



THE MIGHTY 12TH

Newsletter of the 12th National Service Battalion Holsworthy

Issue No 9 Dec 2008 ~ email lamaher@bigpond.net.au www.themighty12th.org

Hello again and welcome to the new members of the "Mighty 12th".

This will be our final newsletter for 2008. We didn't do too badly considering that this time last year we didn't even exist.

The directory now contains 277 entries. 17 from our first intake in 1951, 46 from 1952, 25 only from 1953, 38 from 1954, 40 from 1955, 55 from 1956 and 12 from 1957 (1 intake only).

Now when you do your maths, you will notice that these numbers do not add up to our total directory numbers. Some of the guys simply do not remember their intake. It's called D.O.B.- and many of us suffer from it in one form or another.

Hasn't Colin Wood done a great job on our own web page?

I never thought there would be a whole site on the internet devoted to us guys. If you haven't visited it and written in the guest book, I encourage you to do so. If you don't have the internet, try your kids, grandkids or the local library.

The site is: www.themighty12th.org.

The new supply of 12 Bn badges has arrived at long last. My initial order was st—d up a bit and I received 10 badges, not the 25 I ordered but that is being rectified and those who have paid but not received their badges yet should get them very soon.

If you wish to purchase a badge I will need an order from you in writing with \$13.00 (cheque or money order). My address again is Lawrie Maher, PO Box 8160, Koorinal NSW 2650.

I have enjoyed being able to chat with many of the guys on our list. It's interesting to listen to so many stories and get updates on how things are going at present. If you want a chat or to ask any questions, don't hesitate to give me a "bell". I am happy to return calls to keep your costs down.

Unfortunately, the "coffers" - which have taken us through nearly 12 months have started to "dry up" and after this newsletter I will not be in a position to post out further newsletters. The cost of postage alone is now over \$70.00 a time. This does not take into account consumables that are used in the preparation and posting- paper, labels, envelopes, printer inks.

As much as I hate to do this I am asking that you consider making a donation (you know what you can afford) to keep the newsletters going for everyone. I am not suggesting an amount and I will leave that up to you. I realise that any amount may be difficult for some in these times. Hopefully, those that contribute will cover costs for another year- it's up to you. I do not wish to cut anyone off from receiving our news.

On the other hand, if you do not wish to get the newsletter, please let me know. The last thing I want to do is annoy you with ramblings of my own and other members.

Speaking of other members I include below a few tidbits that have been contributed lately.

The MP's and another close call 2/54 at Holsworthy by Colin Wood

I had a steady girlfriend while I was doing my training her name was xxxxxxxxx.(name supplied but removed to protect the innocent) I used to see her very often while I was doing my 3 months basic training. We were only given two leave passes per week & these only till 23:59 (1 minute to midnight) & seeing I was so much in "love"

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with her I used to go AWL at least two night per week & arrive back at camp in time for reveille 5-30 am . I was not the only one in my section to do this , we used to wait until dark & slip out down near the creek on Heathcote road. Coming home we would get off at East Hills station & walk back to camp about 3 k”s dodging any MP’s that might be around . One early morning around, 3am 2 of us got off the train & was walking along the platform when a cabbie came up to us & told us that there were MP’s on each side of the foot-bridge at East Hills, they took us back to camp via Liverpool. He had driven all the way from Liverpool to tell us.

(Boy! Is this a familiar story or what? (editor))

There was another time when it was a bit scary, We on a fortnight camp at Singleton. I was on the radio at the gun site. The radio, the lieutenant in charge of the guns & the plotters are about 20 metres behind the guns. Any way this particular day everything was going fine until the gun that was ranging on the target misfired. I was watching the gun at the time & saw the bomb (these were heavy mortars & the projectiles were called bombs) leave the barrel & slowly rise & fall about 20 metres in front of the gun. The bomb luckily for us did not go off, (the bomb is primed by the force of it leaving the barrel & there was not enough force to prime this one.) It just stuck in the ground with the fins showing.

We came back to this spot a few months later & the army demolition team had blown it up leaving a crater about 6 metres across. We were very lucky as this type has a killing range of about 100 metre radius.

And from John Cripp:

Something you might like to do each day

Working People frequently ask retired people what they do to make their days interesting.



Well for example, the other day my wife and I went into town and went into a shop.

We were only in there for about 5 minutes. When we came out, there was a cop writing out a parking ticket.

We went up to him and said, ‘Come on man, how about giving a senior citizen a break ?’

He ignored us and continued writing the ticket. I called him a Nazi turd. He glared at me and

started writing another ticket for having worn tyres.

So my wife called him a shit-head. He finished the second ticket and put it on the windshield

with the first. Then he started writing a third ticket. This went on for about 20 minutes. The more

we abused him, the more tickets he wrote.

Personally, we didn’t care. We came into town by bus. We try to have a little fun each day now

that we’re retired. It’s important at our age.

Keith McNeill writes: I designed & built the Nasho memorial at Bardia before I took over as State President in 1996. I managed to obtain a fair bit of the materials for completion for nothing (donations) & I did not charge the Association a fee for my work..

I always work too cheap.

I had a lot of help from members

I am a little rusty on names & dates

From Ray Grindley

I appreciate what you are doing, and enjoy reading the newsletters. I’d like to submit a contribution for your consideration.

It was good reading Ted Goodwin’s piece in the May newsletter since we shared our three months together under canvas at Holsworthy. I had a chuckle over Barry Hocking’s contribution in the July edition.

It reminded me of a Bombardier who, (like Barry’s “hated regular instructor” will remain unnamed) was a Korean vet. Only mine wasn’t 5’2”... he must have been at least 5’5”. (I know that for sure, because he was about my size.. maybe a 1/2 inch taller.). I think he was a good digger though, although he was a tough nugget, and especially tough, I thought ,on me. I , and we, didn’t hold any grudges, probably because we knew he must have gone through a lot himself. And I sought of expected to be treated a bit harshly, as I was reminded by the same bombardier, I was the shortest man in the platoon.

I’d learnt to accept that fact, and expected the treatment, so I wasn’t phased by it at all by this handicap. There were some moments though, like

when we were doing exercises and marching fully kitted with rifles and bayonets attached. The big lads marching behind had the problem especially when we wheeled left or right and had to duck suddenly. Our wise sergeant understandingly called me out of the formation. It wasn't long after this that I and two others were invited to finish our training as cooks!

One other thing, surprisingly enough, despite my size and quiet nature, I was put forward as a boxer (never pugged in my life before, for obvious reasons), and found myself representing the company in a boxing tournament. The lad I was to fight was a six footer, but built like a bean pole, since we were both in the under 8 stone 13 weight division. His reach was enormous. I couldn't reach his head to any great effect, but with encouragement from the my corner laid on him a straight right that hit him hard in the sola plexus, and sat him on the canvas. My one claim to fame in the ring. It must have impressed some, though. One of the wags in our platoon after the boxing tournament suggested a bout between myself and the bombardier, but neither took it up. Not that I was scared, of course, but I didn't think it appropriate. I guess the other mooted combatant thought the same.

Getting back to Barry's story, I wouldn't be surprised if it wasn't the same trainer. Small world!

Bill O'Neill writes:

I read though you Newsletter again and there was no bulletin in the intake I was in. Instead they decided to appoint a batallion photographer. I had just bought a new camera and knew very little about it. I asked if they would keep it for me in the orderly room safe. A few days later I was told that I had to report to the batallion office. The colonel (or light colonel) had been told by my company commander "that he had a photographer who was keeping his camera in the safe.". I knew next to nothing about the camera or photography but that must have been more than the guys interviewing me. They appointed a trainee from Newcastle who was working as a professional photographer in civilian life and to my surprise, made me his assistant. He taught me a lot and if between regular training we had to wander around taking pictures. I can't remember if they sold them or what. I do know that we were supposed to replace the bulletins.

I remember one night there was an inter-company boxing tournament. Our company had a professional. I think his last name was O'Keefe. I went along to photograph the event. The bell sounded and I switched on the camera to activate the flash. Before it was charged our guy had knocked his opponent out and was leaving the ring. That illustrates what little I knew about cameras.

We had to supply copies of everything we took to the colonel's office. I have no idea what they did with them.. I still have a few, but nothing noteworthy.

Just a reminder about the "merchandise".

Badges, as previously mentioned are \$13.00 posted.

12 Bn Booklets are \$16.00 posted.

Plaques- (Rising Sun, 12 Bn emblem, your name, Intake, Platoon and Company included thereon) \$35.00 posted

Maybe a plaque would make a nice Christmas present from one of the family. There was an order form with your last newsletter.

Two priests decided to go to Hawaii on vacation.

They were determined to make this a real vacation by not wearing anything that would identify them as clergy.

As soon as the plane landed they headed for a store and bought some really outrageous shorts, shirts, sandals, sunglasses, etc. The next morning they went to the beach dressed in their 'tourist' garb.

They were sitting on beach chairs enjoying a drink, the sunshine and the scenery when a 'drop dead gorgeous' blonde in a topless bikini came walking straight towards them.

They couldn't help but stare.

As the blonde passed them she smiled and said 'Good Morning, Father ~ Good Morning, Father,'

Nodding and addressing each of them individually, then she passed on by.

They were both stunned.

How in the world did she know they were priests?

So the next day, they went back to the store and bought even more outrageous outfits..

These were so loud you could hear them before you even saw them!

Once again, in their new attire, they settled down in their chairs to enjoy the sunshine.

After a little while, the same gorgeous blonde, wearing a different colored topless bikini, taking her sweet time, Came walking toward them.

Again she nodded at each of them, said 'Good morning, Father ~ Good morning, Father,'

And started to walk away. One of the priests couldn't stand it any longer and said, 'Just a minute, young lady.'

'Yes, Father?' 'We are priests and proud of it, but I have to know, how in the world do you know we are priests, dressed as we are?'

She replied, 'Father, it's me, Sister Katherine.'

May I wish all members of the "Mighty 12th" and their families the sincerest good wishes for the Christmas Season and the best in health and prosperity for the coming new year. Lawrie and Leone Maher and Colin Wood



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