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12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association

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Well, if you're reading this, you've obviously made it to 2017! Back in our Vietnam days, who'd have been game enough to predict we'd still be on deck this far into the future?

We guess you all have a busy year planned, and it should also be a big year for the Association, particularly centred around our reunion in May. More about that later. This year, we'll continue to keep you up-to-date on how the world of artillery veterans is progressing via these Bulletins. Don't forget that any of you is welcome to submit material for inclusion any time.

In addition, this year we will be tackling the big issue of the Association's future role and how it can continue to provide service to its 300+ members. Some lateral thinking may be needed.....

In the meantime, we hope that 2017 is a good year for all members.

The Committee.

1. The GG's View on Vietnam Veterans:

Flood recently read an insightful speech by Sir Peter Cosgrove, AK, MC (Rtd) and has suggested that some of our members may find it of interest.

A copy of that speech is attached to this Bulletin.

2. Getting Coverage for the Magnificent 18-pounder and Limber.

Cossie has sent us this note referring to an article by Peter FitzSimons published in the Sydney Morning Herald. It's fantastic to see the project getting recognition.

Trev, Article as appeared in SMH yesterday. Scrubber could be behind this!!!! May be worth placing in future newsletter. Cossie.

A copy of the article is attached.

2.

3. News from Phil Cormack:

Phil has sent us this news about his military-serving family, and also his encounter with a great Australian.

Happy NY mate! I spent a few days at Tweed Heads (my home town) visiting my brother just after NYD and he had his two sons and wives/partners visiting as well. Both in the regular army with one having served in East Timor and Afghanistan. Lots of war stories. David, the younger of the two is engaged to be married to a girl in the Navy and they both work as 'mechanics' on army/navy helicopters and both based in Nowra – she outranks him!

Just as an aside, on Remembrance Day I had lunch with a bunch of nashos at the Westpac Sub-Branch RSL and had a chat with a fellow named Paul Irving. Turns out he stayed on in the army after he attended OTU at Scheyville and finished his service as the highest ranking ex nasho – Major General! A good bloke too and involved with (I think) Legacy, the Sydney War Memorial and also the Masonic Club. He served all his career in Signals. Phil.

4. Association Reunion Maroochydore, May 2017 - Update:

Thank you to those members who have already made the commitment and have sent their payment and Registration Form for this upcoming event. Numbers have been sound, but at this stage, are a little disappointing, which is a shame considering the nature of the event and the low cost to participate.

Although we are technically able to take registrations for another few months, it would help us considerably if those planning to attend could get their Registration Forms to us by the end of January.

In case you've lost your Registration Form, I attach a replacement for your easy use.

5. North Vietnamese Propaganda:

Graham Rylands has forwarded this note to us, together with a copy of some outrageous but hilarious propaganda.

This may or may not be of interest to you. A mate of mine (Tony Hersey who I did the Wentworth to Renmark Possum walk with) served in 8RAR in Vietnam and he's a bower bird, collects and keeps anything that's not nailed down - he's done that since we were kids.

He is handing in these pieces of propaganda which he collected after a couple of contacts (firefights) in 1969 to the AWM.

Interesting that the Nogs reckoned they had knocked over 10 battalions of Australian troops. Ha Ha. We barely had enough troops to send three battalions at any one time to that place.

Communist propaganda leaflet-Vietnam War

Australian SERVICEMEN!

ON November 15th, 1969, over 1 million of American people have taken to the street in protest against US imperialist's war of aggression, demanding the withdrawal of all US troops from SVN !

The Australian people are also struggling for the repatriation - of Australian servicemen from SVN !

The Gorton reactionary government had to confess that: Over 10 battalions of Australian troops had been killed at Dat-do area (B a r i a province, SVN).

What do that mean ?

It show that :

- US' war of aggression in SVN is unjust and will certainly be defeated !
- The American and the Australian people do not want their reactionary governments continuing to push their men to SVN as cannon fodder to serve the US dirty aggressive war !

What do you think of that ?

Let resolutely struggle for :

- An end to the US war of aggression in SVN, a restoration of peace in VN !
- Demand the withdrawal of all US and Australian troops from SVN !

In the immediate future, let refuse to go raiding or rescuing, demand to be sent back home to avoid shameful and useless death !

Day by day, your parents, wives and children are waiting for you to return home !

BARIA LIBERATION ARMED FORCES

6. A Powerhouse New Vietnam War Website.

President DonTait has sent us details of this Link to a fantastic US website containing invaluable information about the war, all in one place.

Trev, I think this would be of interest to our members. Regards, Don

To all who served during the Vietnam Conflict.

Unbelievable resource for research on Vietnam!

I am passing this along because it is probably the best search list ever compiled about the Vietnam War. This simply has to be shared with anyone who ever served in Vietnam or knew someone who served in Vietnam.

It would take months to look at everything this site offers.

CLICK HERE <http://www.tom.pilsch.com/Vietnam.html>

7. 1RAR Coral Reunion 2017:

1RAR has issued its Warning Orders for this year's Coral Reunion which is being held at the Grand Chancellor Hotel in Hobart on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 16th, 17th and 18th May.

As usual, members of our Association are warmly invited to join the blokes from 1RAR and associated units in the observance of this memorial service and reunion.

If you are interested in attending, please let me know and I will forward the details and Registration Form to you.

8. The Battle of FSPB Coral Unit Citation for Gallantry UCG.

Here's the latest update from Jack Parr regarding 1RAR's submission.

Last Year we advised that the submission for a Unit Citation for Gallantry had been sent to Defence. More specifically to the section called Defence Honours and Awards or DHA. A belated submission such as ours is then sent to the 'Higher Up's, in this case to the Chief of Army (CA) who then does a 'desktop review' of the submission. This internal review then uses the principles and rules that were put in place for 'belated' submission during the 'Valour Inquiry'. At this stage there are many 'technical' reasons for the submission to be rejected and it would appear from my reading of reports and reviews that this is universal for belated submissions.

Consequently 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. At the same time the CA spelt out our rights of appeal to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal. (DHAAT) We anticipated this. The DHAAT is an independent body and answers directly to the Defence Minister. The technicality here is that it was necessary for our submission to be rejected by the CA for it to become reviewable by the DHAAT. 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.

If you wish to find out more information then check out all the reports and reviews on the DHAAT website.
<https://defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au/>

5.

At the time of writing (Dec 2016) we are currently reviewing the DHAAT reports in order to focus on specific grounds for appeal with a plan to have this to Minister Tehan by February 2017.

Being more pragmatic, we know that we have a comprehensive submission and there are good grounds for appeal... BUT even having the best argument does not guarantee us getting any further. It is obvious that other submissions have been successful mostly by using other measures in conjunction with the appeal process. Therefore we see it necessary that an on-going strategy be developed that will enhance our chances. We know and the Official History recognizes that the Battle of Coral Balmoral was the biggest show for Australian troops during the Vietnam War. This fact by itself is not a criteria that can be used in the determination for a UCG. We are seeking recognition for the combined 'Gallantry' displayed by the troops, on the ground, under combat conditions and our argument has to reflect that, and this is the focus of our submission. In our case it is the sustained effort by all troops, units, sub-units and detachments in AO Surfers and Surfers II from 12 May to 6 June 1868.

Once the appeal is sent to the Minister our strategy will be one to increase the public awareness of the Battle of Coral Balmoral. More specifically we will be targeting politicians and the media to achieve this. This will mean that all of us will need to get more active in communicating our story. Some have already commenced this process and they are to be congratulated. From the feedback I have received the release of the DOCO has had limited exposure and success in raising awareness. This does not reflect the quality of the program but rather due to it not being on free to air TV. I have produced a number of summary documents and a Power-point show of the main points of the operation and these have been distributed earlier. We have prepared a script in 'plain language' for a five minute video suitable for You Tube and other promotions. This should be released in February.

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.