**34th Annual Corowa Swim-In and Military Vehicle Gathering- Year of the Trailed Equipment and Armour**

They say that 13 is an unlucky number and for some, the Year 2013 was an unfortunate one. The wet weather we had in NSW had not affected the Riverina area which had not had rain for some months. We enjoyed temperatures in the mid 30’s all week and after leaving Sydney’s rain it was nice to be able to look forward to sunshine. The internet was able to provide us with an accurate long range forecast which proved to be correct. There was a prediction of rain on the Saturday and fortunately it occurred after our swap meet and prior to our Presentation and Auction. KVE was pleased at the excellent response of pre-registered entries and the number of people taking up the Direct Payment option. It is important to include your payment reference on the form as we are still trying to sort out a couple of entries. The form for 2014 has been revised to include boxes for Direct Payment details. Once again we applied for a grant from the Corowa Tourism Event Grant Program and were successful in everything we wanted so pre-registered participants received mementoes such as a cap, plaque, pen, sticker and Special Edition magazine. We received favourable comments on the packs and their contents. We streamlined the booking in process for pre-registered entrants so want to encourage more pre-registered entries which enables us to know the numbers of vehicles and people attending. We are aware that sometimes circumstances come up where a participant is unable to attend so we encourage people to organise for the collection of your pack. There are still participants who are coming along to the Site Office and providing details of vehicles they have not been able to bring which causes issues when we add up the total number of vehicles at the rally.

Once again Richard Farrant, one of our KVE Committee decided to make the trip out from the UK. Richard and I left Sydney on Saturday 9th March and after just over 6 hours we arrived at Corowa. The first port of call was to the Showground to meet members of the Rotary Club, Showground Trust and our Vice President, Neville Smith. We checked out locations of the site to work out our vehicle display area, camping, swap meet and food area. KVE would like to thank the Corowa Rotary Club, Corowa Racecourse & Showground Trust and Show Society for all their help over the past 12 months to make our week in Corowa a success. There were people interested in camping at the Showgrounds for the week so we made a decision to have the facility from Monday 11th March to Monday 18th March at a cost of $200 per day. People contacted Neville Smith to book camping and Swap Meet sites. There ended up being very few who took up the option of camping so at this stage, in 2014 we will only have the Showgrounds from Thursday to Sunday. We gave people the opportunity of setting up Swap Meet sites upon their arrival any time during the week and a few took advantage of this. There were people who had booked but didn’t arrive or have the decency to contact Neville to say they had changed their plans to either not attend or stay elsewhere. While there we loaded up all the display boards and office material which was stored out there and brought it back to the Site Office at Ball Park. We updated the boards with promotional stories from 2012 and a story already written on our event for 2013 in the Corowa Free Press. After 34 years of collecting newspaper, magazine and other reports of the Corowa Swim-In it is fascinating to see people who spend time going through all the past reports. We also have a Memorial Board for participants of the event who have passed away. Every year the board is added to and we appreciate some photos and stories of people who are no longer with us. One or two A4 laminated pages provides people with an insight into these people.

On Sunday we decided to have a day out and our destination was the 41st Mitta Muster. The next Mitta Muster will be held on Sunday 9th March 2014. A very pleasant drive, with a stop at a Sunday Rotary Market in Albury where Richard picked up 2 vehicle manuals at a bargain price. The Muster was not a big event, but very entertaining with something for everyone. A few stationary engines and classic vehicles were of interest, as were the young motorcyclists pitching their skills at Trials Riding over obstacles, but the horse events were main interest of the day. With a KVE committee meeting scheduled for the afternoon, we could not stay long. On the journey back, we did a recce of the town of Chiltern, which was on the list of places to visit for the Wednesday trip out. As we got back to Ball Park, we noticed Ian Evans’ truck and semi-trailer at the nearby loading ramp and went to see what he had brought along. It was loaded to the maximum with vehicle entries, the largest being the Blitz semi with FBE trailer.

One of the early arrivals was Peter Kunz junior who had recently purchased a Dodge Weapons Carrier. Peter left from Goulburn, followed by Fred and Marilyn Reeves with a stopover in Holbrook. Only major hick up was that it used about 5 litres of motor oil on the trip and the fuel sender was leaking petrol if the tank was filled up, (fixed on the road). Throughout the week there were no major dramas except vaporised fuel and the Dodge didn’t like to start hot over 150 degrees Celsius. Peter left on Sunday morning and somewhere past Yass he stopped on the side of the road as the engine suddenly lost oil pressure and made grinding noises. The vehicle was taken on a trailer back to the farm. The crankcase wall inside the engine is damaged and the camshaft is snapped in 3 pieces. The con-rod big end nuts were found to be loose. Peter is deciding whether to find a new engine or rebuild the old one, including the gearbox as this is leaking oil everywhere. They are hoping to rebuild the Dodge mechanically before Corowa 2014.

On Tuesday afternoon Brian Healey produced the first edition of our newspaper, Daily Dispatches. It was followed up with a newspaper each day and the final one was handed out on Saturday evening. Thanks to people for their photographs, trip reports and other stories. Participants were eager to get their copy. There were many very positive reports. We hope to continue with releasing Daily Dispatches in the future. Thanks Brian, you did a great job meeting most of the deadlines. We are hoping people will forward some jokes, stories, etc. during the year which could be included next year.

The first trip was on Wednesday to Barnawartha and Chiltern. The 13 vehicles left Ball Park in convoy and it was only a short distance before the first incident occurred. Rick had not secured his toolbox on his Leyland Super Comet and tools fell out onto the road. Graham Meyer and Paul Brooks were following and fortunately picked up the tools. They walked the 75 metres down to where Rick had stopped clear of the parked cars etc. As they walked towards him, a bloke backed out from the kerb and accidentally nudged his truck. Rick said “I guess he couldn't see a green vehicle because they are painted green to make them less visible.” Only a bit of paint off the bumper, but he moved the truck sideways. He didn't even bother to get out of his ute to check his damage. So that's the reason for the Loose Tool Award which was presented to Rick on the Saturday night. The convoy arrived at Barnawartha Public School prior to 11am. At 11am the children were given the opportunity to view the vehicles and they enjoyed blowing the horns on all the vehicles, being in the driver’s seat and standing in the back. David Smith had his Meteor Tank Engine which was towed behind his ‘Rolling Landfill’ Land Rover and the children stood back to listen. It was amusing to watch the reactions of the children and one lost his feet altogether.

After the school visit the vehicles went out 3kms from town to the Chiltern Motor Museum which was previously located in the main street of Chiltern. After seeing the collection it is now apparent why they had to move to a larger premises. The Museum is a privately operated collection of machinery and automotive memorabilia. This collection includes over 50 hand operated petrol pumps, tractors, bulldozers and other farm machinery. It also includes signs, oil bottles and racks, auto cycles, vintage oil engines, tins, etc. The trip continued on to Chiltern for a look at the town. Thanks to Neville Smith and our Corowa KVE members who coordinated this day.

As Public Relations Officer we received excellent promotion. The Border Mail and Corowa Free Press came over and took photos and interviewed participants. A few years ago we had made contact with Mark Fletcher, known as ‘Fletch’ from the TV program “Classic Restos” and he was hoping to attend our event prior to covering the Chryslers on the Murray but couldn’t make it. A casual phone call by Richard on the Thursday before Corowa prompted him to remember being previously contacted and after several phone calls a deal was struck and he was able to attend prior to going across to Albury. Google ‘Classic Restos’ or www.itchybutt.com.au He arrived on Wednesday in his 1969 Dodge Dart to start filming on Thursday. We took him out to the Wahgunyah Hotel for dinner where he met some of the participants which gave him an insight into the military vehicle scene as he has not done a program on military vehicles before. He was impressed that I was willing to help him with the filming and interviews and I made sure we covered a cross section of vehicles and participants. The day started at 7.30am with some footage down by the river and lagoon. Scott Rough provided the transport in his jeep and we made sure the Corowa Shire and Ball Park Caravan Park were highly promoted. At 9:30 the photographer from the Border Morning Mail wanted to catch up with us and he asked for some vehicles to go down to the River. I phoned Richard who was wandering around Ball Park and he managed to rustle up some vehicles. The first person he spoke to was Bill Sjoblom with his Moke. Bill seemed surprised to be asked but Richard said it would make a good cross section of types. Another one was Richard Sanders in his GPA. They lined up at the top of the slope to the river awaiting the call to move, a funny thing was other vehicles started to join the line, thinking it was the start point for the Thursday drive to the Rutherglen Public School. Fletch enjoyed the ride in the GPA and later in the afternoon in Bill Bates’ White Half Track. Interviews were done with the following people: Scott Rough - Jeep, Richard Sanders – GPA, David Smith – Meteor Engine, Jack Neville – Marmon Herrington, Limber and 25 pounder, David Furness – Nash staff Car, Bob Schutt – Armoured Scout Car, Julian Smith on his BSA, Cameron Reed in his Blitz and Hugh Thompson. He was also on site to get footage of people leaving on the Thursday trips. This will be shown in 4 major countries around the world so it will be good publicity for our event. For anyone wanting a copy of the DVD please send $15 to Khaki Vehicle Enthusiasts Incorporated.

Keith Webb, our official DVD maker, arrived on Thursday and started doing interviews and filming vehicles around Corowa. Unfortunately with the lack of rain over the past few months no one could find any mud! To see the range of DVD’s and purchase any please contact Keith Webb at Image Control on (03)9429 3301 or email [**keith.webb@imagecontrol.com.au**](mailto:keith.webb@imagecontrol.com.au)The latest DVD, Year of the 6x6 is now available.

Our local KVE members had also organised the 2 trips on Thursday. 20 vehicles went across to the Rutherglen Primary School in the morning. In the afternoon approximately 60 vehicles visited Bill Petzke’s tractor collection on the outskirts of Corowa. Bill has over 100 tractors, stationary engines, Model T – Ford truck and various other vintage trucks. He has tractors of all makes including a number of John Deere, Lanz Bulldog, International, Fordson and some very rare ones including Turner and Newmans. We took Fletch up to the Hotel Australia on Thursday night for dinner. He had to leave us on Friday morning so he could cover the Event - Chryslers on the Murray.

Ben Hemmings organised the trip to Beechworth. He coordinated the event with the local Tourism. Unfortunately Rick’s truck had a blocked fuel filter when going up Mt Pilot so the trip was delayed and the tour organised was missed however people were happy to sightsee, go shopping and organise their own tours. Thanks Ben for coordinating this trip.

On Friday, of concern was when an ambulance arrived at Ball Park, followed by another. We were shocked to hear that they were called out to Tony Luke. Luckily for Tony, his good friend Rick Shearman, a doctor, was present and he was in good hands. Tony was admitted to hospital and did not get released until after the event was over. For this bit of misfortune, Tony was awarded the Hard Luck award at Saturday’s presentation for missing out on the best part of the show. This was only the start of “unlucky 13 year”.

In the afternoon after the trip Graham Arkle took his Alvis Stalwart in to the river, the first time one of these had swam at Corowa. It had been 9 years since the vehicle had been in water. Graham has owned the vehicle for 4 years. He was generous to take people out for the ride. A small problem occurred when a sandbar was encountered at the far end of the lagoon. Normally with one of these vehicles it would not be a problem, but Graham had engineered declutch units for first and third wheel stations, and being disengaged they gave him less traction to get over the obstacle, but after a little manoeuvring all was well.

On Friday night we had organised for Tim Vibert to be our guest speaker this year at the Civic Centre. We had Dutchy’s briefing for the drive through on the next day and the line up of vehicles at the Corowa Showgrounds. With this starting at 7.30pm, it gave ample time to have a meal first. The talk was a fascinating insight on Tim’s life with military vehicles and he had been working on the talk for some time and practised it in front of relatives! He was one of the participants of the first Corowa Swim-In in 1980 and has attended the majority of years. His acquisition of vehicles over the past 34 years was covered including the purchase of 105 Centurion Tanks, opportunities for filming with vehicles overseas, trips overseas to places like Kubinka and the United States. I remember going to Bandiana and seeing all the tanks shortly after Tim and his 2 partners had sealed the deal.

On to Saturday, up early to get to Bangerang Park to book in those late comers and entrants who had not pre-registered. This year there were very few, as most had heeded our advice to pre-register early, so it made the job easier for all concerned and caused little hindrance. Still there were a few who slipped through the net and did not enter. We rushed off to get a vantage point for photos just before the vehicles turned off the main road down to the Showground. Once the parade had passed it was back to the Showground to photograph the line-up. The Swap Meet was an excellent one too. About lunch time the sad news went around, about Charlie Anderson’s fatal accident earlier in the day back in Qld. He was hoping to attend the Swim-In this year after purchasing a 1988 Reynolds Boughton but after a few health issues he decided not to travel the distance but made sure one of his mates took his vehicle to Corowa. In the afternoon we went back to Ball Park to start sorting out the Site Office, deciding on the awards and preparing for the evening activities - Presentation and Auction. Jack Neville was asked to be involved in a local wedding with his 1941 Ford Marmon Herrington, Limber and 25 Pounder. (See the Wedding Story at the end of this report.)

There was a reasonable roll up for the Auction and Presentations however it would have been nice to have the majority of our participants attend this function. It has been decided that the Auction as it is now, should be either reduced or wound up as it creates a lot of work for a small return. It might be best to have a Presentation evening starting around 8pm which could include a few auction items. Many thanks to Merv and Beth Kennedy for itemising all the auction items and also for those who helped with the auction. At the last minute we received notice that our regular auctioneer was sick so Neville made contact with another auctioneer who was with us within 30 minutes. KVE appreciates having members in town who know all the local people and we also appreciate the donations made by many of our participants. Bruce Brown donated a Jeep Quilt which was very impressive and the lucky bidder was Barbara Thompson. Participants had a chance to nominate a theme for 2017. We have decided it will be Year of the International.

It was nice to see some of Jim and Jenny Bennie’s children and grandchildren participate in our event. In 2012 Jenny Bennie presented the Jim Bennie Award after she lost her husband Jim while we were at Corowa in 2011 and organised a presentation to those families where more than 2 generations attended this year’s event. Deborah and Ian have continued on with this tradition after their mother passed away last year.

Awards were presented to the following:

* Graham Arkle – Mal Mackay Award to an individual who appears to get the most enjoyment out of being at Corowa.
* Hard luck – Tony Luke for missing out on the end of the week’s activities after being sent to hospital
* Breakdown award- John Hedges who arrived on Monday and his Jeep sounded as sick as a dog and shortly after failed to proceed until parts were sourced later in the week.
* Longest distance- Gary Schluter from WA
* Encouragement award – Warwick Johnson’s kids
* Vehicle – People’s choice: Jake Neville with the Fordson WOT2 truck
* Trailed equipment – People’s choice: Ian Evans with the Folding Bridge Equipment - Semi Trailer
* Armoured Vehicle- People’s choice : Bob Schutt with the 1942 Ford Scout Car S1
* Loose tool Award – Rick Cove

The event officially finished on Sunday 17th March. People were able to attend our KVE meeting followed by a dinner which was held at the Royal Hotel. Thanks for the free drinks provided by the Royal Hotel.

There were a few who stayed on for a day or two. Sandra and Dennis Taylor stayed on and unfortunately Dennis ended up in Corowa Hospital on Monday with health problems. He was released 9 days later. We hope he is recovering well. We were all saddened to hear that after Mike Edwards left on Tuesday, he suffered a fatal accident after his Land Rover and Trailer rolled after going through Yarrawonga on the way to Katamatite. KVE sends our condolences to both Mike’s family and Charlie Anderson’s family.

We appreciate all the help that was given at the Site Office by KVE members and other participants some of whom did a number of shifts. These people gained a huge insight into what goes on in the background and without these people the event would not be as successful as it is. Robert Pearce is organising the Site Officer Roster for 2014 and we are taking names and times you can help.

Many thanks to the Corowa Shire Council and many of the local businesses who supported our event in 2013. We had more correspondence with them for our 2013 event and attended meetings during the week. I hope some of them made an effort to visit us in Ball Park or attend our activities at the Corowa Showgrounds. We look forward to their support in 2014 and once again we will be applying for a Corowa Shire Tourism Grant and we will also apply for a Regional New South Wales Tourism Events Grant for activities held between January–December 2014 which should help us with promotion of our event and having people such as Fletch from “Classic Restos” provide us with more promotion over a wider area.

We received a record number of pre-registered entry forms for 2014. Please send back ASAP to give us an idea of the numbers of participants we are likely to have in 2014. KVE anticipates that in 2014 with it being Year of the Ford and Year of WW1 there could be a record number of participants.

**New Site Office for KVE – WW2 Radar Van**

A few weeks before the event we received news that we may not have a council site office and with this in mind KVE members started looking at possible solutions so we could have our own site office and store area. With Year of the Trailed Equipment there were suggestions of different types of trailers and we ended up being fortunate enough to be offered a WW2 Radar Van. We are in need of some help with the restoration and if anyone can offer assistance with materials or labour please let us know. We would love to have this on site at Ball Park in 2014.

**Wedding Story –** by CAPT Christopher and Laura Pike (nee. Browne)

I am a Coy 2IC at 7 Combat Service Support Battalion in Brisbane and Laura is a Speech Pathologist.

The reason we got married in Corowa was it is centrally located to both of our families most of which reside in Melbourne, Country NSW and Country VIC. Laura's Grandparents Joan and Harry Caughey have lived in the area for the past 80 years, having family ties with vineyards and wineries in the region. Laura's parents Barbara and Peter Browne moved several times throughout her childhood due to Secondary School teaching careers, however visited Corowa on a regular basis.

Barbara and Peter Browne married at St Mary's Catholic Church on 13 January 1979. Over 34 years later on 16 March 2013 we married at St Mary's Catholic Church where Laura was also Christened. The photos taken with the truck on the Murray's bank was the same location where Barbara and Peter had their wedding photos taken all those years before.

Laura's family has strong ties to the Australian Army and it was only fitting to hold the reception at the Corowa RSL who hosted a magnificent evening. It was excellent that the military vehicles were in town over this period and it was my pleasure and privilege to talk to several of my RAEME brethren in the main street, the day prior to our wedding. Due to these family ties we are appreciative of Jack Neville taking the time to bring his truck down to the river to set the unique backdrop to what are some beautiful photos. Laura and I enjoyed watching and inspecting the preserved history on show and the characters we met on this memorable weekend.

Thank you and regards,

Chris and Laura

**Why the Johnson family received the Encouragement Award**

Geoffrey is the eldest and he drove in the parade and on the Friday run, he turned 18 the Thursday prior to Corowa and has been driving around the paddock since he was 12. His first off road driving with a club was in November 2012 at the World War 2 jeeps Christmas party get together. He has always been mad keen on jeeps since he was a toddler. Christopher is 14 and has only taken up driving himself in the last year. Prior to that he was happy to jump in with Geoffrey or anyone else who had a jeep with the engine running. Thomas is 10, and Kirrily is 8 on the 30th March. Like the older two they adore the jeep and run out of the house when they hear it start in case they miss out on a ride up town or to the rural supply store. They all have caught "JEEP FEVER" from Warwick.

**Land Rover Gun Buggy – Report from Steve Dietmann**

The Gun Buggy started life as a 1958 Series 2, Command Recon, 88 inch wheelbase Land Rover. Along with a number of it's cousins it was selected to be turned into a 106mm Recoilless Rifle Carrier. The modifications to do this were many. According to it's chassis number, this vehicle saw active service in South Vietnam with 104 Signal Squadron and had it's rifle removed and fitted with a pintle mounted M60 machinegun and used as a convoy escort vehicle. In this role it was very capable as they are a zippy little thing to drive. The 1/15 Royal NSW Lancers were issued these vehicles and as such the museum was keen to secure the purchase of one. Colin Brown made this one available and the deal was done. It is now a permanent exhibit at the Lancers Museum and is kept in running order to attend various shows and parades.

**Tales of a Corowa Virgin – report by Alan Lark (a dedicated Site Office worker seen working morning and afternoon most days)**

After a disastrous start, where I had lost my wallet and had spent my first day cancelling and renewing licence, cards and what so ever, I finally got under way early on Tuesday morning. All went well though I thought the fuel consumption had me a bit worried, after refuelling at Goulburn the Land Rover took on a new lease of life and I eventually arrived safe and sound in Corowa in the afternoon, booked into the caravan park and began the task of setting the van and annex up, you know how it is, a few stakes in for the annex...reach for a cold one, back to the job....then reach for another cold one ( well it was bloody hot ) I almost had the area to myself and I thought " what a peaceful place to spend the rest of the week”, ( did you know that Kookaburra’s wake around five am) you do now. Little did I know that come Friday afternoon, I would be hard pressed to find my van. I must confess that I have never seen so many ex-military vehicles in one place, some I have no idea what they were and am still checking my photographs to identify them. I started my military career as an Army Apprentice at Balcombe around 1953 and finished in 1975 and as I have said, never seen or heard of some of them, needless to say I was like a fly around a cow pat, even to see one disappear into the river. I met up with some people I haven't seen for years and was able to make more friends than I can remember. I really enjoyed my time checking people in where I really got to know more people, it was a bit hectic at first but when you got the hang of it all it just rolled along nicely, I even went to Victoria one night and had a feed and a couple of Mexican beers, the things you do when you are away. Friday night was wonderful, Tim Vibert's talk was an eye opener, what would you do with 105 Centurion Tanks, makes me feel that my restoration of a 1942 No6 Chev Blitz Gun Tractor a bit wanting. After the talk I was kidnapped and taken to some unknown place where the local Port flowed freely, I ended up heading for the van around midnight, strange things happened that night, a friend said that there was a phone call from me around 2am asking directions home, I was certain that I was well in (or on) my bed by then. Must have left my phone somewhere. Saturday Night and the auction was great to be part of, did that lady eventually wear that women’s uniform she bought?

     On the way back to Sydney I have reason to make application for the idiot of the year award. Creeping out of the park, at around 5am Sunday morning, I waited until I was out of earshot and on level road outside the park to carry out the final hook up, chains, lights etc. 75 kms from Corowa, I was flagged down by a motorist, to tell me I had left the rear jacks on the van down, that was easy fixed as it was breaking dawn and I didn't have to grope around in the dark. Now it gets bad, about 15kms from Holbrook, the gearbox gave up and I had to be towed to town (Van and all) where I spent the rest of the day trying to work out how to get home. A good mate made the trip from Sydney and towed the van and myself home.....at the time I wrote this, the gearbox is still not fixed

I am making arrangements to return next year. Keep on collecting and displaying it is a vital part of our Military History

**Ford Armoured Scout Car S1 – owner Bob Schutt**

Bob Schutt from Monto in Qld, brought a very rare armoured vehicle to Corowa this year. The Ford Armoured Scout Car S1 was built in Australia during the war by Ford at Geelong, Victoria State railways are believed to have built the first five. Constructed on a CMP Ford F15 4x2 chassis, the body had similarities to a White Scout Car. This was a "reverse Lend-Lease" arrangement as the vehicles were built for the US Forces to use for airfield defence. As Bob says, not a very suitable vehicle for the role. It is the only restored one known, and the only other one is unrestored and in Syd Beck's museum at Mareeba in North Qld. About 50 are thought to have been built. Bob first heard about this vehicle in 1984, he eventually tracked it down and bought it, but did not start the restoration until 2002, finally completing it in 2007.

**John and Bill Belfields trip to Corowa** To get the M816 Prime Mover, 3 axle steco float and Pacific film Sherman tank ready for the trip to Corowa was challenging for the Belfields. John shares this story with us:

“we got stuck into preparations – first parade service by Bill – the bloody bonnet is too heavy for me – weak excuse. I know. No oil in the master cylinder so therefore out with the lead light and inspect all backing plates and wheels for rotten telltale signs of brake fluid leaking out of RH rear wheel – off with the wheels, damn heavy 1100x20 and then the hub – also bloody heavy. Reco the wheel cylinder and reassemble, then remove and reco the master cylinder and bleed the brakes. Also the diff seal was stuffed another lousy job. Then pump up a total of 26 tyres, check the lights and fix. Load up the Sherman and chain it down and after last year’s debacle when the coppers hit us for a $375 fine for dropping off a chain which holds the railway sleeper, which protects the tyres when the Sherman runs over them. So a brand new sleeper and 2 new straps – hopefully problem solved!

Departure 7am Thursday morning and its dark and the head lights wont work – well its nearly day light and the rest of the truck and trailer are lit up like a X-mas tree. Down the Monash ‘carpark’ and through town, up the Tullamarine freeway – along the Ring road and then the Hume Freeway to Kalkallo to refuel at Shell Kalkallo amongst about 10 modern semis. Hop in to start up and no go. Starter jammed solenoid faulty? Batteries flat? So into the Truck stop shop for 2 new batteries and “Oh no mate we don’t keep batteries”. Well, Bill was to follow the truck in our old Barina but had been held up so “what to do?” Stuck on diesel bowser with about 10 modern semis – a tow start seemed out of the question so I have a cup of coffee and wait for Bill.

I then have a brainwave – dangerous thing for me! What about the batteries in the Sherman? Of coure they are buried under the floor with metric nuts and SAE wont fit. Eventually I unhooked them and struggled to get them out of the turret hatch.

Hooray – Bill arrived to carry them off the tank and refit to the truck – hop in, hit the starter button and still that horrible non-starting sound. Next step, go for a drive in the Barina looking for 2 big batteries; Kalkallo is a one horse town but I got lucky – W&P Machinery was close by. I had subcontracted to them for about 15 years converting M543 & M816 wreckers from left to right hand drive – I think I did about 48 altogether. Anyway it was the same owner that I had worked for – even the receptionist had been with them for 30 years. They were happy to sell me two new batteries for cash and I was on my way – unfortunately doing a u-turn on a 4 lane divided Hume Freeway was difficult and meant driving up a couple of one way roads. We fitted the new batteries and wonderful magic, it fired up straight away. We had lost a couple of frustrating hours but we were on our way – Bill driving the truck and me resting up in the Barina.

Next stop was the roadhouse at Glenrowan for Maccas and a coffee – My turn to drive and away I go – but after a few minutes Bill was not behind me in the Barina and I had a panic. Did I give him the bloody keys – I could feel them in my pocket – Oh hell, how can you do a u-turn with a tank on board on the Hume Freeway. So I stopped to ring him and yes, you guessed it, my phone was in the Barina. Feeling thoroughly depressed and ashamed it was a wonderful feeling when Bill rolled up in the Barina – he had used the spare key – thank God for that. Later we changed drivers again with me resting up in the Barina; after all I am 81 – it’s a good excuse and I use it a lot!

Getting up near Wangaratta, Bill was going well, about 85kmph flat chat and then Kapow Bang!! A mighty explosion and bits of tyre and bits of tail light showered onto the road in front of the Barina. The left rear tyre on the 816 had exploded – they run about 100psi cold and god knows what made it explode. Luckily the mudguard had held –(Belfield made of course) the tail light completely stuffed. After last year’s “nice easy trip” we now carry 4 spares, 2 for the truck and 2 for the trailer. Luckily one of our hydraulic jacks worked and we get it back on the gooseneck. A couple of good Samaritans from the club had stopped and helped load the spare under the tank – thanks fellas. 10 hours after leaving home we arrived at the showgrounds after ‘another nice easy trip’ to Corowa. The truck went well on the way home and thanks to Russell Altman for helping us get ready with another flat tyre and lights problem. A very enjoyable weekend overall and thanks to all the committee of KVE and I will be back next year but in maybe a Jeep or something easier.

**Membership to KVE -** KVE currently has only 56 members. We are encouraging people to join especially when they are expressing their points of view on forums and have some suggestions on changes that could be made to the event. In 2015 the Corowa RSL want us to join with them on their Gallipoli anniversary commemorations.

**Themes for 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017:**

In 2014, 10th to 16th March – theme is: Year of the Ford and Year of WW1

In 2015, 9th to 15th March – theme is: Year of the Emergency Vehicles and Year of the General Motors

In 2016, 14th to 20th March - theme is: Year of the Tank and Year of the Chrysler (2)

In 2017, 13th to 19th March – theme is: Year of the International