



12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association (A Branch of the NSW RAA Association)

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**Don't forget to
renew your
MEMBERSHIP**

President's Letter

Gentlemen and Ladies

Hi all 12 F R (V) A members and welcome to the Spring edition of the newsletter, albeit a little late, due to numerous tasks undertaken in the past few months, some of which I have outlined below.

Visit to Darwin

The major issue I would like to bring to your attention is the meeting myself and John Allen attended in Darwin with the CO (Lt. Col. Neil Sweeney), Adjutant (Capt Duncan Anderson) and the RSM (WO1 Dave Rayment), of 8/12 Medium Regiment on 2 September.

The reason for this meeting was to offer 8/12 membership of our Association, as the current holder of the "Coral Honour Title" and as the current Regiment, which partly evolved from 12 Field Regiment.

The outcome of the meeting is reported on Page 3 of the newsletter. In brief, it was a very positive meeting and I feel confident that we will move ahead in terms of the number of members, which should provide increased confidence in the longevity of the Association.

One of the main considerations for the involvement of 8/12 Medium Regiment will be the name of the organisation, which we have discussed repeatedly at previous AGMs.

I would ask you to consider carefully the implications of our remaining known as a "Vietnam" Association. Once we are all gone, there will effectively no longer be an association which would be a travesty if it had such a limited life span.

The proposal to re-name the

Association should be considered along the lines of the proposed move within the Army to dispose of terms such as Field or Medium, effectively meaning that 8/12 Medium Regiment, might become 8th/12th Regiment RAA, and 1 Field Regiment might become 1st Regiment RAA.

One name for our Association might be 8th & 12th Regiment Association, but anyone is welcome to suggest a name that may be more appropriate and forward such to the Secretary, John Allen on jallen@datamasteranz.com or P O Box 312, BELROSE NSW 2085.

Visit to Perth

Once again, the "Dynamic Duo" flew across the country to Perth (at our own expense if you were concerned about the financial implications of all this travel!!) to meet some WA members on 9 August. (See Page 2)

Our objective was to make contact with as many WA members as possible, particularly those who do not have an opportunity to attend our east coast functions. About ten sandgroppers attended White-man Park and we had a fantastic tour of the Auto Museum courtesy of Kelvin Ferris.

We left two large "CORAL" posters to help promote the Association and the DVD sales.

Presentation of Medals to Marlene Smith

On Wednesday, 14 October, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, presented a framed photo and medals to Marlene Smith, the former wife of Ian Scott.

Approximately 15 Gunners

Spring 2009

and Infantrymen attended and it was a very moving event. Some of you would have seen or heard the TV and radio coverage on ABC. (See Page 2)

104 & 102 Battery Reunions

Members of the above Units will be aware of plans for reunions in Darwin and Sydney respectively on ANZAC Day. Members should be aware that the Association has extended a Delegation of Authority to cover Public Liability Insurance to our Members (Rule 25). Members have been invited to attend the Arty Units reunion at the Rugby Club, Circular Quay, Sydney after the ANZAC Day March.

Annual General Meeting & Extra-ordinary General Meeting

Members are advised that notice of the AGM/EGM will be delivered in January. A Golf Day is scheduled for 12 March at Grimmo's place (Georges River Golf Club) and the AGM/EGM and Dinner at Bankstown Sport & Recreation Club on the afternoon/evening of 13 March. Please put these dates in your calendar for 2010.

I am very pleased to report that this will be the first time since inception of the Association that we table an audited annual financial report, due to the efforts of John Beer, our Treasurer. In January, you will be forwarded a copy of the Annual Reports with the formal Notice of the AGM.

This has been a very busy Quarter for the Committee. Please keep your membership current. Without your ANNUAL RENEWALS and DONATIONS, we will be forced to dip into our cash reserves to run the association each year.

John Sullivan
President

Membership Renewals

Members are advised that Annual Subscriptions are now due.

There are 52 Members who have not renewed.

Would you please forward subs by cheque to 12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association, P O Box 82, GLENFIELD 2167 or EFT via the National Australia Bank Account

082 225/83 654 6425

Please ensure you include **your** name in the EFT details so that we credit the appropriate account. We have one or two EFTs which are unaccounted for!!

John Beer
Treasurer

DONATIONS A BIG THANKYOU to the following:

Clyde Larment
Lorraine Larment
Phillip Johnston
Les Stone
Vic Olejniczak
David Dalton
Ron Redding
Ian Macauley
Alan Floyd
Lynette Floyd
Andrew Guest
Geoff Weismantel
Dennis Kershaw
Peter Saint
Ben Dwyer
John Beer
James Easton
Graham Ryland
Ed Shea
John Allen
John Stephens
Valerie Stephens
Brian Edmonds
David Keall

\$500.00

Gunner Ian Scott remembered



The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, presented Marlene Smith, formerly the bride of 6 months of Ian Scott, with a framed photo of Ian with all medals and ACB to which he was entitled at a well-attended function in Brisbane on 14 September.

Members will remember that Ian and Chris Sawtell, both National Servicemen, had been in Vietnam six and seven days respectively when they were killed in the first attack on the morning of 13 May, 1968 at FSB CORAL in Bien Hoa Province.

Marlene had never received Ian's medals and this oversight was exacerbated by our not inviting Marlene to the Coral Honour Title presentation in Canberra in May 2008.

The function was attended by a large number of Diggers from Artillery, Infantry, the Div Loc Battery and others (see photo), including



Graham Smith, Marlene Smith, Alan Griffin

our favourite pin-up girl, Leonie Jones, from USQ. Apologies and best wishes were sent by David Brook, Ian Ahern, Charlie Bartkus, Ray Darragh, Andrew Forsdike OAM, Dale Quigley and John Sullivan.

The Minister was supported by the Deputy Commissioner for DVA, Queensland, Allison Stanly.

Marlene was supported by husband, Graham, and their lovely daughter, Tonina. Scott Smith was unable to attend due to commitments in Melbourne. Our love and undying respect goes to Marlene and her wonderful husband, Graham Smith who was without doubt the Man of the Match.



Graham Smith
Special thanks goes to Ian Ryan. Ian drove this project with a passion and at significant personal expense.

Visit to 8-12 Medium Regiment, Darwin

President John Sullivan and Secretary, John Allen, travelled to Darwin to speak with Lt Col Neil Sweeney, Captain Duncan Anderson and RSM David Rayment regarding the feasibility of establishing a relationship with 8/12 within the 12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association. An informal draft agenda was forwarded to the Commanding Officer prior to arrival. The responses to those items appear hereunder.

1 Possibility of including 8/12 Regiment members in our Association

Lt Col Sweeney (hereafter "the CO") supported the proposition of offering membership to current and past members of 8/12 Medium Regiment. He was of the view that ex-members were more likely to take up membership.

2 Renaming our Association.....

The CO was not concerned about the name of the Association. When asked, he said that, in due course, it was likely the term "Medium" would be removed from all medium artillery regiments in Australia. There was general support for the Association to be called 8-12 Regiment Association RAA or variations thereof.

The CO advised that, to his knowledge, there was no existing 8/12 Medium Regiment Association, and that he had not been approached by anyone intending to establish such an organisation.

Following comments made by the CO that their workload would be very intense next year, there was no discussion on launching the new association at Robertson Barracks. The CO was clearly receptive to receiving or-

ganised visits from members of the current association, particularly on major events such as AN-ZAC Day, Australia Day, Vietnam Veterans Day etc, and reunions such as the 104 Battery Reunion in Darwin next year. The Annual Regimental Ball was also mentioned.

3 Discuss incentive schemes.....

8/12 Medium Regiment has an established award scheme for current members and was receptive to the Association sponsoring an award. The nature of the award (plaque and other rewards) would be agreed. He cautioned that not all members are "gunners". Non-gunner staff are now supplied by RAAOC, RACT, RASIGS etc according to the specific job requirement. He said that 33% of members did NOT wear a gunners hat badge. He also commented on the number of female members (currently 8%).

4 Association Welfare Officer.....

While the CO understood the *raison d'être* of this item, he said that the Army looked after members who returned from active service. He recognised our great strength in our civilian experience and was very keen to see the Association consider a role in re-integrating retiring members into civilian life. This role might include local support by way of introduction to the community, prospective employers and by having an ex-military contact to discuss issues from time to time.

5 8/12 Regt Representation on Committee

There was no discussion on the issue of State Rep-

resentatives for the Association.

6 Cost of Membership

There was no discussion on membership fees.

7 Coral Honour Title

The CO assured the President that the Regiment took great care of the Honour Title which was in a large glass case with other memorabilia in a constantly air-conditioned building. He advised that there was consideration being given to have a suitable case constructed to further protect the charter, but this was estimated at \$10,000 and was beyond the Regiment's resources at this time.

He did comment that the Honour Title might go to the School of Artillery in the future or 102 Battery if it were raised again.

8 What can we do for soldiers serving overseas.....

See Item 4.

9 RSL Trust for wounded soldiers.....

The CO responded by saying that it was not appropriate for him to suggest where the Association should put its funds. He expressed an opinion that the Association should consider its own members and their families first.

10 Access to soldiers' email addresses.....

The CO was very supportive of the Association contacting the members of the Regiment, particularly those mobilised for duty overseas. He said that the members valued recognition of their service by way of stories and photos of them in newsletters. He said that we should be sending e- and hard copy newsletters from the Asso-

ciation to as many units as possible (not limited to Artillery Regiments). He referred to the latest copy of the Liaison Newsletter and encouraged us to make sure we were listed or featured in this document.

11 CORAL DVD.....

The CO asked for two copies of the CORAL DVD. He said he saw the DVD as a training aid, particularly for NCOs. He was given three A3 copies of the DVD jacket and was asked if these could be posted throughout the Regiment to promote individual sales.

The CO and RSM took the President and Secretary on a tour of the site. The CO emphasised his willingness to host visits by the Association to the Regiment; 104 Bty representatives will be informed of this immediately.

There is clearly a willingness to build a relationship between the Regiment and the Association, with particular emphasis on supporting retiring members to integrate into civilian life.

It is also clear that the Regiment per se does not seek any representational role within the Association nor does it see any significant influx of currently-serving members of 8/12.

WHERE TO FROM HERE????

Members are invited to comment on this Report and to suggest NAMES for the Association which encourage other derivations of 12 Field Regiment to join.

Members have already approved amendments to the rules to permit this expanded membership. Responses to Secretary please.

NEW MEMBERS

Robert (Bob) Murry
 8 Nicolai Street
 MARIAN Qld
 4753
 nine.mile@bigpond.com

WELCOME

ARMY COMBAT BADGES

The following applications have been approved:

Bdr M Nowell
 Gnr J Allen
 Gnr W Kurtz
 WO1 A Johns
 Gnr J Ford
 Gnr W Farquarson
 Gnr A Mcmillan
 Cpl R McNamara
 Gnr T Lee
 Gnr S Carbines

If you have changed address since your application, please let me know your new address. All ACBs are being sent to me and will be on-forwarded to you directly.

John Allen
 Secretary
 02-9975 5537
 0407 672849
 jallen@datamasteranz.com

Earth to Major Kym!

Members are advised that Major Kim Schoene, SO2, HOR, RAA, School of Artillery, Puckapunyal, who has looked after our ACB applications, is to be transferred to a new posting.

On behalf of the Association, Kym, we thank you for your efforts and wish you every success in your career.

Vale Neil McDonald 1940–2009

This is a precis of two emails we received from an ex-gunner who had not shared his SVN experiences with his family until two months prior to his death in October, 2009, and, later, his son. Neil had written to resign his membership as he tidied up his personal affairs.

In more ways than one, he is not alone.

Dated 21 August, 2009
 Thank you John , for keeping my name on the Associations Membership list . \$ 10 these days DO NOT buy you very much these days and I am quite happy to pay that to have a CONNECTION with the Association even though I do not know many members. I am happy to receive e - mails at anytime John because it helps to break up the day with a bit of interest . Thank You .

However , come the Final, I will have to leave that duty to one of my offspring rather than for my wife to advise you , John .

Now for a bit of history , I joined the Army at the rebellious age of 18 years in 1958 . After Corp Training at the School of Artillery, I was posted to 111 LAA BTY R.A.A. with 40 mm" BOFOR " Anti - Aircraft Guns . (That makes me a BIRD GUNNER and not a DROP-SHORT). Sorry !!

With 4 FD REGT R.A.A. being posted to NUIDAT in June 1967 without a Sgt Tech Storeman, I arrived " in country " on 1st July 1967. I was attached to the " Q " Compound which was at " Martin's Corner " under Capt John Martin as Q.M. and W O 2 Bill Dick as R.Q.MS.

Most of my time at NUI DAT was spent on OPERATIONS doing RE-

SUPPLY from our Forward Areas back and forth to NUI DAT . I would have been at Bien Hoa Air Base on about 8/9 th May 1968 when I was relieved by W O 2 Alan Johns (R.Q.M.S. for 12 FD REGT R.A.A.) I think .

A couple of days later, we were sitting at the end of LUSCOMBE AIR STRIP to go home. I think that would have been the start of the Battle of Coral. Discharge came 9 months later after nearly 11 years in Army Service to my country and I think that is enough .

As for joining 12 FD REGT (Vietnam) Assoc and joining in on the Battle of Coral Celebrations in Canberra last May, it was an absolute Pleasure in connecting after 40 plus years .

John SORRY Mate getting awfully tired now and will have to say Goodbye for now.

Regards
 Neil McDonald
 4 FD REGT R.A.A. 1967/68

Dated 16 October 2009
 Hi John Allen,

It is with regret I tell you that Neil passed away peacefully on Wednesday night with all his family around him.

We placed him in hospice care on Tuesday afternoon where he wanted to be and was pain free for the remainder of his time. His funeral has now been arranged for 10.30am Wednesday the 21st of October at the Boyd Chapel at the Springvale Necropolis.

Thank you John for the communication you had with Neil as this triggered him to share his past.

Kind Regards,
 Leigh McDonald (son)