



THE MISSION



Everyman's Ministry at the 8th/9th Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment

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Hello again from the Ridley's. Amazingly we are already at the end of the first quarter of 2016! Doesn't the time fly?! It has been busy as usual for us this year. The Battalion came back from their long Christmas break and got straight back into what will be another action packed year. This month of March saw the completion of my first year with Everyman's, hopefully the first of many serving our Lord!



LONG HAI DAY

The 28th of February is the day that the Battalion remembers the battle of Long Hai. Long Hai hills was the area in Vietnam that 8 RAR (one half of the currently linked 8/9 RAR) fought in back in 1970. The day specifically remembers those who were killed on Operation Hammersley that ran for 2 weeks that saw 11 friendly dead and 42 confirmed enemy dead with an estimated actual amount being over 100. These statistics drive home the reality of war and its devastating results for those who paid the ultimate price and the families

who are left behind. This year's commemorations saw the Battalion come together with the surviving members of 8 RAR and their families. It was great for me to be able to bring the brew truck down to serve a few of the old Diggers and watch the parade. Many of them remember the Everyman from back in their day and were glad to see that we are still going as an organisation. Many also asked about my medals that I wore on the day, seeing that I also have an Infantry Combat Badge as they do instantly gains a lot of respect from them, the ICB is exclusively given to those in the Infantry Corps who serve on war-like operations and is worn above the medals (see the picture of Claudia and I on the last page of the previous newsletters). Quite often my medals themselves are a good ice breaker and open doors to speaking with soldiers and ex-soldiers. Having been a soldier myself I can relate to them easily from that perspective but I am always looking to bring in my walk with the Lord and share the only hope in the world and the Captain of our salvation: Jesus Christ

BRAVO COMPANY: BACK IN THE THICK OF IT

Bravo Company, after returning from Iraq and some well deserved leave began this year with some good old fashioned training out bush. The company firstly deployed to Wide Bay Training Area for a 'High Explosives' training week in which they fired the usual Anti-tank rocket launchers, grenade launchers, grenades, claymore anti-personnel weapons. These are the kind of things that many a boy dreams of firing and yet amazingly for us who do it for a job we are paid by the Army to do it! Some people would pay big money to have these opportunities. Of course training in the Infantry is not all fun



and games, and at the end of the day there is always very serious and hard training to be done. The second phase of this training package saw the company deploying down to the Canungra Training Area, a place that is known for its arduous terrain and hot and humid climate. It was a time that many of the younger and newer guys got put through their paces with live fire attacks with machine guns firing over their heads (pictured below), long days patrolling through the bush and even a climb up the largest mountain in the training area the place notoriously known by all who have experience it: 'Stand 11'. The conditions saw many having to be pulled out of the field and seek medical attention but this all goes with the territory of being a 'grunt'. I was able to come to the rescue and bring some much needed morale boosts to the boys doing it tough with cold 'Goffers' commonly known by those outside of defence as soft drinks and some of Claudia's home made bickies that have been earning her quite a reputation within the Battalion as a top notch baker. I was able to stay out a night with the boys and I think the



boys really saw the commitment that we as an organisation will go to to show that we are here for them. Thankfully by the Lord's grace I had a few good conversations about spiritual matters and I was able to hand out a couple of Gideons Bibles to a couple of guys who both had grown up in the Catholic church but only knew God as a concept and weren't too favourable towards the Catholic Church as an organisation. Both gratefully took the Bibles and I encouraged them both to seach the word of God for themselves as I had done and I pray that they will realised it's not about a man made organisation but a relationship with our God the maker of the universe!

SAM AND CHRIS

The Lord has given me many divine appointments this year and I praise His name for every opportunity to share the Gospel with anyone. One of them sticks out the most was when I had a conversation with Sam. I was chatting with a Christian friend of mine, Lance, who has really been drawing closer to the Lord recently when Sam came out where we were talking to have a smoke. Sam asked me about Everyman's and how I became involved with them. I began to share my testimony with him and we got talking about God. After a while the conversation led to usual topics that people have today when talking about their objections to the idea of God and that was for Sam: Evolution and science. I began to share some things with Sam and much to his surprise he was shocked to hear some of the truths about Evolution. I told him I had some interesting things for him to watch and the next time I saw Sam I gave him: Evolutions Achilles Heels by Creation Ministries International as well as two other documentaries about biblical prophecy. The following time that I saw Sam he was so excited when I was speaking with him. He couldn't believe how many lies that Evolutionary science was based upon. Sam then began to tell me that he was starting to think that God really did exist. I gave Sam a Bible and he told me he would read it from cover to cover and then read it again! After this encounter I was speaking with Sam again another day when Chris came over and joined our conversation. We talked about world events and I shared once again about God and prophecy and the fact that all the trouble that we are seeing in the world today was prophesied thousands of years ago in the Bible. Chris told me that perhaps he doesn't believe in God has been because no one has even shown him anything different. I thank the Lord that he sent me to speak to Sam and Chris and I would ask that you pray for the guys who have heard the gospel that they would have an encounter with the Holy Spirit and repent and believe! Blessed be His name!

MODS TO THE BREW TRUCK

The old Rodeo has undergone some recent modifications to it specifically to the fridge that is in the back. To pull the fridge out before required me to manually lift the whole fridge up and out of its recess but when I took the car in the 8/9 workshops to get a service the boys there offered to make some changes. I made a few purchases and the boys worked on the truck in between other jobs and the fridge is now sitting on a slide draw and is able to be pulled out instead of lifted. This will no doubt save someone's back from damage in future.



Hopefully soon Everyman's will have enough money to purchase a new vehicle for Richard and I will get his old truck which is better suited for going out bush than the Rodeo and the Rodeo will go down to Sydney where it will mainly be used by Chris and Tim Wainwright who work with the Navy. I also hope to begin a vehicle fund to purchase a new Everyman's brew truck that will be used and remain as 8/9's brew truck and it will be much

better suited for long range trips with the Battalion on exercises. If it gets approved I will keep you posted on the progress of that project as we go along.



MILITARY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

The MCF meetings have continued as normal this year with a few changes. The RAAF base Amberley group has undergone a location change and we are now meeting in the Everyman's hut instead of what was essentially a shed with no air con, not fun in a QLD summer! We have also had a few new faces come and a few old faces that have returned. The Enoggera MCF group also decided that where we were meeting was a bit too noisy with many other people using the room that we were in, fortunately, we were able to move to the chapel on base with the only other change being that we now have to meet on Thursday's instead of Tuesday's. The change has been welcomed by all because we now have less distractions when we meet. We have also grown in numbers which is really exciting, there is a lady from our church: Luz, who got a civilian job at Enoggera barracks and she has begun to come along. We have probably doubled or tripled our regular attendees since last year even though we have lost a couple too. Although both groups only meet for an hour each week we do get some opportunity to have some lively discussions on various subjects. The Enoggera group has been watching a series called "Stay Free" which looks at the fact that society cannot survive without God. It also challenges us as Christians as to what we expose ourselves to from the world in our day to day lives. We have also begun to have fellowship dinners together outside of our regular meetings as a way of meeting for more than 1 hour a week. Luke, who is an ex-member of MCF who is off doing his placement with a church before becoming a chaplain has possibly opened a door for me to speak at his local church and speak about Everyman's and perhaps bring a message every now and then.

The picture below is from an Open Day at Gallipoli barracks, Enoggera. They run these days a few times a year where all the various Defence related organisations come and set up a stall so then Defence members can bring their families and see who everyone is and what services are available to them. I brought the Brew Truck down and combined MCF into the display. In the picture with me is Mason, George (who both attend MCF), Beccy who is George's wife and their two children: Janah and Malachi, in fact all coincidentally attend our church: CWMF. Mason and I manned the stall all day speaking with people and sharing whenever we could about what both the Everyman's and MCF organisations are about.

I really enjoy being able to connect with other Christians in the Defence community and encourage others in their walk with the Lord, to stay on the narrow path!



Family News

Claudia and I celebrate our third wedding anniversary on the 30th of March! (I've included a wedding photo on the last page) We celebrated with a few days up on the Sunshine Coast. Claudia got the job she applied for at "Bethany aged care" down the road from us and she has thoroughly enjoyed her time there since. She has worked most of her time at another facility owned by Bethany though. The other site is about 20 mins drive away from us. She has mostly been working in the kitchen but also she has been doing cleaning too. She loves the Christian environment and the fact that there are prayers before every meal, hymns playing over the system during the day, daily devotionals and although she adored the little children at the child care centre before she loves the fact that she can talk with the elderly people she looks after. She has also been given by the Lord opportunities to share the Gospel with some of the people she works with, one man who is very keen to come along to church with his family! Praise the Lord!



A few months ago I met a man named Tas Walker who is a scientist from Creation Ministries International (CMI). I was telling him my testimony of how I had received a Gideon's New Testament from my grandpa and nanna: Hew and Cynthia Barnard-Brown before going to Afghanistan in 2012. My grandpa and nanna have been working in the Gideon's for many years and Tas knew and had met my grandpa before. A few weeks after meeting Tas I received a phone call from a man named Craig from a local Gideon's group here in Brisbane. He had heard from Tas about my testimony and wanted to know if I would be available to speak at their fundraising dinner that was coming up. I accepted the invitation and Claudia and I went and enjoyed a free dinner and I shared about my experiences with the Lord in Afghanistan and told them about how I was now giving out Gideon's Bibles as a part of my work with Everyman's. It was a wonderful night with a man named Norm Fuller sharing on a recent "Bible blitz" they did in the Philippines where they handed out 3 million Bibles! It was a pleasure and an honour to be invited by an organisation that has been a part of my grandparents' lives for so many years and also for all the work they have done in the advancement of the Kingdom of God! In the picture here is Craig on the left and Norm and his wife on the right.

The other day friends of ours George and Beccy got married (they are in the picture of the MCF article). George and I have worked in 8/9 together for many years and yet we did not meet each other until 2014. We even served in the same company in Afghanistan and even went on the same patrol (pictured) when I was attached to George's section but amazingly we never spoke with each other during the times that we were together. It was only after we came back and after my life changing experience with the Lord that we finally met briefly on a promotion course. One day after that course I had been sharing the gospel during the lunch break with a few guys from the Battalion and after leaving them I came into the lecture of our company and I saw George sitting there. I knew George had grown up in the Seventh Day Adventist church. I felt drawn to speak with him and I sat down and began to talk about the Lord. George told me about Ellen G. White. I felt led to challenge him about some of the ideas and doctrines that he had grown up with and after an amazing conversation George went away to do some investigating. The next day George came back and told me that he couldn't believe that he had been deceived his whole life including the heavy burden of living under the Law. That began our journey and times of reading the Bible together with the Holy Spirit revealing truth to him and Beccy too. George and Beccy and Claudia and I have grown very close since then and they asked if I could share something at their wedding during the ceremony. I gladly accepted and shared a quick testimony of how George and I met as well as our walks with the Lord. I also sang and played a song on the guitar called 'Love never fails' by 'Christ our Life', a song based on 1 Corinthians 13. Combined with a great message from Pastor David Yarwood it was a great testimony to the mostly unsaved guests.



As I mentioned in the last newsletter I will be leaving to go to Dubai with Everyman's for 4 months. This has been confirmed and I will leave in the first week of April (very soon). Unfortunately, for security reasons it is unable to be made public knowledge exactly where and when I will be going but it is ok for me to tell you this because this is not a public forum. Everyman's was told by Canberra not to put it up on Facebook as it may pose a risk. Rest assured that I will be quite safe and even though Claudia will not be able to come with me we will have contact with each other because I will be living on the base and we will have daily communication, unlike when I was in Afghanistan. We would definitely appreciate your prayers during this next few months for both of us as we will be separated and also that the Lord would use me mightily to reach the lost men and women who are serving the nation over in the Middle Eastern area of Operations. My next newsletter should be from over there! Thank you for your support!

How blessed is he who considers the helpless; The LORD will deliver him in a day of trouble. The LORD will protect him and keep him alive, And he shall be called blessed upon the earth; And do not give him over to the desire of his enemies. – Psalm 41:1-2



"I am the true vine..." John 15:1

In His service,

Ben and Claudia



EVERYMAN'S WELFARE SERVICE
Serving the Australian Defence Force