



THE MISSION

**EVERYMAN'S MINISTRY TO THE 8TH/9TH BATTALION
THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT AND THE VETERAN COMMUNITY**

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Dear supporters and prayer partners, we are racing through 2021, and with all the events in the world unfolding around us, there is a trap that many, including Christians, can fall into. That trap is to live in fear and become unfruitful! But as believers, now is the time to go to war, now is the time to let our faith shine, for we stand on an unshakeable Rock!

ANZAC DAY 2021 - A TIME FOR ACTION!



With 2020 seeing most people locked down in their homes for a large portion of the year, including the most important day of the year for our military forces - Anzac Day, it was a great relief for many to hear that the regular Anzac services would be restored in 2021. As usual, my week surrounding Anzac Day was filled with various activities including speaking at Bethany Christian Care's Anzac services at their three sites, a Boy's Brigade special event, and Anzac Day actual. This year also included something new - the offer to be interviewed on a local talk back radio station - 4BC (more on that later). This year I wanted reach out to people, particularly the veteran community with the gospel in a more deliberate way than what we have done in the past. Normally, we serve and have Bibles and tracts available, but this time I wanted to make sure that everyone who came to the truck went away with an opportunity to know the King of kings. I came up with a plan to hand out large amounts of home-made Anzac biscuits with Bible verses and information about how to find EveryVet's. For this I enlisted an Army of ladies from church to help make them (more about that later in the newsletter), and we ended up with hundreds of delicious Anzac biscuits. Each biscuit was handed out with a gospel tract which related to Anzac Day and war. It was a busy day, but Richard Gibson and I laboured on at our site in the Brisbane CBD serving from his Brew Truck. We gave away many, but we did not run out of the biscuits, and I ended up taking the rest out bush with me and gave them away to soldiers in the field. Anzac Day also allowed me to catch up with many old Army mates, at both the dawn service and after the march had finished in town. It was great to see some guys that I had not seen in nearly 10 years. There are many who are struggling in post-Army life and I hope to be able to reach out to many of them and

lead them to the Lord. As I mentioned earlier a unique opportunity was given to me by Everyman's National Relations Manager - Jeff Green, he arranged an interview for me on 4BC radio station with Neil Breen the following day after Anzac. I was not sure what to expect but I ended up live on air and sharing a lot about my testimony and how the Lord has changed my life since encountering him in Afghanistan in 2012. What an amazing opportunity to speak with an untold amount of people on a very popular secular radio station! You can hear the full interview at:

www.everyvets.org.au/media





RETURN OF THE FIJIAN

A visit from the Republic of Fijian Military Forces



My Battalion has a bit of a history now with the Fijian Defence Force, and I personally have had the pleasure to work with the Fijians several times now. It is always a blessing to get to know more of them, as they all have some kind of belief, whether it is genuine or not. The fact that they consider themselves to be Christian is a great advantage, because they have an ingrained respect for God, and it is easy to strike up a conversation about spiritual matters. Compared to Australian soldiers they are about as far away as you can get when it comes to matters of faith. For the Fijians, Christianity is a big part of their lives. I had the opportunity to share my faith with many, and to even preach to them during their nightly devotions. I did not want to just keep it to myself, so I organised for some of from our EveryVet's group to come to the barracks and have a joint devotions time with them. All who came were very blessed (the singing alone is worth hearing) but we all had the chance to share our testimonies and give encouragement to them to continue walking in the faith and to truly know the Lord. I noticed when I worked with the Fijians down in Victoria, during the bushfires last year, that many have a form of godliness, but do not live it out, so I shared with them about not wearing a religious mask, because we may fool one another but, in the end, we will not fool God when we stand before Him. The message was well received, and many expressed their own shortcomings in that area. I know that I have a lot of Fijian friends now, and if the Lord ever takes us over there, we will have no shortage of people that would invite us to stay with them and show us hospitality!



WE'RE THE BOYS (AND GIRL) FROM THE BUSH AND WE'RE BACK IN TOWN...



Because of the Covid situation across the country, the ADF has been restricted as to what training it has been able to do in the last 18 months, with many soldiers deploying on domestic operations to assist with the containment and isolation of the public returning from overseas. So, it was with great enthusiasm that we were able to get out and support the 7th Brigade on recent exercises up at Shoal Water Bay. Normally, Richard Gibson and I would be busy serving the troops, but this time we had another Rep helping us out. Leane Dabitz who works at the School of Signals, in Watsonia, Victoria, made the journey up from Melbourne, and she was able to experience a side Philanthropic support to the Army that she has not had before. Normally,

Leane is working with trainees, who are still in the process of learning their corps trade on their Initial Employment Training, and less confident in their jobs. The soldiers she was able to serve alongside Richard and I, were highly experienced, and being put through some high-level training. As usual, our time out in the field brings forth the most fruitful moments of ministry. This trip was no exception. We were so blessed by God to be able to share the gospel and testimonies with many soldiers. The Lord gave us divine appointments, and many long and in-depth conversations were had during the weeks that we were out there. With most of the Brigade out in the field, we never run out of people to serve, and we usually end up running around the training area (which is quite a large place) trying to make sure we can provide welfare to everyone. Sometimes we end up doing some serious four-wheel driving (something I do not mind doing), and luckily the Brew Trucks can handle pretty much any condition. Another highlight was Richards 60th birthday whilst out there. Leane and I made him some breakfast, and in one of our trips into Yeppoon, we went and celebrated with a nice dinner at a local restaurant. Coming up in the second half of the year will be Exercise Talisman Sabre, in Townsville. This will be another opportunity to serve even more people with all the international forces coming to participate.



OPERATION: BATTLE BICKIE



As mentioned in the Anzac Day article, I was able to give away many Anzac biscuits on the day. This was made possible by through the hard work of the ladies from our church – Grace Christian Fellowship Brisbane. I called the project - OPERATION: BATTLE BICKIE. Traditionally, it would be Claudia and I making treats for the soldiers, but early in the year I enlisted the help from the willing volunteers from church. Prior to the big Anzac Day push, when it was 'all hands on deck', I usually had one lady per week make a batch of baked goods for me to take to the battalion, and I would take them around and offer to members the unit. I thought it would be a special way for the ladies to be a part of the ministry. It certainly makes me happy to tell the soldiers that the biscuits come from people who have taken their own time and resources to bless them. I have found that I can go anywhere and speak to anyone if I am carrying some freshly home-made goodies. Once in someone's door, it allows for conversations to start. Sometimes

they are just small chat, but other times a deeper more spiritual conversation takes place. Of course, sometimes it is just an opportunity for someone to talk about issues going on in their lives. We just do not know what each day will hold when we are doing a walk around the unit. It certainly impressed the Commanding Officer of 8/9 RAR, when I first meet him, and I offered him a homemade biscuit (he liked them so much that he consumed a few of them!). I'm very proud to tell people that they have been made with love, and out of the kindness of the hearts of these wonderful ladies!



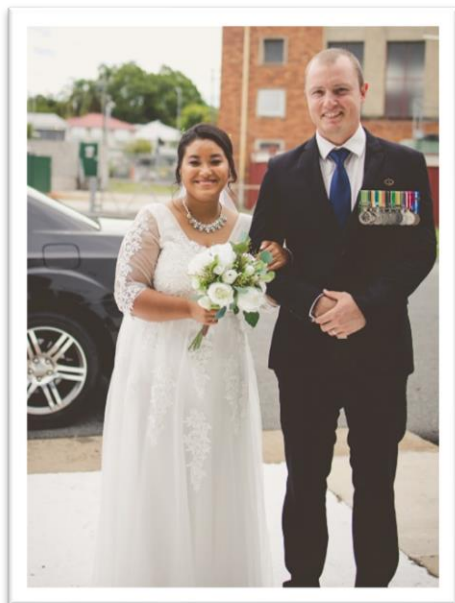
...A Thousand Words

1. With the Fijian soldiers attached with Alpha Company 8/9 RAR. 2. Taking a break from exercise to celebrate Richards 60th 3. A photo op with some 1 Regiment gunners and their M777 Artillery Gun 4. My Brew Truck next some Ambrams Tanks 5. An Illumination Fire Mission with 8/9 RAR Mortar Platoon 6. 'Dropping a couple of bombs' with the mortar boys



ON 'THE HOME FRONT'

This year has been a busy one for our church family, with three weddings happening for couples in our fellowship. It's always good to see any union of friends taking place, but it's even more special when it is two Christians who enter into a covenant with themselves, and most importantly, with God. The first wedding was Jonathan and Carla. We have known Carla since she was only a little girl, we meet her family, the Le Roux's, at our previous church in 2013, and now she is all grown up and married to Jono, whom we meet at our current church in 2016. The second couple to wed were Jeremy and Rachal, we meet both of them at our current church when they started attending a couple of years ago. We have come to know them both well, and they love the Lord. We experienced big Romanian weddings, as both Jono and Jeremy are from Romanian families and we found out that there is no such thing as a 'small' wedding when it comes to Romanian families! The third wedding was Linden and Ruja. We have known Ruja and her sister Neha, and Neha's husband Binod, for a number of years now. They all lived with us for a while, a few years ago. They are from Nepal and do not have any family members in Australia, so we have become their adopted family in many ways. Linden we only meet recently, after he began to date Ruja. I was greatly honoured when Ruja asked me if I would walk her down the aisle and give her away, as her own father could not make it all the way from Nepal. I gladly accepted this responsibility with joy! I never thought I would be walking a young woman down the aisle on her special wedding day, so it was a true blessing. Linden spent some time in the Navy and when their wedding day came, he decided he wanted to wear his 'Australian Defence Medal' and asked if I would wear my medals too. At all three weddings, I was asked to be the Master of Ceremonies (apparently people think I've got a bit of a mouth on me?!), and I also played some songs during the services. Claudia also had the chance to dress in a Sari (the traditional dress from Nepal – See last page) for Ruja's wedding.



Claudia's Corner



Dear friends and supporters, it is a privilege to write to you about what God has been doing in our lives. Since I started my work as a chaplain at The Plains (Bethany Christian Care), I had the honour of seeing souls come to Christ, and I like to say that instead of being a witness for the Lord, I have become a witness of what God is doing, His power and His wisdom. It is truly incredible, and beyond any man's ability to manufacture such events. As a chaplain, my main work is to visit people in their rooms and have 1:1 conversations. Our focus is reaching out to the lost, and that includes anyone, staff member, family, residents, or other visitors. Whatever opportunity the Lord gives to us we want to take it. I also run different group activities such as hymn singing, ladies prayer group, and ladies Bible

discussion. We believe there is no work to be done without prayer, so Ben and I are constantly in prayer for our work at Bethany, Everyman's, and Everyvet's.

In our church community, we also have ladies Bible study once a week at our place, or other sister's places, and the group consists of a vast range of ages, which makes our fellowship rich and dynamic. Ben and I continue to take Sunday school classes, and work together with other 6 passionate teachers. Among our Christian and non-Christian friends, we continue to seek to show the love of God in all we do. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we seek to support those in need whether spiritually, mentally, and physically, and by the grace of God, to impart some spiritual truths into their lives.

I was in prayer this afternoon with a great friend and sister in Christ, and I had this thought - that I have no good news in me to offer to others, except the good news of Jesus Christ. I started imagining my life without Jesus, and I was even more horrified, I would have absolutely nothing good to give to others. Only God is good! Oh dear brothers and sisters, that our hearts will yearn for the ways of God. I read in 2 Chronicles 17:6 that the king Jehoshaphat "took great pride in the ways of the Lord". Oh that we will boast that we know the Lord. That we will long for His power and His salvation to come to others. That we will seek Him with all of our hearts, in our every day lives. The closer we draw to the coming of the Lord, the stronger this message seems to become to me "Only one life till soon be past, only what is done for Christ will last.", a poem from C.T. Studd. I hope and pray that our lives will truly manifest and display the glory of the One who died for us, and rose again, and is now interceding for us, and calling everyone, everywhere to repent and to come to His Kingdom. Thank you for your prayers and support, and I hope that wherever you are, you too will gain a heart of wisdom, to number your days and seek God with all your heart (Psalm 90:12 & Hebrews 11:6).





As we tick over the middle of the year, we prepare ourselves for a big second half of 2021. I will be out bush on the major exercises in Townsville, which will see me away from home for an extended period. It's not always easy to be away for the longer stretches, but it's the sacrifice that we are willing to make to try to win souls for Jesus! Please pray that the Lord would open the doors for the gospel to be preached and that many would come to know the saving grace of God.

Luke 18:29-30 And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house, or wife, or brothers, or parents, or children for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times as much at this time, and in the age to come, eternal life."

Much love,

Ben and Claudia



EVERYMAN'S WELFARE SERVICE
Serving the Australian Defence Force