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12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association

INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 39 11/10/15

Our esteemed Welfare Officer Rick Cranna is currently enjoying himself overseas. Among other things, he's following Australia's rugby world cup matches, and no doubt he's happy with their progress so far. At this stage, we are not missing him too much because fortunately this is the first issue of the Bulletin for some time which does not report the death of one of our artillery mates! Let's hope this healthy situation continues for many more editions.

1. New Member:

We are delighted to welcome Barrie Williams as a new member. Barrie served as a Lance Bombardier in Vietnam through 1968 and into 1969 with 1 Australian Reinforcement Unit, 4 Field Regiment, and 12 Field Regiment. He lives in Surry Hills, NSW, but like Graham and Alan Floyd, he was originally from the great Victorian town of Ouyen, which produced a disproportionate number of soldiers for the Vietnam war, as this summary from Flood describes:

I thought I would inform you all of the "Ouyen influence" re SVN:

- a. Cpl Frank Smith 1RAR KIA 21 Sep 65, the 2nd Australian soldier KIA. Interred at Terendak Cemetery and is to be repatriated Jun 2016 back to Ouyen;*
- b. 14 young men from Ouyen served in SVN;*
- c. another 3 young men who were educated at the Ouyen High School also served in SVN;*
- d. in 1968 there were 10 young men from Ouyen in SVN at the same time; and*
- e. 3 sets of brothers with the "Ouyen influence" went to SVN.*

That about covers it, and in a twist of fate at the Battle of Nui Le 21 Sep 71, exactly 6yrs after Frank was KIA, Ouyen had a survivor!

All in all a pretty good effort from a small country town! Flood.

2. AGM – A Reminder:

Just a reminder that the AGM will be held on Tuesday 10th November 2015 at the Ingleburn RSL sub-branch 70 Chester Rd. at 1400hrs.

Lunch will be provided beforehand, and we urge as many of you as possible to attend, and look forward to catching up.

3. New Defence Minister:

As you know, Australia now has a new Minister for Defence, but many of you may not know much about her. Her resume is impressive, and our Vice President Neil Mangels has sent us a detailed summary of her illustrious career which is attached for your interest.

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4. Resignation of our Esteemed VP:

Yes it's true. After all these years of competent and dedicated service to this Association and its managing committee, Neil Mangels is finally calling it quits from the committee, effective later this year.

Those who know Neil and have had the opportunity to work with him, appreciate what a great bloke he is and recognize his total professionalism. He was one of the founders of the Association and our long-term success has been in great part due to his efforts. More recently, his work with John Beer to organize the successful reunion last year at Maroochydore was superb.

Hopefully Neil will remain a member for many years to come and we can still catch up with him from time to time.

5. Australian Artillery Association National Gunners Dinner:

Those of you fortunate enough to have attended this event at Caloundra last year will know just what a fantastic night it was. It was so successful, and the feedback has been so positive, that the AAA has now decided that it will hold the event again at the same location in 2017. Please note the following email from their President:

Following the success of our 2014 National Gunner Dinner and the, what could only be described as an avalanche of enquiries with regards 'when is the next one' that followed, the Australian Artillery Association has decided to hold another National Gunner Dinner on the 27th May 2017. The dinner will once again be held at The Event Centre in Caloundra given the suitability of the facility to hold such a large catered event; the close proximity of the 1st Regiment and 20th Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment and Royal Australian Artillery Band of the 1st Regiment and one of our principal organizer's is a local which enables the event to be well managed in the lead up and execution of the 2017 National Gunner Dinner. The full details of the dinner can be found on our website at www.australianartilleryassociation.com.

Our aim on this occasion is not only to bring the Gunner community together again, and this time we are hoping for a turnout of between 400 and 600, we intend to use the event to raise funds for the Regiments. All monies raised by the dinner will be donated to each of the Regiments, inclusive of the School of Artillery and the Royal Australian Artillery Regimental Fund. Once again all promotional material used at the dinner such as banners (which will be of a generic type, themed Artillery) and other items will be gifted to the Regiments at the completion of the event.

To enable us to get the word out there to as many people as possible it would be greatly appreciated if you would place a notice in your next few Newsletters using the attached image and place an ad on your associations website (should you maintain a website).

The Australian Artillery Association recently designed and had made a Lapel Badge featuring the logo "Once a Gunner Always a Gunner". The profits from the sale of this Lapel Badge are all to be returned to the Regiment in one form or another and to date we have made the following donations:

- a. \$500 has been donated to the RAA Regimental Fund,*
- b. \$500 has been donated to the 'Veterans of the Street Australia' appeal, and*
- c. We are currently in the process of providing assistance to one of the Batteries by way of designing and gifting them a number of pull up banners. With the continued sale of the Lapel Badges coupled with other initiatives we hope to be able to outfit all of the Batteries within the Regiments over time (should that be permitted and they so desire to be outfitted).*

Your assistance in helping us get word of the 2017 National Gunner Dinner spread as far and wide as possible is sincerely greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions in relation to the above information, that contained on the webpage advertising the 2017 National Gunner Dinner or the Australian Artillery Association in general please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Kind Regards, Ubique, Kim (Mr Kim McGrath President Australian Artillery Association)

Please note your diaries and start saving! They've given us plenty of advance notice for us to get our acts together. Now that we know what to expect, I can safely say, "Don't miss out – it's a terrific experience."

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6. Centenary of Anzac:

With Australia still in its first of 4 years of commemorations of the 100th anniversary of our participation in the Great War, member John Beer (Beery) has sent us a copy of a poem he admires, and which describes the role of the Aussie Light Horseman in that conflict.

For those of you who like poetry, there is a copy attached for your contemplation.

7. 102 Battery Theme Song, The Toucan battery Blues:

For those of you who have heard the CD and have asked me to send you a copy of the words, I'm sorry I've been slack. I attach a copy to this Info Bulletin for those interested.

And remember the CD is available from the Association through Laurie Bird with all proceeds going to Association funds.

8. Project to Support the Orphanage in Vietnam:

Last issue of this Bulletin contained information about an orphanage in Vietnam and the assistance it gets from a few dedicated members of our Association. There was also a plea for members to donate funds to help with the work being done there – in particular, help to purchase a much-needed mini-bus for the transport of children to medical appointments etc.

The response from you – our members – has been very gratifying and several thousand dollars has been raised to date through your generosity. However, they are still well short of their target, so if any of you are thinking of donating, I'm sure it would be greatly appreciated.

The orphanage does a wonderful job, running on the smell of an oily rag, but it could do so much more with a little more funding. So if you can help, your donation can be made by Electronic Bank Transfer to BSB 064-404, A/c Ian Dimond Goal Saver, A/c No 10536210.

Ian Dimond has sent us the following report on the orphanage's activities, written by My Huong Le who manages the facility.

Hello Ian, News for Long Hai Centre.

The new school year at Long Hai Centre opened on the 7th September. This year we have increased from 132 to 150 children. Motorbike repair and sewing training are going very well, with some new students learning these skills. We are having problems hiring a hair salon training teacher (because of the low salary we are offering), but are hopeful to find the right person. 4 of our most qualified girls from the hair salon training program have found employment in this field. 8 of our children in the sewing training program also found employment and are now earning incomes to be able to support themselves and help their families.

New equipment such as hairdressing chairs are needed in the salon room before the next lot of children can join the program. In June the kitchen was renovated which we are so happy about and now older girls will have an opportunity to learn cooking.

A new program for the 18 children who are mentally affected in the special class at Long Hai Centre will begin to use a computer program called Duo Dulinex in October. This program has recently been translated into Vietnamese and has proven to be most beneficial for mentally handicap children in other countries. This will be the first time the program is implemented in Vietnam.

The Vung Tau Centre has closed, and all the children transferred to the new Centre 2 months ago. The new Centre is 7km from Vung Tau town. It is massive new building which was built by the government. It is 3 times larger than the former Vung Tau orphanage, but the move has come with many challenges and there are now more needs than ever. Security is a big problem with thieves breaking in of a night and since the move 5 boys have run away, jumping over the fence of a night. The walls are low and the surrounding area is very large. This will be very costly to secure the surrounding building with

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

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wiring. There are also many other practical problems which need to be fixed, such as needing blinds to keep the sun out and many more fans are needed throughout the building. The building is very hot and there is no sea breeze like we had at the old Centre. The building was given unfurnished so most of the rooms are empty. All the old furniture was moved from the old Centre, but much of it was old and broken so was left behind.

More than anything though the children feel isolated at the new Centre and can not go to the park or beach as they used to. It is my dream to set up some new programs such as an art room, library/games room, music room and to have more sports equipment so that children can be kept busy and entertained. For sure if children are happy, then they will not run away. Never before have we had this problem to that degree, so it is definitely indicative that the boys feel bored and isolated. Anyway, I feel sad for those that have left as I know how hard life on the streets is for them and more often than not they turn to drugs. It is very sad because those boys were doing really well at our Centre prior to the move. Ian knew all these boys and can testify to the fact that they were well adjusted and happy prior to the move. There are of course some positives to the move in the very fact that we now have much more space and there is huge potential to open more programs to benefit the children given the space we now have. In the future I would also like to see a sewing training program at Vung Tau Centre as we have at Long Hai Centre.

Thanks as always for your care, kindness, generosity and friendship. My Huong

9. Merchandise:

QM Laurie Bird reminds members that he still has all-weather Jackets and they remain at the very competitive price of \$55 including postage.

Also don't forget the usual shirts (\$27), caps (\$15) and ties (\$27) etc. that are still available, as well as the CD featuring the 102 Battery theme song The Toucan Battery Blues, and a tribute song to the Centenary of Anzac called Lone Pine Lament (\$10).

Christmas will soon be upon us and any of these items would make magnificent gifts not only for your ex-Regiment mates, but also for family and friends who are proud of your service to your country.

To order please contact Laurie Bird on birdlawrence@outlook.com or phone him on 02 49548248.

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.