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12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association

INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 54 3rd December 2016



1. Message From the New President:

At the AGM recently I was voted in as your President. It was a great honour and I thank those who nominated me and voted for me. I will do all that I can to continue the great work that my predecessor has done for us.

Graham Floyd was our President for many years. His leadership and devotion to the Association have been frankly amazing, and on behalf of all of us I thank him. He will continue his involvement with us as our Vice President and I will consult with him regularly as we move forward.

I'm fortunate to have a competent and dedicated committee supporting me. Together we will continue to manage the affairs of the Association for the benefit of our 300 members. Noreen and I hope that you have a great Christmas with your families and friends and that 2017 is all that you wish it to be. We look forward to catching up with you at our May re-union."

Don Tait

2. Nostalgia:



Remember this photo from the last Bulletin?

Thanks to Ken Marsden and Geoff Mauger, we can identify a few more.
Top Right is "Leafy", Sgts' Mess
Under him is Doug Power, driver.
Middle, 2nd left is Ken Marsden, cook.
Middle 4th left is Bob Stelling, barber.
Front, 2nd left is Jeff Robertson, signaller
Front, 3rd left is Geoff Mauger, surveyor.

3. Laying Knoxy to Rest:

Dan Cudmore has sent us this moving report about the process of scattering the ashes of Geoff Knox. RIP, Knoxy.

TAKING GUNNER KNOX TO HIS FINAL RESTING PLACE

It was a full eight years since Knoxy had decided to shuffle off to a different place on the 22nd October 2008. And now, here he was, still lying around in one of those duck egg blue canisters waiting to be taken to his most favourite place and a spot where he could gaze out over what once had been ‘his’ domain. He was about to be taken to the summit of Feathertop, Victoria’s second highest peak.

Ben, Sarah and Thom along with Sarah’s partner Ben and myself had gathered in Harrietville for an early drive up to the Razorback from where we could traverse the 11 kilometres to the junction that leads to the summit of Feathertop, a further one or so kilometres up to the 1,922 metre mark.

The boys and Sarah had spent their growing up years in this superb high country region of Victoria, it was all pretty ‘second nature’ to them, and so as we tracked across each hill, the stories flowed; inevitably, stories that provided me with great colour and some alarming insights to what had transpired in Geoff’s life over some of those forty years since we had been together sending down fire missions and drinking way too much VB in South Vietnam.

The weather was typical Victoria cold one moment and sunny and warm the next, so Sarah spent a good deal of time oscillating between being an Eskimo and a Pacific Islander on holidays. At the same time, her Ben had decided from the outset that he was indeed going to the top of the world and had rugged up not unlike Sir Edmund Hillary on his way to the summit of Everest.

At the track junction leading to the summit we fueled up on healthy snacks and fruit supplied by our wonderful provider, Lois and at that point Ben Knox made a magnanimous gesture and suggested that I might like to carry Knoxy to his final resting place? So off we set, up the only steep part of the entire trek. I was immediately reminded of April 2010 when I ran the Boston Marathon in honour of Knoxy, and I had kept wondering just when was he going to do his bit to get us to the finish line? Similarly this time, I kept telling him to do his bit as I wheezed my way to the summit.

By this time we were above the snow line, so on the eastern side was knee deep snow, while on the west was rock and tussock grass. As we reached the top I muttered to Geoff, “mate, if you think there are going to be 227 annual pilgrimages to come and see you up here, you had better think again,” I think he got the message.

Thom had brought a flag and Ben the beers there was nothing more required. For those of you who attended Geoff’s funeral service in 2008, it was the very same flag that was draped over his coffin. Nice touch Thom. After drinking a toast of ‘Pirate Life’ craft beer, [nothing middle of the road for our Knoxy!] Ben moved to the edge of the mountain and commenced to set Knoxy free, the eddy wind picked him up [Geoff, not Ben!] and flung him back into a close embrace with Sarah and a smack in the face for the rest of us. It then settled into its easterly path and I imagine even now there are particles of Geoff riding high and well on their second or third circumnavigation of the globe.

There were no formalities but the moment passed just as it should have, with quiet reflection, a call into Lois waiting down in Harrietville; solemn respect and the realization that this finally was indeed, the last post.

A note: Thank you to Lois, Ben, Sarah and Thom for allowing me to be included in a very personal event. It was a privilege and an honour to take part.

LEST WE FORGET



Dan, scattering Knoxy's ashes with Ben, Thom and Sarah (The other Ben was the photographer.)

4. Naming of Battery Mascots:

- Flood has sent us this explanation of how the turtle became the icon of 106 Battery:



106 Field Battery....."prior to its first tour to SVN the battery acquired the nickname "The Turtles", which members of 106 regarded with affection. Shortly before the battery was disbanded for the fourth time (1977), Department of Defence (Army Office) approved a battery crest design showing a Green Turtle on a gold field, surrounded by a brown border. The gold is for the sands of Egypt, the brown for France's agricultural land and the green for the jungles of Vietnam. The crest was displayed publicly for the first time on the Battery guns and vehicles during the final parade of 106 at Lavarack Barracks 3 Nov 1977."

- And Cossie has given us this info about the 102 Battery toucan.



Not many know this but the original 102 Bird was in fact a Horn-bill, a bird of SE Asia, and it was raised by the Battery when they served in Malaya. I think the Toucan evolved in Vietnam as whoever painted the Battery rock painted a Toucan and thus was the birth of the Toucan. You will remember our Heli pad in Nui Dat was in fact called, Horn Bill pad.



5. Reunion Update:

Registrations for this big event are already flowing in. Many thanks to those members who have made the commitment to attend, and also to those who have taken the time to give us their kind feedback about the program and costs.

Although registrations are not technically due until 31st January next, it would greatly help the organisers if you could send us your registrations as soon as possible.

It's going to be a wonderful event, at very little cost to you. Who wouldn't see value in this?

And while we're on this subject, please don't leave it too long to book your spot at the AAA's National Gunner Dinner in Caloundra, which is happening on the Saturday night of our Association reunion, and is integrated into our reunion schedule. Don't forget that our Association will make it easy for you to attend by providing free busses to take those attending the Gunner Dinner from our reunion venue at Maroochydore to Caloundra and back.

We are told by the AAA that this spectacular event is filling fast. Our Association has already filled a table of 10, and we are well on the way to filling a second table so please register soon. You can register your attendance at the following website:

<http://australianartilleryassociation.com/>

6. 1RAR's Quest for a Unit Citation:

Jack Parr from the 1RAR Association (who took over after the sad passing of Pepe Prendergast) has sent us this report to update us on the progress of 1RAR's battle for a citation for units involved at Coral:

"We have received advice from the Chief of the Army (CA) Angus Campbell that he has decided to '... not to proceed with any action...' on our submission for the UCG.

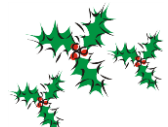
We anticipated this, as it is the same result of all submissions sent to Defence Honours and Awards (DHA.) He suggested our course of action is to appeal to the DHAAT. (Appeals Tribunal) which is an independent body. Hence the CA does not have to make a decision.

Acting on other advice we will not be appealing to the DHAAT but intend to APPEAL DIRECT TO THE MINISTER with a request for an INQUIRY.

You can check out all their inquiries and reports since they were set up in 2008 on their website.

As Canberra 'Shuts Down' during December and January this will give us 2 months to get our grounds for appeal together and to construct the appeal. GAME ON!!!!.....

*Rest Easy
Jack P."*





Canadians – ya gotta love ‘em!

7. Cheers from Tink – You’ve gotta be joking!!!

As usual, Tink has sent us his annual Christmas message of hope and piety - NOT!!!

There’s a copy of it at the end of this Bulletin, but it hasn’t scanned well so it may be difficult to read. Persevere though, and you may learn a few facts of life from the spiritual master. You are such a worry, Tink.....

8. The Modern Digger has it Easy!:

Neil Mangels has got his hands on a modern army ration pack, and can’t believe the size, range and variety of choices.

TO: "WE Were Warriors" , (12 Fd Regt RAA (Vietnam) Assoc. ,

Remember the good old days compared to the "pansies" of today. A friend of mine passed onto me recently the attached info, include in a Ration Pack (that was out of date). I suppose if you were in a desert the choices on offer would "help" you through the day.

Must say each pack is twice the size of the "C" rations of the 60s + 70s. of which we had to toss because of weight and size.
Neil

There are a few pages from the pack attached to this Info Bulletin which will show you the types of choices the modern grunt has.

I particularly liked the last point on the ration pack first page which – get this - invites feedback from the digger as to any improvements or suggestions!! Imagine what we would have given as “feedback” if we’d had this option!

9. A personal Note From Me:

A big thank you to all those members who have contacted me to enquire about my wife Jean’s battle with non-Hodgkin Aggressive B-cell Lymphoma. I’m pleased to report that Jean has finished her long program of chemotherapy and blood transfusions. On 23rd November she had a full CT scan to look for any residual cancer spots in her lymph nodes, and it was all clear! On the 24th November, we met with her oncologist who has declared her to be “in remission” which is an excellent outcome. It doesn’t mean that the lymphoma won’t come back, but if so it should be well into the future and they would then tackle it with more chemo.

But..... we’re not thinking about that; only that, at least for the short-to-medium term, she can get back to living a relatively normal life and we can enjoy our Christmas with our kids and grandkids.



Some of you would have already seen this Leach cartoon as it appeared in the Australian, but I think it's a ripper and deserves to be seen again.

It says it all!!!

10. A Poem from an Ouyen Lad:

Our esteemed immediate past president Flood is very passionate about his home town of Ouyen, Victoria, so every time someone local does something well, he likes to let us all know.

This time he has sent us an inspirational poem by Ouyen local Paul G White about the men and women from the mallee country who served in war and didn't return. You can read it at the bottom of this Bulletin.

11. Association Merchandise:

Our QM Cossie has set himself a big challenge to clear out some of the excess items in the Association's Q Store. Have a look at his list of absolute bargains at the end of this Bulletin.



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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Stock clearance sale!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Buy now.

Summer is with us at last and we have purchased 100 Tee shirts in sizes from S to 5XL.

You can own your own T shirt And a **FREE** cap included for the crazy price of **\$22.00!!!!!!**
Reduced by \$3.00 plus free post.

The last of the Mohicans!!!!!!!!!! Our Chambray shirts have sure been a popular item, but now we are down to the last of them. We have 3 x long sleeve M, 2 x 2XL short sleeve, 1x 2XL L/S 3 x XXXL S/S and 1 x 5XL S/S and 1 x 5XL L/S
now sacrificed @ \$15.00 and we will throw in a cap for free !!!!!!!

BARGAIN HUNTERS



Caps

The summer favourite is quickly getting scarce. Once this batch is sold there will be no more. So get in now whilst you can. Crickey, you can't even buy a schooner these days at this price, **\$6.00 Supa special**



Association Regimental Tie

This is the second generation of our original and it includes background shadows of the artillery badge in the full length of the tie. You could look fresher than Sir Les Patterson on Anzac Day wearing one of these specials,
Limited number to clear \$16.00



Buy now to support the Reunion in May 2017 in which your Association is giving huge support to you and your partner!!!!

ORDER NOW.....

Via: cossie0102@bigpond.com or Phone: 02 49 303 359 or 0409 432346. If I don't answer, please leave a message.

Following is a poem I recently wrote for possible publication in your newspaper. My parents Ted and Winnie White are originally from Mittyack and all of my siblings were born in Ouyen. I was born in Charlton after my parents moved there in the early '60's. I still have plenty of relations living in Ouyen and the Mittyack district being the White and Patching families. The poem was inspired by the stories my mum used to tell me about her brothers Tom, Bert and Len Patching and is a tribute to them and all the young men who left the Mallee country to fight in the wars. Unfortunately a lot of them never returned.

— Paul G. White.

Back Home in Mittyack

And the ship it sailed away at night and left the southern shore
And a father's son was sailing to fight another war
And the sheep were gently grazing with the rain upon their back
And the summer crop was rising, back home in Mittyack
And the shells were landing heavy, each one a body torn
And they ripped apart the meadow, each one a widow born
And a wheat train was moving, upon a sandy track
And the rabbits they were breeding, back home in Mittyack
And the guns they had no cut-off switch, they had no time for rest
And the soldiers had no time for sleep, their courage to the test
And a Curlew was calling, beside a lonesome track
And a baby child was bawling, back home in Mittyack
And a soldier's tears were flowing for the folk he left behind
And a farmer's son was crying for the mates he couldn't find
And the dust clouds were lifting, behind a Mallee shack
And the farmers hopes were shifting, back home in Mittyack
And the battle cry was waning, as the human cost was told
And the diggers left remaining were hungry, tired and cold
And the harvest was completed, as they tallied up each sack
And man and beast were rested, back home in Mittyack
And his mates they laid his body down, for its final rest
And they placed a cross above his grave, no medal on his chest
And his mother's fears were founded, as she wore her dress of black
And his father's son no longer, back home in Mittyack.

— Paul G. White, 2014

PO Box 11
Moama
NSW 2731

12/10/2016

Dear All,

You know you are getting old when you open Christmas cards and their signature is unreadable and they give no address—so you can't reply.

A man travelling through called me to tell me he was broke and needed to travel around a lot. SOO would I buy him a car. No I had never met nor heard of him.

Farmers are SO practical. One day as I stood talking to a farmer the flies were all over my face but not his. I asked how I could fix that. He said cut a small hole in the back of your trousers.

At a wedding I had the bride arrived BEFORE her parents. She wanted to start immediately but I refused telling her what an important/special day it was for her parents. After a long wait she spoke to me privately and asked that we wait no longer because she did not remember if she had invited them. They did not turn up.

A husband and wife were having a drink and he said How is it that when we fight I always have my say loudly and firmly and you say nothing! You just get up and walk away. She said: I go and clean the toilet! How does that help you? I use your toothbrush!

A man born in England but always wanted to be Irish. In middle age he asked his Doctor IF he could have an operation and become Irish. Dr. said Yes but it is delicate. Sure you want to try it. Yes. What do you do? You as English are born with a full brain if we cut half out you will be Irish. After the OP when he woke the Dr said: Sorry we mucked it instead of taking out half we took out the whole brain. He said NO WORRIES MATE!

Years ago 2 Nuns went to a sporting match wearing their "Habits" During the game there were 3 rowdy men behind them. 1 shouted I wish I'd lived in Syria, there are only 100 catholic there. The 2nd shouted I wish I'd lived in Iraq there are only 50 catholics there. The 3rd shouted I wished I'd lived in Iran there are only 20 catholics there. A Nun stood up looked looked at the men and said Why don't you 3 GO TO HELL—there are NO catholics there.

A drunk man staggers into an empty Catholic Church and as he walked around he opened the confessional door. He went in. The priest behind the screen heard him enter so he coughed a few times to let him know he was ready to hear his confession. When there was no response Father knocked on the wall. The answer was It's no good knocking here we have no paper on this side. An Atheist told his Religious mates he was jealous because they all had Feats Days. One said to him So Do You—when the Atheist asked Every April 1st.

On a 4 wheel drive tour in the Kimberleys, all the out back toilets had a HUGE notice above the "Bowl" It read. Do not place anything in this bowl that you have NOT EATEN. I read it many times but still did not ask my fellow travellers what they did with the toilet paper.

Whenever our guide spotted Flowers, Trees, Bushes, Birds, Animals he thought would interest us he pointed them out and then explained their facts in full. One day he saw a whole lot of Wallabies and told us to look at them but only said "Is there anyone on this bus who knows the difference between Wallabies and Kangaroos?" He did not say another word for half an hour as we discussed our thoughts on the difference. Finally he said "the difference is the Wallabies play Rugby Union and the Kangaroos play Rugby League.

A little boy asked me "Do you know what a brunette is? Yes! Do you know what a blonde is? Yes! A brunette and blonde were out for a walk in a park. Suddenly the Brunette said: Look that bird is dead. The blonde looked up and all around and said I can't see it! When I didn't laugh he said Tink. You must be a blonde too because everybody else but a blonde would not look up for a DEAD bird!

Recently I had a funeral and I waited for the undertaker to arrive with the coffin. The family asked me to start—Silly me they had had the person cremated and the ashes buried in the morning before the afternoon Service!

At an Army Reunion this year I overheard an ex Female soldier say to an ex male soldier. "Do you remember me?" He looked at her and said "I remember your face but don't recognise the rest of your body." She laughed as did all in earshot! Aussie Humour.

A little boy asked me :Tink, what is fastest—hot or cold?" I had no idea. His answer was hot because you can catch a cold. Then he asked why do we call clocks shy? Because they always have their hands over their face/dial. God Bless you all

Tink

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