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INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 42, 31st January 2016

Well, here we are in 2016. Can you believe it? President Flood and the committee hope you all had a joyous Christmas and that 2016 is already looking like a good year for you.

This Information Bulletin - Number 42 – is the first for the year, and continues a long line of communication that your committee established back in 2012. But as with all previous issues, the Bulletin can only be as good as the information that we receive for circulation, so this year it would be great to see more participation in the Bulletin from members, and we ask that you all take an effort to send stuff in from time to time.

1. Invitation from the Victorian Vietnam Veterans Association:

All our Victorian members, and those from other states who are interested, are asked to note the attached invitation from the VVVA for vets and families to attend any of a number of commemorative services to be held at 35 separate locations around Victoria on Sunday 21st February. All details are contained in the invitation.

As a note to our ex-Headquarter Battery members from Victoria, we've had a special plea from Mick Austin for you to try to attend the ceremony in Camperdown where Ian Scott (KIA at Coral 13th May 1968) is buried.

2. Report From the Vung Tau Centre:

Many members have taken an interest in the progress of this charity ever since our members Ian Dimond, Geoff Grimish, Robin Parkinson and Rick Cranna brought it to our attention last year. A few members assisted by donating funds to help with their various projects.

Last issue we mentioned the need for shade cloth to be fitted over the play equipment and suggested that some of our donated funds would be used for this purpose.

It seems like that has now gone ahead according to this report from My Huong (Centre Director). A photograph is attached;

“Just to let you know that the posts and cover for the play equipment at Vung Tau orphanage has been erected and looks fantastic. The covered area itself is larger than I imagined and all the play equipment fits underneath it nicely. Now that the play equipment is covered it is no longer hot and children will be able to play throughout the day.

A very big thank you to everyone who has contributed towards this. We are most appreciative of the support of the Battery members.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and all the Battery members a very healthy and happy new year.

Thank you again for your valued support. Best regards, My Huong”

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

3. 1RAR's Efforts to Obtain a Citation for Units Involved at Coral:

We received the following update from Pepe Prendergast just prior to Christmas. He certainly seems optimistic about finally getting results for the tremendous amount of work that has gone into it so far.

***Hi everyone,** It's been a very busy year for us scribes who have toiled long and hard to produce the UCG Citation submission for Defence.*

We are ticking & flicking the Final now so I will have it with Defence Honours by 29 Jan when we expect those in charge will be back from Xmas leave or newly posted in.

It has been a labour of 'love' with many, many, many hours of research, starting documents, drafts revised & revised again & added & deleted all through this year. A heck of lot of good work was done.

It has taken much longer than we first thought as we identified & incorporated many new aspects of that battle that are either not covered or minimally covered in the formal and official books.

Many of you have contributed in some small or large way & we appreciated your input. We have tried very hard to incorporate enough information to highlight the contributions of the many smaller units.

If we missed something you thought was important then it is because you didn't tell us. We can only ask. We have tried very hard to ensure all units & attachments were included.

In any case, getting the full "bigger picture" story right is the key to getting this through to approval.

*When it is signed off & sent in we will send you a copy **for your eyes only for now** until we get an initial response from Defence.*

I would like you to tell your members about this so they know we have done our job (on their behalf) as we said we would.

We firmly believe that taking the bigger picture approach covering the full 26 days, the 4 major battles etc; and involving ALL units was the way to go. We believe that the Defence Act 110 & Regulations allow us to submit this Submission and, there is precedence for Defence to accept and acknowledge our Submission and properly assess it in line with recommendations made by several Defence Honours Review Tribunal reports.

While there may be some typically "official administrative hurdles" for us to jump over, in the end we believe we will succeed.

So there you have it.... finally done & dusted as they say.

*We will now take a fresh final look in early Jan to finalise it by 20 Jan for printing & sending it in on **27 Jan 2016***

*On behalf of the voluntary scribes who were Neil Weeks, George Hulse and particularly Jack Parr (the lynch pin), may I wish you all a very **Merry Xmas and may 2016 see it approved.***

*Thank you for your patience & help when asked.
Pepe Prendergast*

4. Artillery Veterans Affected by the WA Bushfires:

This information is passed on to members by President Flood.

You would all have read and seen the devastation the WA fires caused at Yarloop.

Les (Squizzy) Taylor SVN 1Fd Regt 66-67 and 4Fd Regt 70-71 lost his life in these fires. Les was not a member but would have been known to a lot of our guys. Also Tony Ferraro, 104 Bty 71, had the fire go through his dairy farm. Tony and his two sons stayed and fought the fire as the wives were evacuated. They saved the two homes on the property and their dairy herd, but lost all their fodder and feed plus 30k of fencing.

5. Tom's Odyssey:

Member Tom Brown (102 Battery Foxtrot gun 1968) and his wife You-han, are currently in the middle of a long road trip round Australia, which started in the middle of last year and has still got 6 months to go. They're certainly seeing a lot of the country!

This week he caught up with Peter Geelen and me (Trevor Bryant) in Adelaide before he heads to the west. Tom says that the highlight of his trip was the short but precious time that he spent meeting with his old Gun Sergeant Max Franklin in Queensland not long before Maxie died.

6. Welfare Report 30th January 2016 from Welfare Officer Rick Cranna:

Hope everyone had a good Xmas and New Year and trust the 2016 is a great year for us all and we all keep well and as fit as we can!

I have made contact with a few of our members who are having a battle health-wise, which I thought I would report to you as I know that any contact by our 12 Field family will cheer them up.

Dave Dalton (HQ Bty 1968-69) suffered a heart attack earlier this month and was taken to Taree and then Newcastle hospital. Spoke to Dave two days ago and he is now recovering well after having a stent inserted and he tells me that he is back in training for Anzac Day in April. Dave and Carol have a very sick daughter, which is a worry for them, so we are all thinking of you Dave and Carol.

Spoke to **Tom Carmody (102 Bty 1968-69)** a few times this month to see how he is. Tom suffered a series of minor strokes causing some falls and a stint in hospital at Forster during December. He is now out of hospital and on the road to recovery. He tells me that little "new knees" **Johnnie Hahn (102 Bty 1968)** has been visiting him and giving him advice on beach fitness, which I am sure Tom appreciated!

Russell Hogan (102 Bty 1968-69) must be one of the bravest guys I know. I have reported previously about Russell who has had just about every part of his body operated on. He never complains, but I rang him last night to see how he is getting on. He told me that he has some good news from his doctors concerning the two tumors in his neck which have not grown, but one other in his throat is giving him some discomfort. Some blood discharge in his waterworks is also a worry so a trip to another doctor on Monday will hopefully attend to that although he is a little concerned about exactly how and where the doctor will insert the camera to identify the problem!

He has been very grateful for the racehorses that Grimo has sent him to train and race and tells me that he has five horses booked to race at Balranald on the 27th Feb which he reckons will run pretty well.

I spoke to **Graham Ryland (HQ Bty 1968-69)** this morning to see how his wife Ros is getting on. I mentioned in my last report that Ros, who has been undergoing treatment for Leukemia, has not been at all well. Graham mentioned that a change of doctors has made a good difference, so hopefully Ros will get some relief as soon as possible. Graham himself hasn't been too well either, with a short stint in hospital just before Xmas and I know the regiment's thoughts are with them both at this difficult time.

Graham mentioned to me also, that **Vic Page (HQ Bty 1968)** has been in hospital with blood pressure problems, but his wife Delma told me today that Vic is out of hospital and feeling much better.

Graham also mentioned that he had spoken to **Mal Hundt (HQ Bty 1968)**.

I mentioned in my June report, that Mal has been undergoing treatment for prostate cancer. The good news is that Mal advised Graham that recent tests showed a drop in his PSA levels so that is good news.

Mal is currently moving house but I know all of us are right behind this very nice guy in his battle with the disease.

Also spoke to **Barry Twomey (102 Bty 1968)** during the week. Barry who lost his lovely wife Pauline not so long ago, tells me that he is OK and hoping to meet up with a few of the guys on Anzac Day.

I did make a call to **Maxie Franklin's wife Win** to see how she was getting on after losing Max recently. Win says that she has her good days and bad days but has the support of her son and grandson as well as the many friends that keep in touch with her. Win's number is 07-33724286 if anyone wishes to give her a call.

In a few weeks, **Geoff (Grimo) Grimish, Robin Parkinson, Rex Ward and myself (all ex 102 Bty 1968-69)**, are heading over to Vung Tau to review progress at the orphanage that guys from **12 Field Rgt** have been supporting.

Mind you, we might have an odd beer and rum (or two) whilst we are there!!

I know that Trevor has details of the shade cloth that has now been erected over the playing area for the kids which was paid out of funds donated by some of our members.

I had a text from **Ian Dimond (102 Bty 1968)** last week advising that a further payment of \$2200 or VND34,000,000, had been made to purchase mattresses for the kids to sleep on and he advised that sporting equipment (table tennis tables etc.) had also been purchased for use at the orphanage.

Ian is a remarkable guy - he is currently in Vung Tau, and is like many of our people from 12 Field Rgt who work many hours and give up their time and money, to try to make the lives of those who live in these poverty-ridden countries, especially the children, more comfortable.

That is all the Welfare news I have at the moment. If anyone has some news that they would like our members to know, particularly news of anyone who is not doing so well, please let me know so that I can pass it on.

Try and stay fit.

Regards,

Rick Cranna Welfare officer - email: rgranna@bigpond.com Phone: 0407572048.

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