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12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association

INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 31 1st February 2015

Welcome to the first Information Bulletin for 2015. It's going to be a big year for all vets, particularly because of the centenary of ANZAC services which will take place round the country and at ANZAC cove on 25th April. Each of us will be marking the occasion in our own way and I hope it turns out to be memorable for you. As a personal comment, I recently saw the new Aussie movie called The Water Diviner about a father trying to trace the fate of his sons at Gallipoli. I thought it was a truly great film, not only for its superb entertainment value, but also for its depiction of the battles. I thoroughly recommend it to all vets.

1. Accolades for our Les Partridge:

4297 Major Leslie Walter Partridge (Rtd) OAM

The Association was pleased to learn of the award to Les in this years' Australia Day awards. Les was the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) during the Regiment's 1st tour of South Vietnam 1968-1969. Les was appointed RSM of the Regiment on the 16 Nov 1966. It is interesting to note that Les enlisted in Sep 1947; before many of the Regiment's 1st and 2nd tour members were born! Les retired from the Army on the 9 Sep 1982 after 35 years of devoted service to RAA.

That devoted service continued after Les retired as he actively became involved with the welfare of veterans and their families. Les is a founding member of the Association and maintains a keen interest in the Association's affairs. The award of the OAM is warmly applauded by our Association and congratulations and best wishes have been forwarded to Les from the Assn.

Les has asked for us to pass on his thanks to all members who have contacted him with their good wishes. His message is:

"Thanks for the congratulations etc and the notification that you will be making mention in the next Info Bulletin. Could you please include my appreciation to all who have sent their congrats. I have replied to a number of them, but over the past few days I have been inundated with emails and phone calls and I have just run out of time and space. It would be a big thank you to all of my boys for their effort. Les."

2. M2A2 at Seymour:

Last Bulletin, we reported that an M2A2 has now been added to the magnificent Commemorative Walkway at Seymour. A couple of our members noted that the photo showed that the gun was without tac signs and it was suggested we might get our own regimental sign put onto it. We have received the following response to our suggestion from Seymour VVA via Ian Warren, which logically explains the situation. Thanks Ian.

"The M2a2 was used by Army Res units and the School of Arty (53 Bty) for training with 53 Bty firing the majority of rounds. I have been talking to Arty persons to obtain Tac signs.

The Committees does not wish to single out one gun Regiment from the Viet conflict and seeing all Gunners trained on M2a2s it would be appropriate that the larger tac to be School of Arty .

*The reason the gun is not represented in action position is that it was an OH&S issue with the Shire. Travel position mimimises accidents*****?*

3. RAA Historical Company:

The Historical Company maintains a web-site resource which records an obituary for all ex-gunners who are deceased. They continually require input from families and friends of gunners who have passed on so as to help keep their data as up-to-date as possible. We have received a request for assistance from Peter Bruce OAM, JP who is the Obituary Resource Coordinator of the RAA Historical Company. He is asking whether any of our members can help by providing background information on any of their mates who have recently died. A copy of his letter is attached and will provide you with further information.

These sorts of records are a valuable source of research information, but they also serve to keep the name of our mates in the public eye, so any help you can provide would be greatly appreciated I'm sure.

4. Cossie's News:

Cossie has sent us this SITREP.

"Trevor, we have just returned from a trip to Murray Bridge for a 5 day Murray river cruise on the "Proud Mary" river boat. If you have not done this trip, I highly recommend that you do. The trip, tours, food and service was fantastic and I would advise anyone who hasn't done so to do it.

On the way back home we visited Greg and Lorraine Ayson (ex 102 Battery) at their sheep property "Bidura Station" for a couple of days. The harshness of their land and surrounding country side really amazed us as to how you could derive a living from a land so harsh. I have included a few photos should you wish to include in this report. The dead Merino Ram letter box at the front gate is a ripper. Lorraine and Greg farmed Merinos for many years and they nearly sent them broke, so they now farm dorpas a South African, self-shedding meat live export sheep, and are now nearly on top of it.

Lorraine and Greg's hospitality was something else, although Greg's Foxtrot Gun beer drinking stamina needs some help and after our first night on the property he went back to bed on the morning after because he was so crook. I have told him to get into condition before Anzac day. Regards, Cossie"

One of Cossie's Bidura photos is attached.

5. Welfare Report:

Welfare Officer Rick is getting ready to send out the first Welfare Report for 2015. Please, if any of you have news about yourselves or one of your mates that you think the rest of the members should be made aware of, send it to Rick at rgcranna@bigpond.com, or phone (02) 4384 5570 ASAP. The Welfare Report is very popular but is only as good as the information that is fed to Rick.

6. Merchandise:

Our QM Laurie Bird reminds everyone that goods on offer include caps, ties, Chambray and polo shirts, and all-weather jackets. These items are available immediately unless you require a shirt or all-weather jacket in a size which is not normally stocked. In these cases, the clothing must be ordered for you from the factory and there would be a short delay in you getting them. Caps and ties are available immediately. These are all items that are particularly suitable for your reunions and other ANZAC Day activities.

Prices are: Caps \$15, Ties \$27, Shirts \$27 and all-weather jackets \$55. He advises that the previous offer of free postage for all orders has been extended.

To order please contact Laurie Bird on his email address of lawrence.bird@bigpond.com or phone 02 49548248

7. Gold Coast War Museum:

All our members who have visited this facility have been very impressed with what's been done there, and recommend it to all members. Neil Mangels has sent us an update report which is attached for your interest.

12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association is a Branch of RAA (NSW) Association Inc

The Association ABN is 90 248 586 329. However, the Association is not registered for GST and is Tax-exempt

8. Song and Poem:

Please forgive me for being a little self-indulgent here.....

Back in 1990 on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of ANZAC, my mate and I wrote a song which was recorded by a local folk-singing group, long since dis-banded. Anyway, in this year of the 100th anniversary, I thought some of our more creative members may be interested in seeing the words in poem form. The song/poem was written from the perspective of a young wife, widowed when her husband was killed during the assault on Lone Pine. It's called Lone Pine Lament and it's being re-recorded in time for ANZAC this year.

LONE PINE LAMENT

Words by Trevor Bryant. Music by Bill Eime. © 1990

Oh, you seemed so young and free as you marched to war that day,
Full of courage knowing you were right.
As you held me in your arms you said you wouldn't stay,
You'd soon be back to warm my lonely night.
But you knew not what lay waiting in the hills above the sea,
In the little cove they call Gallipoli.
No you knew not what lay waiting in the hills above the sea,
In that little cove they call Gallipoli.

Long will I remember the day the message came.
The ANZACs stormed the summit at Lone Pine,
They told me you were wounded in a burst of cannon flame,
And died before the morning sun could shine.
And they lay you in the hillside beneath that lone pine tree,
In the little cove they call Gallipoli.
Yes they lay you there with honour beneath that lone pine tree,
In that little cove they call Gallipoli

They told me of your courage and the pain you had to bear,
And promised me it hadn't been in vain.
Then they granted you a medal that you will never wear,
And told me it would ease my grief and pain.
But a hundred shiny medals cannot bring you back to me,
From the little cove they call Gallipoli.
No, a hundred shiny medals won't bring you back to me,
From that little cove they call Gallipoli.

Now so many years have passed, and the time has brought you fame,
For a nation needs its heroes so it seems.
But every year in April when they salute the ANZAC name,
It makes me weep for all our wasted dreams.
They lie with you forever in that far off cemetery,
In the little cove they call Gallipoli.
Yes, our dreams are lost forever in that far off cemetery,
In that little cove they call Gallipoli.

The Association acknowledges the ongoing support of the Ingleburn sub-Branch of the RSL in the publication of these Bulletins, and thanks them for their assistance.

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