



THE MISSION

*Everyman's Ministry to the 8th/9th Battalion
the Royal Australian Regiment*

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Greetings! We are at that time of year again that seems to come around quicker every year! It has been a year chock-a-block for all and reflecting back on 2016 I think that there have been many highlights and a few unexpected challenges. Obviously for us one of the highlights was also the most challenging and that was being over in the U.A.E. for a quarter of the year away from one another, but as always God is gracious and got us through! Moving churches and home was another challenge and even up to this late quarter of the year more changes have taken place which I will talk more about later in the newsletter. We have included a collection of photos from 2016, and we hope you enjoy!

The Battalion's Freedom of Entry to Brisbane City

The 31st of October marks the 8th/9th Battalion's birthday and as usual a week is set apart for some fun activities for all. The week was taken up with the traditional Billy Cart race in which all the Companies create a Cart and have a time trial race somewhere on the barracks. This year the Battalion also had a 'Back to the Battalion' day for the ex-members of the Battalion in which they could come and check out what the 8/9 of 2016 looks like and how the toys have changed from their day. This was done by static displays and an opportunity to go to the range for a shoot under the guidance of the current serving members. It was a chance for me to bring my truck down and allow the old diggers a chance to experience the Everyman's service just like many of them had experienced back in Vietnam or other places back in their day. The following day the Battalion then exercised its right to the 'freedom of entry' with a march through Brisbane city. I was curious to find out where the tradition of the 'freedom of entry' began and this is what I found on Wikipedia -

"The Freedom of the City is an honour bestowed by a municipality upon a valued member of the community, or upon a visiting celebrity or dignitary. Arising from the medieval practice of granting respected citizens freedom from serfdom, the tradition still lives on in countries such as the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, Canada, South



Africa, and New Zealand – although today the title of "freeman" confers no special privileges. The Freedom of the City can also be granted by municipal authorities to military units which have earned the city's trust; in this context, it is sometimes called the Freedom of Entry. This allows them the freedom to parade through the city, and is an affirmation of the bond between the regiment and the citizenry."

The day was an excellent opportunity for Richard and I to get out with the newest 'Brew Truck' and support the Battalion in the only way that Everyman's knows how - by serving the troops. It is a long and arduous day for all as the day begins early with the getting dressed into ceremonial polyester dress, moving from the barracks to the train station in Enoggera, boarding the train into the city and then forming up ready for the march. It was at this point that we had the newest Brew Truck there waiting with some refreshments for the boys who really appreciated our efforts as there is no other opportunity for them to have a drink from the time they leave until after the march finishes. The Brew Truck looked great and it was the first time we had taken it out for a major event (Lord willing we will have enough money next year to purchase a similar one that will be assigned for 8/9 permanently. On a side note we thank the Lord that we received a significant donation that will go a long way to purchasing the next Brew Truck!).

Not only did they do the march but the Battalion also performed a Military Tattoo. The boys have been practicing their drill for weeks leading up to the day and although I did not get to see the actual tattoo myself from all accounts they looked sharp. The idea for the tattoo was from the out-going Commanding Officer - Jim Hammett who the Battalion farewelled as well as its current mascot - 'Stan the ram' he was put out to stud and was ceremoniously changed out with a new Stan the Ram on the day too (I have included a photo of me back in my Army days with Stan).

The day concluded with a concert for all the Battalion and their families at the 'River Stage' concert amphitheatre (pictured below) where they had musical performances and lots of food and drinks in a family friendly evening.



BURIED AND RAISED WITH HIM!

Some weeks ago now I had the honour and pleasure to baptise of one of my best friends: Dale. The story of Dale and I go way back to our school days and I first met Dale in 1998 at Bethesda Christian College where we both attended High School together. Dale and I became really good friends and we got up to a lot of mischief together in our teenage years. Although we attended a Christian school neither of us were walking with the Lord in fact quite the opposite but through out the years we had spoken a lot about the Lord and other spiritual things but neither of us were willing to take up our crosses to follow Jesus. After we left High School we both decided to join the Army Reserves and we both eventually joined the 10th/27th Battalion the Royal South Australian Regiment. Dale and I did much training together (see bottom pic) and were gym training buddies. But Christ was still not at the forefront of our lives and we were very much a part of this perishing world, tasting all the un-godly pleasures contained in it. However, my life changed when I went to Afghanistan and when I came back I was so eager to see my friends and family coming to



repentance and faith in the only One who is able to save our souls, but, even though I was very zealous to see this happen, Dale was not ready at that time as the Lord deals with each one individually, but, we continued to pray for him and our other friends and I know Dales mum: Heather was praying for him too. Recently Dale and I began to share openly about the Lord and this was a great joy for me personally, I could see the Lord working in him. One day Dale called me and told me that He felt the conviction from the Lord to get baptised and so in obedience to the commandment of Christ we went down to beach a few days later with some other believers and dodging the numerous jelly fish Dale was baptised and raised into a new life with Christ! After we sang some hymns and had a BBQ lunch what a joyous day! If you could please pray for Dale that he would continue to grow and trust in our dear Lord and Saviour.

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. - Romans 6:4-7



2016 PHOTO ALBUM



My brothers - Dan, Jason, Tim and I



ex-Army buddy - Chris Cavanaugh



Uncle Gerald and Auntie Leonie



Ps. Bill & Kristin Randles from the U.S.



George and Beccy's Wedding



Conrad and Ruth Halyburton



Ivor and Yvonne Jones



Camping - Philip, Tyler, Tanya and J.P.



Lt. Luke Geerlings



Luke, Gerrie, Josh and Chloe Skipper



Todd and Angela's wedding



My Nephew - Heath



ON THE HOME FRONT



It was with some sadness but still with great joy for us to hear of the promotion to glory of John Butters who was a supporter of ours since I joined Everyman's a couple of years ago. We first met John after he rang Everyman's Head Quarters asking if I was related to the famous John Ridley who was an evangelist in the last century. I was given his number and after speaking with him I discovered that he lived only 15 mins away from us. Claudia and I went down and spent sometime chatting away with John and it turned out that he used to be a chaplain in the Army and worked with the Everyman Rep at Kapooka some years back it was some years ago because John was 94! Recently after not being able to contact John for a couple of weeks I decided to call the aged care facility that he stayed at and they informed me that he was in the hospital. Claudia and I went for a visit and my thoughts were when I saw him in his bed that he looked like he would not be able to speak let alone remember us, little did we know but when he saw us he immediately recognised us and suddenly he was beaming with life! Even his son and daughter-in-law were surprised how he suddenly was so animated and I knew

that though the outer man was perishing the inner man was still being renewed in John. We had a great conversation and we said our goodbyes, I felt glad to be able to see him one last time and lo and behold just a week or so later I received a call from John's son informing us that John was with Jesus now! Praise the Lord for the life of this man of God!

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. - Psalm 116:15

Recently in Adelaide where I grew up there was a large hail storm and two of my brothers and my Dad have been working in the dent repair industry for many years. I received a phone call shortly after the storm happened asking if I would like to come down and work for their business, after initially saying no we realised it was a great opportunity to make some good money in a short period of time, plus, we had already been planning to make our usual trip to Adelaide for the Christmas holiday's and the Army was winding up for the year anyways. This meant that I would come down a few weeks earlier than Claudia and we would have to be separated temporarily but we both agreed to make this sacrifice again. After coming down it became apparent that this was a great opportunity not just in the short term but in the long term as well and that whilst I am down in Adelaide it would be a good time to learn the trade of fixing the dents myself, so, if the Lord wills, as well as doing my usual work with Everyman's, I will seek to have a business of my own in Brisbane fixing dents in cars. I believe that this could be a blessing and a way the Lord will sustain us in the ministry with Everyman's in a "Tent maker" style.

Claudia's Corner

Dear friends, sorry for repeating myself again, but indeed we are so honored to serve the Lord. We cannot thank you enough for your love, prayers and encouragement as we also remember you in our prayers that we may go forth into this world which our dear Saviour died for. I remember once watching a children's movie about the persecution that some Christians suffered and it started with the apostle John in the prison at the end of his life and some of the prisoners were mocking him and he said "I am honored to be here for Christ, in these chains, and you, are you honored to be here for your empire?" O dear friends what else can we say? The reality of serving the King there is nothing compared.

*To God be the glory, great things He hath done,
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.*



We had so many highlights this year serving the Battalion, the ADF and our Lord in many other ways and we are so glad to be able to share some of those with you. We enjoyed our trip down south to Melbourne and back in the Brew Truck, speaking at churches and especially having great fellowship with the Saints along the way. Another highlight was sharing at the Gideon's convention in Sydney, you can see a brief version of our testimony on their website (I'll put the link down the bottom of the page if you are interested). We thank God for all your support and we pray constantly for you all who support us and pray for us in the ministry that God has called us to. Feel free to contact us directly as we would love to hear from you!

There are many debates over this time of year and as usual I hear both sides of the argument on whether we as Christians should celebrate Christmas or not but I have come to the conclusion that Christmas should be treated as any other day in our lives, a chance to shine the light of Christ to a dark and dying world and it just so happens that our family's get together during this time so we can make the most of it and let them see Christ in us the hope of glory. The photo below is a family photo from my younger brother Jason and his wife Kelsey's wedding earlier this year.

We hope that you all will be refreshed in the Lord during this holiday season, ready for what 2017 may hold.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. - Phillipians 1:2



Much love,

Ben and Claudia

<https://www.gideons.org.au/about-us/stories-of-lives-changed/290-ben-ridley>



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