



# THE MISSION



**EVERYMAN'S MINISTRY TO THE 8TH/9TH BATTALION,  
THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY CADETS, AND THE VETERAN COMMUNITY**

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# RECRUIT



# RIDLEY!



## REPORTING FOR DUTY!

Say hello to Probationary Rep Claudia Ridley! I reported in the last newsletter that we were waiting for the approval, but now Claudia has officially become an Everywoman! She received her accreditation at the end of last year, and it has taken till this year for her to have an opportunity to don her uniform and get out to serve the troops. We were able to take a trip up to Wide Bay Training Area, where we served some of the soldiers and officers of our sponsoring unit 8/9 RAR. Claudia took to it like a duck to water. I will let her share on her own experiences later. God even had a couple of divine appointments for us when we were out there, and it was already a blessing to have Claudia with me, particularly, because one of the soldiers we encountered was a female, so it made the spiritual conversation easier!







# CHAPLAIN BEN



## A NEW CHAPTER AND A NEW MINISTRY

As I reported in the last newsletter, the Lord has opened a new door for ministry as a chaplain with the Army Cadets. I have officially become a part of the team, working part-time in the Cadet world. It is familiar, as it shares many similarities with the Army world, but it still has a few differences too. Over the last 10 years or so I have been involved with running youth groups and Sunday School in our church, and it's a bit like taking my previous Army career and blending it with those things! Although, it's still early days I have already had some of the most amazing opportunities to share with the Cadets. Being that I served 11 years in the Infantry Corps, this gives me a huge 'ice breaker' and credibility with them, as many of them have aspirations of joining the Army in the



Cadets from the band (faces of minors blurred)



Offering Bibles at the end of the AFX

future. I am currently posted to the 15th Battalion, but I am also covering the 13th Battalion, as they do not currently have a chaplain. Between the two battalions there are 12 Cadet Units. Each unit parades in a different location, and the size of each unit varies dramatically. Some of the smaller units only have 10-15 cadets, with the larger ones having over 100 cadets. Since I started, I have been making the rounds and visiting almost all of the units during their weekly parade nights and attending some of their weekend training activities. I have also attended longer activities such as the annual field exercise and a senior cadet promotion course, both being held at Canungra Training Area. Whilst there I ran into an old friend Michael whom I served with in

my Army Reserve days! Michael was on an Army Reserve promotion course. I have also got opportunities to travel interstate coming up in April. I have been nominated for an annual Adventure Training Activity, which is held down in Tasmania. I will go as a Directing Staff and would complete the activities with the cadets, such as hiking, abseiling, and kayaking! Pretty exciting! I had to complete a fitness test consisting of a 7.5KM pack march, with 21kg in my pack, a 'Beep Test' run, and a 100m swim with a 2 minute tread water. I completed all the tests, but I never thought that I would be doing those kinds of activities after leaving the Army! The best thing about being involved with Cadets is being able to be a role model and to share Christ with them. I've had amazing conversations and given many Bibles away!



With Michael Peachey



# A THOUSAND WORDS

In the picture below Sergeant Royce Keegan, a Christian in 8/9 RAR, is holding an Everyman's Coffee Brew Mug. They are a fundraising idea that I came up with to raise funds for our multipurpose trailer. It is a travel mug with a laser engraved 'Brew Truck' on the side. They fit perfectly into the ammunition pouch on the combat chest rigs the soldiers wear.



Claudia having a chat with Noah at Wide Bay



Royce Keegan with his new Everyman's mug



Bjorn Larsen - ex-8/9 and now with Everyman's



Bjorn serving 8/9 at Wide Bay



7.5km pack march at Gallipoli Barracks



Swim test at Gallipoli Barracks





# EVERYMAN'S FUNDRAISING GALA



## FUNDRAISING GALA FOR EVERYVET'S

In December last year, we had our inaugural Everyman's Fundraising Gala. Specifically, we are raising money for a multipurpose trailer for use with EveryVet's and Everyman's activities. It was also a fantastic opportunity for guests to find out more about what we are doing as a ministry. It was by far the biggest event that we have organised (we had nearly 80 people in attendance), but we received a lot of help along the way. Something we know that came from the Lord. Specifically, we received help from a lovely couple - Jeremy and Jennifer. They were a huge blessing for us and made the whole evening come together, especially because Jennifer played the music for the evening on her keyboard. Throughout the night we had several opportunities to feature some of the life of the Everyman's/EveryVet's ministry. We conducted a formal commissioning service into Everyman's for Bruce and Mercy Maher, and none other than, Claudia! They were each presented with their certificates by Chief Commissioner Ken Matthews who flew up for the occasion. We were blessed on the evening to be joined by Chief Commissioner Stacey Kruck (Retired), and his wife Hazel, who were our guests of honour. Stacey was also the keynote speaker and spoke about the history of Everyman's. This was after I showed a mini documentary of the history of Everyman's and the Wacol Military Barracks. You can see the film here: <https://www.facebook.com/Everymans.Welfare.Service/videos/195218017007286/>. I also made two other videos for the evening, one was a year-in-review 2023 for Everyman's and one for EveryVet's. Both of those can be viewed on the Everyman's Facebook page too. During the night we took time to show our appreciation to those who have supported Everyman's in recent years. We gave certificates to people including Scott Gayton for being a part some EveryVet's events as the keynote speaker. We also gave them to the team of ladies from our church who have been baking biscuits for me to take to the barracks, and on during Anzac Day, when they all made a large batch of biscuits to hand out from the Brew Trucks when serving the veterans and soldiers, before the march through Brisbane city. We also thanked Steve and Robyn, who are the volunteer caretakers at the Wacol site, and they have been a blessing to us over the last few years. Overall, it was a wonderful night, with many giving great compliments!





Jennifer performing a number



Claudia, Mercy, and Bruce with their certificates



Mason and Jonathan having chat



The guests enjoying the evening



The amazing 'Brew Truck' cake



Petri and Vicki having a chat



The 'Battle Bickie' team



Ken, Stacey, Hazel, and I



# THE LEAST OF THESE



## AN UNEXPECTED TRIP TO INDIA

Last year I was approached by some brothers from our church - Nathan and Bjorn, to join them on a trip to India to visit an orphanage. I have known both guys for some years now. Bjorn and I worked together in the Army and has also recently joined Everyman's as a Rep. Nathan has been supporting the orphanage for sometime now, and even visited it a few years ago. Initially I said that I could not afford to go with them, however, they offered to pay the expenses, as they wanted me to come along to share my input about some potential projects that could be done at the orphanage, and also another ministry building project elsewhere. One idea that we felt could benefit the orphanage is 'Farming God's Way', which I had come across in 2019, in Uganda. This trip was to be



The boys don't like cricket, oh no, they LOVE it!

an exploratory trip to check out how things function and to see how our church could best support them, and how we could implement 'Farming God's Way' in the future. During the 3 week trip we spent time at the orphanage itself, with Surendra and his family, who founded it, and also Ashwin and his family, in Chennai, who previously attended our church in Brisbane. We visited several churches and I was asked to share the Word and some of my songs. We experienced the horrendous nature of Hinduism and the 'Caste' system, which oppresses those in the lower classes of society. The orphanage is in the so-called 'Untouchable' caste, which means they are rejected from society. Fortunately, we were able to share with many of the Hindus about the Kingdom of God, in which those who have power stand up for those who are



I miss those smiles!

oppressed, and how King Jesus has won the victory over the false gods. He promises a future where the last shall be the first and the first shall be the last! What an amazing thought! We aim to go back to India next year, Lord willing!





# ON 'THE HOME FRONT'



We never know where the Lord will take us in this life. Certainly, the events that have been taking place and will take place in the near future I never thought were going to occur. But when we give our lives into the hands of the Lord and let him lead us, we end up in places we weren't expecting! I never saw myself becoming an Everyman when I was a soldier in the Army, living far away from the Lord. I never thought that I would become a chaplain in the Army Cadets, yet here I am and loving it! I also never thought I'd be throwing a pack on my back and marching kilometres on end, but with the opportunity to attend the Adventure Training Activity, in Tasmania, in April, here I am back 'stomping' the ground in boots again! Well, something else that I never imagined to be doing was to be going to Israel to help train the locals to fight fires! Now, that has probably got you wondering what experience do I have in fighting fires? Well, not much to be honest! I did a small firefighting training package way back in 2005, when I deployed on Operation Relex II, where I spent 6 months in Darwin, working on the Navy patrol boats, doing boarder security (see photos below). This trip to Israel comes through a friend - Tim, who is a firefighter and has been running a fire prevention and instruction business for many years, as well as his father and brother. He has been over to Israel twice before to equip people living in the Kibbutz's how to fight fires properly. This came about a few years ago when the terrorist group 'Hamas' was using deliberately lit fires as a weapon of terror against Israel. After seeing on the news how poorly these amateur firefighting teams in Israel were trained, he contacted the Israeli embassy and offered his services to go and train them properly. Tim has been asking me for some time now to help with other firefighting projects that he is involved in, but I haven't been able. But, after some careful prayer, the Lord has opened the door, and I will be leaving at the end of April for a month, off on another adventure!! Please pray, as I hope to be able to be a witness to the Israeli people we meet and shine the light of Jesus their Messiah to them, especially in the dark times they are going through.





# Claudia's Corner

Well, well, well... Who would have thought that I would become an Everywoman? Well, you might have, but I never thought. It was always Ben's calling, and we were sure and united about that from the beginning, but last year it was my turn. I felt to join Everyman's, so I put my application in. Still in much prayer, I had no idea why God wanted me to join in. One thing was certain, I didn't want to be a burden to Ben, so I prayed earnestly that God would rescue me from my foolishness. On my first 'Brew Run' trip, we went to Wide Bay. It's about 3 hours drive from our place, and I was a mixture of nervous and excited. We stopped at a servo station, and I saw lots of Australian soldiers wearing the same army uniform. I wanted to wave and greet each one of them and tell them that it was my first day as an Everyman's Rep, but I controlled myself, even though I think I smiled to all of them. When we arrived at the Wide Bay Training Area, I saw this group of people flocking towards the Everyman's truck, now I finally understood what Ben has been describing to me. As soon as I got off the truck I had my opportunity, I told the soldiers that I was a recruit and that it was my first day. Of course, that put a smile in their faces. After about 1 hour serving the boys, I realized that God had prepared me for that job. It was not hard at all. My fears disappeared, and I started to think of all the many jobs and places God led me, to train me, and prepare me to serve Him, how amazing He is! I had spiritual conversations with a few people, and Ben is following up with them at the base. Thank you for your prayers, we truly appreciate them.

At home, we still have ladies Bible study every Thursday, which we enjoy very much. At the moment we are going through the women mentioned in the Gospel of Luke. It's such a deep and fascinating study. At church, Sunday school also continues by God's grace with a dedicated team of teachers, praise be to God. And at last, this year I started leading my own R.I. class. I cannot say enough how much I enjoy doing that. Currently I'm teaching years 1 and 2 and we have about 35 children in the class. Please pray for that ministry as well, may the light of Jesus and His word shine strong in their little hearts.

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With all our love,

Ben and Claudia



With our Nepalese friends for Ruja's birthday