



THE MIGHTY 12TH

Newsletter of the 12th National Service Battalion Holsworthy

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Editor: Lawrie
Maher

Hello to all

“Mighty 12’s”

Things have been fairly quiet on the growth of the directory with our total now being 231.

A special Request: If you are in a country area that has its own Newspaper could you find out the address and forward it to me so that I can send off a “Letter to the Editor. The Illawarra guys did this with some pretty good results. I hear we have lots of Nashos in many areas who know nothing about the directory- I also know that there are probably just as many who don’t want to know.

Many thanks to the email guys- you have given me plenty to do- just the way I like it.

BAD NEWS: (good for some) The stock of 12 Bn Badges has totally run out and to have them redone at the same price, I need well over 50 orders. SO!! I am currently taking orders- no money- to see if I can make the magic number for re-orders to be done. I am trying another source but that’s still “hush hush”. (The price will be the same but I might be able to order in lesser numbers.)

Also, if you want a copy of the 12 Bn booklet (80 pages- lots of pics) you had better act quickly as these are a bit like hen’s teeth.

Thanks to those who keep in touch and enjoy a bit of a chat on the phone. If you feel like a talk

anytime, give me a bell- I can phone you back as I have an account that is quite friendly.

Have you ever been to the Bardia Barracks Precinct at Ingleburn? I believe it’s a pretty good display and looked after on a voluntary basis by fellow Nashos. My chances of getting there grow slimmer each year so if anyone has some photos I would be interested to get a look at them.

Photo Album: I have started an album for photos that you fellows have sent and will be trying to add to it gradually with other pictures I have gathered over time. I am always pleased to get bits and pieces to add. If you do send photos, please try to include names if you can but especially your own- maybe on the back of the photo. If you want them returned please make this clear in an attached note.

I have been having a bit of a “discussion” with a friend of mine in relation to the names of the 12Bn lines. In my first book, Lt Tremain refers to them as Bardia but I am sure we were never that name at New Holsworthy. I know our 1/51 guys were at Bardia at Ingleburn and then 1/52 were at New Holsworthy. I have a booklet from 13 Bn called the “History of Bardia Barracks 1951-1959.

I always thought we were Tobruk Barracks with Gallipoli across the road in 19Bn. If you would like to join the “discussion” you are more than welcome.

We had an ex POW deliver our address on VP Day and I will include it in this newsletter. I hope you agree it’s well worth reading.

I have been doing a lot of soul searching lately- maybe it’s just that time of year when I have to explain to the local press what WE were all about when we are surrounded by returned servicemen from Korea and Vietnam.

I would be interested to hear whether you have any thoughts on 228000, 18 year olds who never fired a shot in anger, didn’t serve overseas, (at the time) and obediently answered the instruction of the Government of the day, that Australia need to be prepared for the possible “invasion” of the “Red Peril”

Lawrie Maher - Editor 3/56
lamaher@bigpond.net.au
PO Box 8160 Koorinal NSW 2650
Please send content as text file and
pics as jpg file to editor.
Colin Wood - webmaster 2/54
turton37@bigpond.com
Suggestions and constructive
criticism welcomed.
www.themighty12th.org

I am not trying to stir the pot but I would be really interested to hear what you guys think about the whole “show”.

I have had numerous chaps say to me “I hated National Service” but it must have done me some good.”

(mateship aside)

Well, enough of my philosophy session, but please feel free to put “pen to paper”- it may help me to get my head back on straight.

Now for that article from Albert Burgman

One line particularly “got me”

In the final analyses they all gave their tomorrow for our today

**Address by Albert L Burgman on V.J. DAY,
August 15 - 2008**

Today we are here to commemorate that eventful day, 15th August 1945, a day that is a part of our nation’s history.

That was the day the Japanese Emperor ordered his armed forces to surrender, unconditionally, to the Allies, thus heralding the end of WWII and the subsequent victorious home coming of our armed forces.

That day, thousands of people were dancing in the streets of Sydney, Melbourne, London, Paris, New York and Lisbon etc.

That day a great sigh of relief was heard all over the world.

Yes, today, we gather again to remember that glorious day, which liberated us from times of fear, of tears, of apprehension, of worry, of deprivation.

Times of loss of loved ones, times of sorrow, times of the greatest human depravity men could inflict on their fellow men.

Times we somehow are unable or not willing to forget and for what reason you may ask?

One might argue, why not just forget that shocking period of history which can’t be changed.

Why keep on harping on the horrors of War.

Why keep on remembering how and where those men and women perished; recalling the names of those who didn’t come home.

Why are these memorials and remembrance services necessary?

Why is it that every year, on particular dates, we feel obliged to look back on a horrific nightmare,

suffered in one way or another, by so many all over the world? Is it just because our war veterans and those who lost their loved ones are unable to forget?

And, by the way, who are those people we try to recall and honour?

Well now, just read the names inscribed on this Sandakan monument

and do the same when visiting war cemeteries all over the world, read the names on hundreds of thousands of crosses ...

then it will dawn on you and you will be compelled to bow your head and say you have paid the ultimate price, we owe you so much, sleep in peace mate.

Yes, we veterans feel very strongly about it. Why?

Because we were in action or were POWs with those named on those crosses.

In my case, in my early twenties, I was one of those young men, whose misfortune it was to be made POWs of the Japanese after an ill-matched battle. In the latter part of our three and a half years of incarceration I was with them when they were dying, one after another in increasing numbers,

suffering with dreaded bacillary dysentery, Typhus, malaria...dying on bamboo stretchers riddled with bedbugs, in a so-called sick bay with a leaking roof and mud floor.

Dying in a POW camp on the fringes of a Sumatran tropical jungle. I was there as one of the volunteer orderlies.

Not a properly trained one I might add, but that didn’t matter there, because there were no medicines of any kind to administer, no medical equipment to handle.

There was nothing, not an Aspro or any disinfectants.

Our task was simply to be there, day and night in shifts of 12 hours.

To be able to hold in our bony hands the bony hands of those doomed to die.

Feeding them, if they were still able to eat that is, with lousy daily rations of 60 gr of rice.

We were to take those, too weak to walk, to the hole-in-the-ground fly infested latrines.

Toilet paper was only a dim memory.

Only water or tree leaves were used to clean patients.

In short, the task of an orderly was simply to

console and assist those emaciated human beings... our mates waiting for the end of their young lives.. That's all that was required of us, just to be with them till they passed away, mercifully escaping the agony of gut destroying bacillary dysentery, the never-ending hunger and deprivation.

Amazingly, the patients did endure all this with total resignation, without saying a word.

There was nothing to be said anyhow.

The last act of the orderly on duty was to close his deceased patients' eyes and watch the body of that soldier being buried in a shallow grave, very lonely...

no loved ones present, no family, no friends, no flowers, no tears.

Yes, I was with them then, a very lucky one at that., to be still alive and able to tell you about them.

Believe me, ladies and gentlemen, I will never forget the faces of those soldiers, Australian, English and Dutch waiting for the inevitable.

A question often arises, in regard to those POWs, not killed in action, but through circumstances beyond their control, dying as slaves of the Japanese. Should they be regarded as heroes or just victims of fate? I was there and I can therefore assure you, they are both... heroes and victims, who suffered and died for their country.

Let's therefore never ignore that the 15th August is one of those appropriate days on which we should pay tribute to so many who gave their lives, in their effort to defend their country during WWII. Those who died on battlefields, in the air, at sea and as POWs.

In the final analyses they all gave their tomorrow for our today.

They died for us, for our children and children's children, to defend and keep our beloved Australia free.

This, ladies and gentlemen, should be a powerful enough reason, never to abandon the

15th August and to gratefully remember and honour the fallen, so that they may rest in peace. THEREFORE.... REMEMBER THEM.... LEST WE FORGET

As you read this newsletter I hope to be bowling like Kirkow on Norfolk Island. I really hope the temperature is warmer than here in Wagga Wagga where we have had some beautiful days reaching 6-8 degrees.

Don't forget to give me a ring anytime or drop me a line (after 3rd September for phone calls) even if just for a chat.

Be on the lookout for other 12Bn "mighties" and let them know how to register.

A Possible date for your calendar.

I hope to plan a 12 Battalion Get together next year in Wagga Wagga on the same day as our Reserve Forces Day Parade which is the end of June. I will be asking for expressions of interest but I think I will probably go ahead with something anyway. We usually hold our day about a week before Sydney.

If you haven't marched to the Kapooka Band you don't know what you have been missing- ask the Eurobodalla guys.

And what would our newsletter be without a "giggle or two"?

Childbirth at 65

With all the new technology regarding fertility recently, a 65-year-old friend of mine was able to give birth. When she was discharged from the hospital and went home, I went to visit.

'May I see the new baby?' I asked 'Not yet,' She said 'I'll make coffee and we can visit for a while first.'

Thirty minutes had passed, and I asked, 'May I see the new baby now?' 'No, not yet,' She said. After another few minutes had elapsed, I asked again, 'May I see the baby now?' 'No, not yet,' replied my friend.

Growing very impatient, I asked, 'Well, when can I see the baby?' 'WHEN HE CRIES!' she told me.

'WHEN HE CRIES?' I demanded. 'Why do I have to wait until he CRIES?'

'BECAUSE I FORGOT WHERE I PUT HIM, O.K.?!'

An elderly gentleman...Had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to the doctor and the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear 100%

The elderly gentleman went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor said, 'Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again.'

gentleman replied, 'Oh, I haven't told my family yet.

just sit around and listen to the conversations.

I've changed my will three times!

And this is my absolute favourite

An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house, and after eating, the wives left the table and went into the kitchen.

The two gentlemen were talking, and one said, 'Last night we went out to a new restaurant and it was really great. I would recommend it very highly.'

The other man said, 'What is the name of the restaurant?'

The first man thought and thought and finally said, 'What is the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know... The one that's red and has thorns.' 'Do you mean a rose?'

'Yes, that's the one,' replied the man. He then turned towards the kitchen and yelled, 'Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?'

Make the most of what we have guys! Be in touch again soon.

Lawrie Maher (69263123) PO Box 8160
Koorringal NSW 2650