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12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association Information Bulletin No. 26 6th July 2014

1. New Members:

The Association is pleased to welcome Peter Martin (Marty) as an Ordinary Member. Marty served as a Bombardier in 104 Battery's second tour in 1971. He lives in St Arnaud, Victoria with his partner Hazel (Judy). Welcome folks and we hope we can meet you at one of our reunions sometime.

2. A Couple of Great Museums:

- Member Steve Lewis wants to draw our attention to a new museum. Those of you who travel up to north Queensland from time to time might like to make the effort to check it out.
Not sure if all our members are aware of it, but the new national armoured and artillery museum is very close to finalisation on the Western Arterial road north of Cairns (about 10 minutes out). A very impressive looking building located within metres of the famous Kuranda Sky Rail terminal and a must for any of the boys heading north. Steve Lewis.
- Thanks to tips from member Larry Davenport and from Mike Mikicevic (1RAR 68/69), I've had the privilege of visiting a private military museum in a small town called Pt. Elliott, about 80ks south of Adelaide. I walked into the shed, and there in front of me was an entire, intact, working condition M2A2! On closer inspection and after reviewing their copies of all the official RAEME records of the gun, I can confirm it is definitely 102 Battery's Echo gun as fired at Coral. It even has a dent and a piece missing from the under-barrel front plate resulting from where the RPG had hit the ground in front of it early in the 3rd night's battle! According to the records, after Coral it wouldn't shoot straight, even after getting a new barrel, and was repatriated back to Aus. in mid-June 68.

Our member Laurie Bird remembers Echo gun at Coral well:

The article on the M2A2 at the museum brings back many memories of this particular howitzer, as it was Echo Gun which I was on during the battle at Coral. I remember that battle only too well and in particular the night of the 2nd attack when our gun was hit by an RPG as I was on duty as a member of a listening post within our Gun position in the early hours of that morning. I was midway between our rest area and the protective bund and sandbagged enclosure of the LP when I knew we would be hit by a missile of some kind. I had to make a decision to either shelter behind our Gun tool trunk or make a run for our LP protection. Thankfully I made the right decision of the LP position as the tool trunk was blasted with shrapnel. Sgt Robbo Robinson took shrapnel in his eye as a result of this hit. Ray Smith was my other member during the LP duty. Now the bad side of my escape is that you fellas have to put up with my annoying input with issues we have had. I hope I haven't been too much of a nuisance. All the best Gents, Laurie

The museum is owned by an ex-arty officer and is one of the finest private collections of militaria I've ever seen. It includes parts of a Centurion (his mate next door who is also a collector actually owns a full, intact Centurion!) parts of fighter planes and masses of artillery stuff – even a full set of 105mm shell-case charge bags still strung together. But the thing that impressed me most, was his collection of historic rifles – hundreds of them dating back to the American Civil War, and including the Zulu Wars, The Boxer Rebellion, Teddy Roosevelt's attack on San Juan Hill, First and Second World Wars, Korea and Vietnam. Visits are by appointment. If you'd like to have a look next time you're in SA, please contact me and I will give you the details. (See photo of Echo gun attached.) Trev Bryant.

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

2.

3. RAA Historical Company – 18 Pounder Restoration Project:

Cossie has sent us an update of this project as follows:

Trevor, attached is an article from the latest Cannonball magazine by Scrubber regarding the 18 pounder project that the RAAHC is working on for the centenary of Anzac next year. I thought that it might help if you included it in your next newsletter.

4. A Digger's Poem:

Member Clarence Ormsby (161 Battery) has sent us a copy of his poem, A Digger's Memory. See attached.

5. Obituary:

Member Gordon Alexander has sent us this obit which will be of interest for those of you who knew Richo.

Many of the Battery and 12 Fd would remember Paul 'Richo' Richardson - 10 Platoon, D Company 1RAR. My FO Team (John Gainsford, John Free, Sam Moule, John Ericsson) and I certainly do and also remember, and were inspired by him on the night this anecdote recounts. Regards, Gordon

WALTZING NO MORE

Vietnam vet Paul "Richo" Richardson passed away this week. A legendary figure in the Australian Army who I was privileged to dine with on one occasion three years ago, Richo will be remembered by his fellow vets for many things, but most particularly for what he did during the Battle of Coral, on the night of May 15-16, 1968. At the height of the action, just when it seemed the Australians of D Company, 1RAR were about to be overwhelmed by North Vietnamese troops, Corporal and Section Commander Richardson and his team of nine were firing their machine gun, rifles and grenade launchers for their lives, when he started singing Waltzing Matilda at the top of his lungs. The whole platoon joins in. He took a lot of stick for it, too, afterwards, but his mates loved him for it. He was that kind of bloke, and this week his platoon commander on that night, 2nd Lieutenant John Salter, eulogised: "Richo was a soldier's soldier who thrived in the bush and created havoc in the barracks. A bloke who commanders needed when it mattered but despaired of, when it did not. An inspiration to others at war and peace and the bloke you wanted to watch your back."

Vale, Richo, and thank-you for your service.

6. Seymour Huey:

Member Ian Warren has sent us a note to confirm that the long-awaited Huey is now in place on top of a pole to complete the wonderful Commemorative Walkway at Seymour. (See photo attached.)

7. Reunion Update:

There has been quite a rush of late registrations, bringing our total number so far to x. It's not too late if you're still interested. Ring Neil or Beery (their phone numbers are in the letter-head above) if you have decided to attend. Meanwhile, for those of you who have already registered, your outstanding balances are now due and we would appreciate your payment as soon as possible. Thanks.

8. Memorabilia – a Note from QM Laurie Bird:

A reminder that we have many quality Chambray Shirts in both Long & Short Sleeve, and also Short Sleeve Polo Shirts in most sizes, specifically bought by the Association for reunions/meetings. And remember ladies we also have appropriate shirts for you to wear. Just check out our website and provide your choice of shirt & size & provide your details either by email lawrence.bird@bigpond.com or phone 0249548248. All profits from these sales will assist in the Association subsidising our Reunions. I also advise that I have ordered caps and ties for the August reunion and expect delivery soon. If you would like one at \$12 for the cap and \$26 for the tie, order them from me and **I will throw in free delivery.**

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