



Family Christmas Party. Gallipoli Army Barracks Enoggera Qld.

On Sunday 01 November, the Army at Gallipoli Barracks (Enoggera Qld) held a Christmas party for the troops and their families - once again organised by Major Graham Palmer, the 7th Brigade Welfare Officer. As we've said before, we wonder whether people appreciate the amount of work this bloke puts in. His job requires him to give up a lot of his weekends and spare time to organize events such as this – a fact that probably goes un-noticed, but which is appreciated by a lot of people. He deserves a big thank you!!!



There's been a lot of changes in the ADF over the years, people aren't "volunteered" like they used to be so Graham arranged for "helpers" from 3 local RSL Sub-Branches to come along and help with the day. These helpers formed up under his watchful eye early on the Sunday morning and were delegated off into various jobs. The focal point of the day being a "Bunnings-style" sausage sizzle and the RSL boys and girls got to work setting up shop, cranking up the barby, separating the 60 or so Kg of snags, buttering then stacking the bread, setting out the sauces, thawing the onions then when everything passed muster, on went the snags and onions and by 10.00am the cooked snags started to roll.



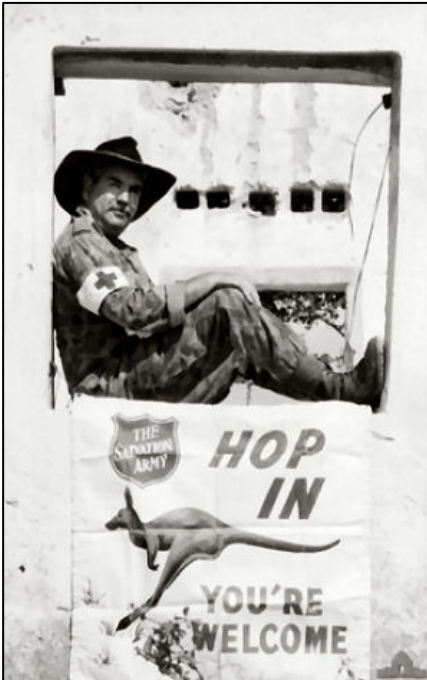
Only a few days previously, (on the 31st October) about 300 ADF members were farewelled from the Base on their way to Iraq under [Operation Okra](#). A majority of the 300 were from the 7th Brigade which is based at Gallipoli Barracks, most of whom have left behind young families who naturally are worried about the welfare of their loved ones. These parties/barbies are events where these young (mainly) wives can get together, in a happy and social atmosphere and help each other through the worrying times their loved ones are away.

The ADF (and Australia as a whole) has learnt a lot since Vietnam. No longer are ADF personnel left to their own devices when returning from a conflict zone, no longer are they expected to just "toughen-up" when they have problems, today the ADF, DVA and many



volunteer groups are freely available to help returning personnel through a troubled period and thankfully no longer are they ridiculed on their return to Australia by mongrels like Jim Cairns, wherever he is today, I hope it's nice and warm.

One group that has been there for the troops for what seems forever is the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army Red Shield Defence Services (RSDS) has been serving Australia's Defence Forces for over 110 years. It began when Salvation Army Staff Captain Mary Murray was appointed to the South African Boer War in November 1899. The first Sally hut on a field of battle was put up during the Boer War in February 1900 and this began the tradition of support in theatres of war involving Australians during the 20th Century and beyond and anyone who has been in a conflict knows and appreciates the excellent work they do.



During WW2, Red Shield Officers established their famous "Hop-In" centres at war zones from Tobruk to the Kokoda trail, providing on the spot comforts and a home away from home for soldiers. The centres ranged from large marquees in major areas to small tents, all displaying the familiar "Hop-In You're Welcome" signs.

The Korean and Vietnam Wars through the 1950's to the 1970's again took Australian troops into active service and the Salvo's Hop-In Centres helped keep up morale.

Today the RSDS still maintains a close relationship with troops on Barracks, in the field and on deployment with both Australian and UN missions. They are equipped with a fleet of 4WD vehicles and are able to bring practical support to soldiers in the field, including their famous cold "jube juice" (red cordial) hot drinks, biscuits, sweets, chewing gum, magazines and a listening ear. Their Hop-In centres are now equipped with TV's, DVD players, video games, table tennis, pool tables and some computers with internet access. Today's Hop-In centres provide somewhere that soldiers can relax in an alcohol free environment.



The Sallies had one of their Tojos at the barby and their volunteer staff were on hand to provide hot and cold drinks to the mums, dads and their kids during the day – though we reckon some

mums and dads might later regret they allowed their off-spring to have that 3rd raspberry cordial.....

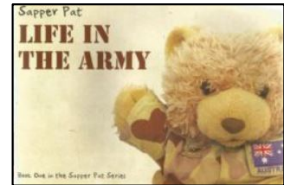
Another support group which is provided by the ADF is the Defence Community Organisation (DCO). In 1986, Sue Hamilton, the Assistant Secretary for the Office of the Status of Women, issued a report titled [Supporting Service Families](#). This report suggested urgent changes which underpin DCO's support for Defence families to this day, including family stability, dealing with absence and disruption to partners' careers and children's education. Today the DCO provides a [Defence Family Helpline](#) which provides a 24-7 support service to families as well as the [FamilySMART range of programs](#) which help Defence families manage the challenges of military life, such as deployment, parental absence from home, moving house, or a partner returning after a long time away. It recently released an informative book titled the [Deployment Support Booklet](#) to provide families with a go-to resource to assist them during times of deployment.



Julie Penman – a Defence Community Organisation volunteer.



Julie was on hand to provide support to those that needed it and she also had a bunch of “hand-outs” for the kids including the 3 wonderful little “Sapper Pat” booklets.



Nicky Matthysen from the Gallipoli Barracks Welfare Centre.

Gallipoli Barracks has a very well equipped Welfare Centre provided by the DCO and in which the Barbecue was held. Volunteers provide various activities for families during the week, such events include play-groups for the kids, a “girl’s night in”, craft groups and a “Mums and Bubs” centre where new mums can meet with other mums and help each other when, in a lot of cases, their menfolk are overseas/.

You can see further info [HERE](#).

Nicky is one of the volunteers who help manage the Centre and she was on hand, with her very young son, to sell tickets in the Christmas raffle to raise funds for the Centre.



During an election campaign, a political candidate's driver lost control of the car which ran roughshod through a farmer's field killing several animals. The politician agreed to reimburse the farmer which was the first (and only) time a politician took responsibility for all the bulls hit.

Other volunteers who “tossed-in” to help Graham at his party include:



Karen Fieldhouse and Chloe Andersen, from Greenbank RSL Sub-Branch.

Karen and Chloe came all the way from Greenbank which is on the south side of Brisbane (about an hour's drive away) to set up a trestle table and give out balloons, windmills, muffins and other much sought after “kid's stuff” and they were an instant hit with the little ones who (as we've always thought) much prefer a simple toy with which to play rather than one that plays itself. A balloon on a stick and/or a windmill can be anything to a young imaginative mind, whereas most toys today have one purpose and as such don't hold the child's attention for long, they leave no room for that little fertile imagination to kick in.



The Gallipoli Barracks Welfare Centre.

The Army, in their wisdom, arranged for some of their vehicles to be available and some of the kids were lucky enough to get a ride around the block in one of the Bushmasters.



When kids think of the Army they think of these things, great big camouflaged tanks or trucks, they are symbolic of the Army. Kids think everyone in the Army has one, when you sign on, you go to the Q store for your gun, your uniform and your tent then to the “big shed” to get your own “Army Truck”. The kids love them, they love to touch them, get in them, hear them, pretend they are driving them, to some of the little ones they must seem as big as Ayer’s Rock and be completely indestructible bits of machinery.

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Also on display for the kids, and we noticed some big kids were keen to have a look too, was the ASLAV (Australian Light Armoured Vehicle). This thing is unbelievable, it will do 100kph on the highway, will power through water at 10kph, will climb a 60 degree slope, cross a 1.2metre wide trench and at a cruise speed of 70kph has a range of 660klm.



It is normally crewed by 3 people, a commander, gunner and driver. If you were going to cross the Simpson, this is the machine you'd love to have.

There is a traditional 1950's American style café in Brisbane called Harry's Diner. On Thursday nights it is a magnet for muscle cars and for people wanting to look at the muscle cars. The Police keep an eye on things but although it has been there for yonks there has never been any trouble. Some time ago, Graham got the idea of inviting the cars and their owners to the barbecue – to give the mums and dads an opportunity to look over



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these remarkable machines and for the vehicle owners to get together on the base and have a free barby.

They turned up in droves.



A distraught senior citizen phoned her doctor's office. "Is it true," she wanted to know, " that the medication you prescribed has to be taken for the rest of my life?" "Yes, I'm afraid so," the doctor told her. There was a moment of silence before the senior lady replied, "I'm wondering, then, just how serious is my condition because this prescription is marked 'NO REPEATS' "

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Car owners Greg Herbert and Tony and Kay McKenzie.

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Tony and Kay McKenzie's heavily modified 1975 HJ Holden ute.



This immaculate machine is fitted with GM's high performance 350 cub in V8, a fact lost on a lot of mums at the barbecue, but immediately recognised by most of the dads.

Other vehicles on display were:

1960 Chevy El Camino ute.





1968 VW Country Buggy.



Although 1,956 of these vehicles were built back in 1967/8, today there are not a lot still operational. Designed in Australia (Clayton, Victoria), they were intended as a cheap farm vehicle and although they could not compete with 4WDs, (only two [rear] wheel drive), they had good clearance, a light body, a low centre of gravity, wide track and with most of the weight over the rear wheels, they could go far beyond where a 'normal' two wheel drive was capable.

Built on the beetle's platform, it looked a little like the Kubelwagen, the military Beetle used by the Germans in WW2. It was powered by VW's proven 1285cc (1300) 'flat' four cylinder, air cooled engine, although a 1192 cc (1200) was an option. It hit the market at \$1598 and was sold for only eight months before the project was pulled.

How come every time you ring a wrong number it's never engaged?'



Also enjoying the morning were:



Jayden Ross, Robert and Wendy Hill, Alex Ross, Jasmine Hill.



Rex Scoles, Matt Davies, Donna, Jesse and Billy Scoles.



Abby Morrison and Hannah Branch.

By about 1.00pm, all of the snags had been cooked and enjoyed by those present. It was time to start winding up, cleaning all the barby tools, pickup up any rubbish, stacking tables and chairs away, collecting all the toys and leaving the centre ready for the little ones who will invade it again in the morning.

All in all, a very successful day, once again, well done Army.

Last year I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.



Spartans by two.

On Sunday Monday, (1,2 Nov) 35 Sqn brought both of their C-27 Spartan aircraft up to Amberley from Richmond and we were invited out to Amberley to have a look.



Getting onto the Base is a bit of a mission these days, thanks to the nutters who walk amongst us. The Base is at what the RAAF calls, "Safe Base Charlie" – we don't know whether Charlie is third down the line after Alfa and Bravo nor do we know if it goes any further down, but if Charlie is at third base and it did get to Delta – forget it. Your uncle would have to be the PM himself if you wanted to get on. As it is, you need a "sponsor" to meet you at the gate, someone who must remain with you at all times and who is responsible for your behaviour and/or actions.

After we had watched the 5 minute video which tells you when, where and why you can or can't go anywhere and/or do anything, you fill in your name, address, car rego etc, then front the guard room and get your day pass. Then you drive up to the gate, swipe your pass at the gate which opens the boom and you're on.

We were met by FSgt Damon Edwards, a loady off the C-27 who looked after us, we thank him for that.

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Spartan number 2, number 1 had left for home earlier in the day.



John Sambrooks, metal basher extraordinaire, John Griffiths, pilot of Caribou (and other lesser) aircraft, John McDougall, ex-Caribou loady.

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John McDougall, pretending to know what he's looking at.

If God wanted me to touch my toes, he would've put them on my knees.

Akubra

With the by-pass bridge now in place and operational, (to be called the Macleay Valley Bridge) not a lot of people go through Kempsey anymore – which is a shame as it's a lovely little town with much to see and much to do. Kempsey, which is about





midway between Brisbane and Sydney, is on the Macleay River which, it is said, is the second fastest running river in the world and apart from being very quick, it also has the bad habit of regularly flooding. Between 1946 and 1989, there have been 16 major floods – see [HERE](#), each of which isolated the town and closed the Pacific Highway for days on end.

Which of course is why the bypass was built.



Kempsey has a population of about 11,000 people with one of its famous sons being David Gordon Kirkpatrick, better known as Slim Dusty. Recently the [Slim Dusty Centre](#) was opened in Kempsey and features objects and images from the Kirkpatrick family's own extensive archive, as well as contributions from fans and friends from all over the world. The display provides a look into Slim's first steps into show business, the early years of adventures with Joy and their mates touring the towns and villages of Australia's outback and the glory days of life on the showgrounds of Australia with artistes and performers of vaudevillian delights. Memory acts, dental trapeze and comedy skits were all part of Slim and Joy's shows for years, until they settled into the type of performances for which they became famous; rollicking country music and Slim's natural good humour, all with a very Australian flavour. If you're a country music fan it's a must see.

Other "must sees" in Kempsey include the [Kempsey Museum](#) and the Akubra factory. Unfortunately, because of WH&S regulations, visitors are no longer able to tour the Akubra factory which is one of Kempsey's major employers.

Akubra started life in Hobart in 1874 when Benjamin Dunkerley arrived in Tasmania from England and decided to start a hat making business. His skills as a hatter were backed by his ability to invent machinery and soon after his arrival he had developed a mechanical method of removing the hair tip from rabbit fur so the under-fur could be used in felt hat making. Previously this task had to be done by hand.



In the early 1900's Dunkerley moved the business to Crown Street, Surry Hills, an inner suburb of Sydney, setting up a small hat making factory then in 1904 Stephen Keir I, who had also migrated from England, joined Dunkerley. Keir had hat making experience from England and was seen as a valuable acquisition for the business. In 1905 he married Ada Dunkerley, Benjamin's daughter and soon after was made General Manager. In 1911, the business became Dunkerley Hat Mills Ltd, and had a mere nineteen employees.

The increasing popularity resulted in the move to larger premises in Bourke Street, Waterloo and expanded production, especially of Slouch hats during World War I. The trade name "Akubra" came into use in 1912 and soon after all hats were branded Akubra, the word is

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supposed to have derived from an Aboriginal word for “head covering”. When Dunkerley died in 1925, ownership of the business transferred to Stephen Keir I.



The business continued to flourish and when Stephen Keir retired in 1952 he was succeeded as Managing Director by his eldest son, Herbert. His second son, Stephen Keir II, served as General Manager and became Managing Director in 1972. His son, Stephen Keir III, became Managing Director in 1980 and the company has been in the Keir family ever since

Each hat takes on average 14 rabbit skins, most of which are now imported from Europe. You can see an excellent video on how the hats are made [HERE](#).