation they showed upon hearing the news really showed our family how many lives he touched.

Greg's journey from Brisbane to Bankstown on that fateful Friday has changed our lives forever, but it was only one of a multitude of journeys that Greg took in his life.

Words cannot describe the pain we are going through. In you, I have lost my brother and mum and dad, a Son. Losing a son and brother is like losing a part of yourself forever. We will never be the same without you and you will always be our hero. Please stay by our side forever.

Greg left us much too soon, but he left us with an extraordinary model of how to live our lives. For you, Greg, we'll do our best and we'll do what's right to use our wisdom to influence others. You were unique, intelligent, passionate, loving but most of all you were our Greggie, a son, my brother and as mum would always end every conversation ... love you Greg.

I would like to leave you with a poem;

You never said I'm leaving,
You never said goodbye.
You were gone before I knew it,
And only God knows why.
A million times I needed you,
A million times I cried.
If love alone could have saved you,
You never would have died.

In life I loved you dearly,
In death I love you still.
In my heart you hold a place,
That no one could ever fill.
It broke my heart to lose you,
But you didn't go alone.
On that Friday, part of me went with you,
The day God took you home.

Elizabeth Benson



HONORARY MEMBERS

Bree-anna Till

Jacob Till

Taleah Till

Ziggy Till

Susan Staden

Noel Till

Vicki Rawling

Peter Rawling

Darren Shaw

Marie Robinson

Peter Robinson

Rachael Robinson

Benjamin Robinson

Troy Robinson

Liv Bergeest

Katrina Paterson

Roxanne Hilton

Murray Smith

Brenton Paterson

Michael Jorgensen

Tracy March

Kelly Newton

Andrew Coleman

Rosland McDougall

Luke McDougall

Cory McDougall

Paul Gould

Phil Heads

Prashanth Shanmugan



[image 1]
SOER catafalque party.

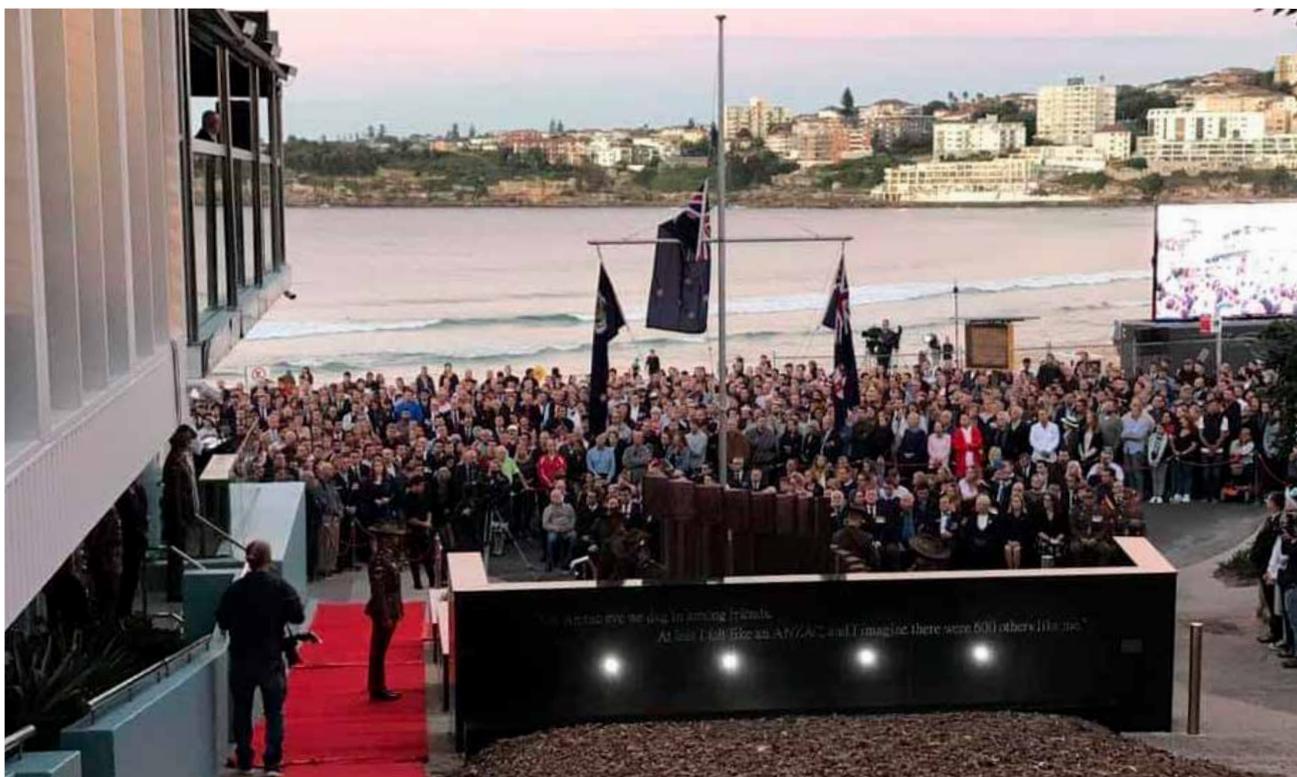
ANZAC Day 2019

This Anzac Day 2019 marked 105 years since the Anzacs first landed on the Gallipoli peninsula, every Anzac Day serves as a sobering reminder of what those soldiers stood for and endured. As the sun rose over the beaches, up to 30,000 people joined members of the Regiment and our newly formed Association at North Bondi RSL which has become the home away from home of the Regiment. Every year it draws current and ex member of the unit back together and this year was no different, however, I would have to say that this year, with the inaugural Association Anzac Day, the former members appeared to outweigh the current. This increased attended by former member may have just been by chance; personally, I think the rapidly established network that is the associations may have had something to do with it.

For those members who were not aware, honorary members from the Robinson family attended the Anzac eve AFL match in Melbourne; Richmond Football Club hosted them, as Peter Marie and Rachael lit the Anzac caldron at the MCG.

A huge thankyou and congratulation on a job well done goes out to the catafalque who provided an exceptional guard of honour for the duration of the service, lead by Cpl S, they represented the unit well.

(Previous page)
Honorary members of the SOER Association.



[Image 2] North Bondi ANZAC Day service





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SHOP INTO THE NEW WEBSITE AND FOR FURTHER IDEAS OF
ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN THE SHOP





Special Operations Engineer Regiment

Alpha Squadron

In order to ensure Alpha Squadron continues evolving to meet the worldwide threat, coupled with the integration of new technologies, training methodologies and operational constructs; throughout 2019 the Squadron has focussed on upskilling Sappers in scientific skills, drawing back to the basics. As is common throughout the Corps as a whole, tempo provides fleeting opportunities to have all Sappers in one location and able to conduct combined training, so a focus on the basic building blocks of skills ensures the interoperability of teams and the resilience of our TTPs. This ensures that the Squadron continues to be relevant, cutting edge and mission focussed to meet current and future requirements.

Along with their supported Commando element, the Squadron conducted numerous walk, crawl, run style exercises; culminating with validation and certification in either late 2018 or early 2019. Alpha Squadron continued to provide personnel to support extant Operational commitments in the Middle East, and focussed heavily on training that enabled this support.

After an excellent and much needed Christmas break, Alpha Squadron returned to work to continue their good work from 2018 and started the year with a validation activity, supporting the Commandos through C-CBRNE planning and effects to a successful conclusion. Additionally, surrounding the main validation were a number of challenging activities, including a CCG complete CBRN FMP at The Defence Explosive Ordnance Training School in Orchard Hills, NSW. The Troop alongside their supported elements endured a rapid assault in full IPE throughout the heat of a Western Sydney summer.

Several opportunities to conduct C-CBRNE technical training FMPs were capitalised on, and excellent results were achieved across the board. As always, Domestic Operations is a high tempo, high integration area; and the balance of combined training vs SOER independent training was managed well.

Another Troop within the Squadron returned to work and immediately started a high tempo period of individual and group skills training with few Troop members at the unit on a daily basis for at least the first month. Gaining new parachute insertion skills has enabled the Troop to provide an enhanced level of support to its CCG, and has paved the way for others to follow suit. Following their training period, the Troop integrated and validated with the associated CCG, integrating seamlessly with elements from multiple units within the ADF.

In the lead up to EX Talisman Sabre, Alpha Squadron has conducted additional Mobility, Survivability and C-CBRNE skills remediation at various training areas around NSW. EX Talisman Sabre will see the squadron provide expeditious C-CBRNE effects in support of a Joint Task Force operating within a broader ADF and Coalition activity.

The image shows two soldiers in full combat gear, including helmets, goggles, and rifles, standing in a desert environment. They are wearing camouflage uniforms and are holding rifles. The soldier in the foreground is wearing a helmet with a white number '7' on the side. The background shows a sandy, rocky terrain with some debris.

Following EX Talisman Sabre, the Squadron will enter into a period of International Engagements, fostering development and sharing in a combined environment to ensure constant baselining with peer units and continued development of world's best practice across all disciplines.

Alpha Squadron has continued with the provision of training and mentoring to elements of the Iraqi Security Forces within Iraq. A focus on development of Iraqi EOD capability ensures that the Iraqi people are protected from the results of the conflict in the area, and are best placed to continue their development into the future; rebuilding and occupying as the situation allows. The work that our deployed members conduct is vital to ensuring the resilience of the population, the survivability of the security forces and the attribution of attacks to insurgents leading to their prosecution.

Iraqi Army Rangers storm a building during the Iraqi Army Ranger culminating activity at the Taji Military Complex, Iraq.

Communications Manager

New Website

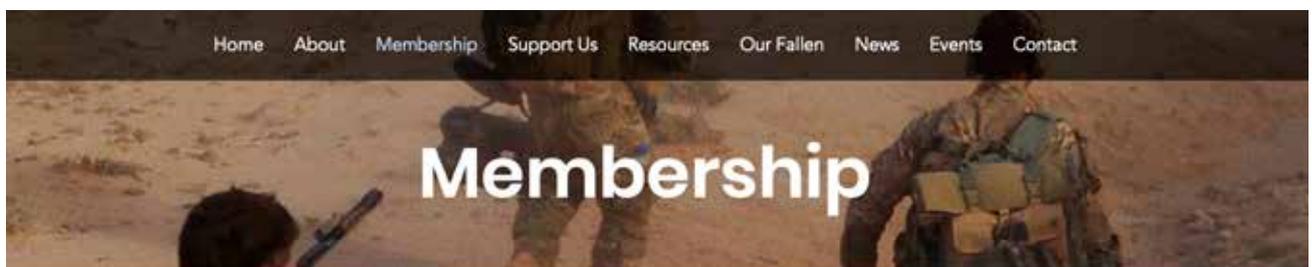
We have been busy updating our website to not only look better but also be more appealing to potential corporate and business sponsors. We seek donations and/or discounts for goods and services that will benefit our members. The new look reflects the hard work and superior design skills of Lara Daddo.



Membership Database

Many of you will have been contacted recently (maybe multiple times!) to provide your personal information to assist us with getting our membership database up to date. We can thank Kelly-Ann King for the massive amount of work in consolidating multiple lists to ensure we have a true record of our membership. Thank you for your patience with this ongoing work. We have been inundated with membership requests from the date of the launch onward from multiple different entries (launch event, website, emails and calls). We are extremely grateful for your support and rest assured we are working very hard to deliver the services and sense of family that you all deserve.

Our super spreadsheet that so far functions as our membership database will soon be replaced by an encrypted database that sits behind the website. This will ensure members can join directly from the website (once approved by the committee), pay and have their details permanently and securely stored. This will enable better communications and ensure memberships are kept up to date. We have Scott Coleman to thank for bringing his exceptional expertise to bare to deliver this.



There are four membership categories to join the SOER Association.

Ordinary Membership

For the men and women that have served in the Incident Response Regiment or Special Operations Engineer Regiment since 2003.

Membership pricing:
\$25 for 1 year
\$40 for 2 years
\$60 for 3 years

[Join](#)

Affiliate Membership

For the families and friends of the Incident Response Regiment and Special Operations Engineer Regiment.

Membership pricing:
\$15 for 1 year
\$20 for 2 years
\$30 for 3 years

[Join](#)

Life Membership

For those that have demonstrated commitment to the SOER Association for over 10 years.

There are no fees for our Life Members

[Join](#)

Honourary Membership

For those that have given exceptional and outstanding service to the Incident Response Regiment and Special Operations Engineer Regiment family.

There are no fees for our Honourary Members.

[Join](#)

Corporate Sponsorship

We have not yet formally sought or approached many corporate or business partners for sponsorship. This remains an outstanding task that will be enabled via the launch of our new website and social media pages. However, we have already had unsolicited offers of support that included discounts during the launch. This included:



If you are a business owner yourself or you have influential connections with any Veteran friendly businesses, we would be very grateful for support in the form of donations or discounts of goods or services to support our members. We would like to be able to negotiate discounts at venues and stores where members can produce their membership card. All corporate sponsors and business partners will be acknowledged on our website.

I hope this publication is well received and provides you with a useful snapshot of what we have been up to as well as what we have planned. A massive amount of work has gone into it and I'd like to acknowledge all the contributors and the work of Nenad Protic who was the MMT who put it altogether into this stunning format. I look forward to working with you all to continue to build on our initial successes and strengthen our Association.



Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association

A tip of the hat to our comrades from the Vietnam Tunnel Rats Association. Grateful to be affiliated with the brave men of that Association that blazed a trail for the Aussie Infantry in the Vietnam War and gave us something to aspire to.



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Sapper Barry Hartford,
a Tunnel Rat with 1 Field Squadron



State Chapter Updates

South Australia / Northern Territory

So, what has been happening in good ol'Adelaide? Well to begin with, let's not forget about our Northern Territory brethren...yeah Potsy, that was a shout out for you mate. Well to begin with, the SA Chapter is a small chapter in comparison to its East Coast Comrades. With a grand total of just one ex-serving member... please feel free to pack up shop and move across at any time. Gladly welcome a second into the wolf pack.

With that said however, I find myself in a rather fortunate position as SA is the home town for one of our own beloved son's...Scott Smith. And although Scotty no longer stands beside us...his family still do with open arms and generosity, and it is a privilege being able to share the creation of the SOER Association with them.

So, with our current three strong SOER populace here in Adelaide, we do our best to give it a good nudge and have so far enjoyed two evening outings. Our first meet found ourselves at the Coopers Ale House in central Adelaide, spurred on by the arrival of our Communications Manager, DL. It was there that we dined and some of the fine local delights such as the classic chicken parmi, and the salt and pepper squid. I paid my dues by supporting Katrina by finding a good home for all her left overs. Yes, I have had to pull out the belt punch in recent times...I've been grazing well...have found myself some good pastures. Get fat or die trying!!

Our second meet happened in mid-May and was prompted by our main man DL once again during his weekend away with his lovely wife to the Barossa Valley. So, with a \$100 food and drink voucher to get through, the night couldn't have gone any better at the Maid and Magpie Hotel. We were fortunate to have Roxanne able to attend after she sorted out some last-minute babysitter issues, and Katrina...well, unfortunately, she got no hugs...as she was making friends with Kleenex. Next time!!!

Lastly, I am still on the hunt for a venue to call the SOER Association home here in SA. It has been rather difficult process due to the lack of numbers, however deterred I am not, and the quest continues. RSL's are not regarded in the same light in SA, as they may appear on the Eastern coast, so the venue of choice will be that of a civilian pub or venue that'll best serve future SOER and SOER Association members.

In closing, if any of you SOER guys or gals, honorary or affiliate members, ever feel the need to stop by in Adelaide (said no-one ever), please don't hesitate to speak up as we would love to organise a night out, dinner and a few drinks.

Till next time...onwards and upwards.

Nathan Bolton

Victoria

The Victorian State Chapter (VSC) had their first 'meet and greet' gathering on Sunday, 24 Mar2019.

We had a great turnout with 11 members coming along to the Box Hill RSL. We decide to take advantage of the 'Deck' area of the RSL to relax, take in to superb weather and view. It needs to be mentioned that this area was not actually open to the general public. However, don't let that stop SOER/IRR veterans to scope out a location, finding the best vantage spot to indulge in a few cold beverages over some great conversations!

Now the 'Deck' is an open roof top bar area of the Box Hill RSL which is only open apparently on Friday afternoon and evenings. Not a Sunday afternoon. The photo will explain what a fantastic area of the club it actual is hence why we were so attracted to it and made it our own for our first gathering.

Our presence on the 'Deck' was unfortunately short lived due to the fact that the bar was a floor down and the only way in was to use the elevator. Now I'm not exactly sure who was the culprit who tipped off the duty staff to our presence up on the 'Deck'. It was either the over flowing tray of drinks that disappeared in the elevator or maybe it was the order of toasted sandwiches which were sent via the closed off stair well to the Deck!!!

Well the Duty Manager was quickly informed of our presents and we were asked nicely to head back down stairs and find another area of the club where we could continue our conservations. You can obviously surmise that the Club President, Secretary and Promotions manager would be informed of our little venture up on the "Deck' come Monday morning and yes, I did receive a phone call.

Our first 'meet and greet' was a huge success and I would like to thank everyone who came along either from interstate, the outer suburbs of Melbourne and local members.

I am pleased to announce that the Victorian State Chapter has been able to secure an affiliation with the Box Hill RSL. This will allow the VSC to created a bases from which we can establish a presence within Victoria for the SOER Association.

The VSC is currently looking at establishing a link with various organisations within the Melbourne area and across the state. Once we have been able to secure these connections, we will pass these on to the members of the Association.

DC





Queensland

G'day from the place where it is beautiful one day and perfect the next.

We started off the year with a catch-up at the Currumbin RSL on the Gold Coast. For those who have not been to this RSL I highly recommend a visit. The location and food are excellent. I wasn't sure who would turn up but it was great to see, Simmo, Andrew Studerus, his wife and their little one, Leon Mc and Peter and Marie Robinson, the mother and father of Rowan.

It was great opportunity to catch up with all the guys who haven't seen each other for years, and of course Rowan's mum and dad. We had a great informal catch-up, talking rubbish as old soldiers do, a few cold ales and a good feed was had by all.

In March it was a chance for our members in Brisbane's to come together for a catch-up. I canvassed for options and the Charming Squire in South Bank was the preferred choice. Unfortunately for us 20 EOD SQN was having their family day on the same date as our catch-up, and this had a big impact on the numbers who could come to the Charming Squire. I'm glad to say the old war dog Simmo turned up, also Chris Panteli and Chrissy Archer and her two lovely daughters. I personally hadn't seen Chrissy and Chris for 10 years or more. It was great to hear what they both had been up to and what they had been doing over the last decade or so. Simmo is still working on becoming the richest man in Australia!! After a lot of chatting, ice cream and burgers we called it a day.

With the run up to ANZAC Day I was contacted by the 2CDO QLD Association and the SASR QLD Association for SOERA members to join them for a few drinks after the march in the Brisbane CBD. I attended and saw a few familiar faces from DCT and deployments to TK. It's amazing how people never change. The day consisted of a lot of drinking, old war stories and piss taking!!

In the future, I'm hoping to have more catch-ups in Brisbane, Gold Coast and also up north in either Townsville or Cairns. I would like to involve the guys from the Tunnel Rats Association as they are our Engineer Corps brothers and also the 2 CDO and SASR Associations' as they are the guys we have fought alongside over the last 16 years.

We are trying to get everyone involved, not just a few, so anyone who has any ideas please feel free to email me. I am open to suggestions. I understand many have young families and that participation through these years is hard but even this, overtime, we can work through. This is for us to share, keep in touch and keep the bond alive.

Pom



Australian Capital Territory

The ACT Chapter had its first gathering in March at the Walt and Burley, a great pub/restaurant in Kingston overlooking Lake Burley Griffin. It was here that we decided to establish a monthly catch-up occurring on the third Wednesday of every month allowing members to catch up regularly if they want to. The ACT Chapter catch-ups are extended to the any SOER or SOER Association members that are travelling to Canberra as it is such a transient location, especially for the ladies and gentlemen amongst us, the Commissioned Officers of course. At this stage we have not identified the location/venue that we would like to call home as we have decided we will sample a few of the key venues in Canberra to determine which will suit our needs best. So far we have sampled the Walt and Burley, Olims and the Old Canberra Inn, still plenty to go yet.



Once a suitable location has been selected, or a couple of options at least, the intent is to approach the venue to see if we can establish a relationship with them it becomes a SOER Association ACT home that anyone can go into, potentially show their membership card and be looked after.

Plans for the future. I would like to see a monthly event occur, if possible, where chapter members participate in other activities in the area, sport, adventurous, family gatherings, cultural or volunteer work all designed to bring people together to have fun and support worthwhile causes. Again these events would be open to any members that are transiting through Canberra.

All information on any events are shared on the ACT Chapter group chat and on the SOER Association page, so keep an eye out for the monthly catch-up venue and upcoming activities.

WO2 O



Treasurer Update



As expected, and as with any new organisation, there were few setbacks and challenges most of which have been rectified. Some of the issues faced:

- Disconnect between membership data and payment data
- No Credit Card and thus our inability to pay for goods/ services directly
- No bank account and reliance on SOER RTF for day to day business

Progress to date:

- Temporary bank account opened which will allow prompt action of invoice payments and reimbursement

- Linked to this temp bank account will be a credit card (should be available next week) that can be used for payment online shop – more to follow in this space

- Funds from SOER RTF account has been transferred to the new account. Total amount transferred: \$5737.27

Two major donors are Paterson Induction Hardening and SOER RTF for the amount of \$5,000 each. North Bondi RSL donated a sum. This amount will be re-donated once the association is granted not-for-profit status.

Expenditures of \$21,363.17 is broken-down as follows:

- Company registration \$403.00
- Cost associated with association launch \$13,465.45
- Committee meeting travel and dinner / ANZAC day attendance \$1,681.27

- ID Cards \$98.45
- 100 x Coins \$715.00
- Contribution to SOER Ball deposit \$5,000.00

MAJ J

Auxillary Update

Hi my name is Amber and my husband has been posted to SOER on a number of occasions. We have three independent and resilient Defence Force raised daughters aged eleven, thirteen and fifteenth. The two eldest are navigating high school, whilst the youngest is in her last year of primary school. My husband is currently on deployment, so life is busy!!!

I volunteered for the SOER Association Auxiliary position because I wanted to know how the association can help not just myself but other families. I hope to provide opportunities for families and allow them to voice ideas about their needs, because just like you, family is the most important part of my life.

Hopefully you'll find some of the information within this article helpful for you and your family.

Amber



[Image 1] Auxillary Manager, Amber Lynch.

Activities for the School Holidays

Check out this site for some great deals and tickets to a huge array of shows and events: <https://navycanteens.com.au/ticketing/>

Have a creative flare? Consider entering the Napier Waller Art Prize: <https://www.awm.gov.au/.../grants-sch.../napier-waller-art-prize>

This site also has accommodation options that are available to defence families: <https://armyholidays.com.au/accommodation/other-defence-facilities/>

The following are eligible to use AAF Company holiday facilities:

- Army Regular and Reserve may book 12 months in advance, and
- All other categories may book 6 months in advance, those being:
- Navy and Air Force Regular and Reserve
- Retired ADF personnel
- Serving members of Overseas Forces
- Defence Civilians
- Defence Contractors
- Family of the above when staying with an eligible member.
- Defence Contractors and Emergency Services
- Defence Bank and Military Bank.

All members booking will be required to provide their PMKeys Number; rank; full name and Unit or workplace details. Retired ADF members are required to provide proof of service (service number) and or a current retired ADF superannuants identity number.



[Image 2] Coogee apartments.

