



THE MIGHTY 12TH

Newsletter of the 12th National Service Battalion

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Hello to all
"Mighty 12's"
Thought it must be

time for another news!

Thanks to those who have been in touch either by email or phone with bits of news or just for a yarn.

If you are a member of a Nasho Sub Branch you would have seen the notice for the 12 Bn luncheon at the Masonic Club in Sydney on 8th December at 11.30 am. If not, then you can contact Fred Bucholtz on 47353250. (Fred is a directory member). He will be able to give you any information. Unfortunately many of you won't be able to get there because of distance, health etc but we will keep in touch through the newsletters anyway.

I am assured that the new badges are on the way- two weeks to go as far as I can tell. Unfortunately, dear old Australia Post has increased postage costs so this will have to be passed on to those who want to purchase a 12 Battalion Badge.

I notice them "popping up" at all sorts of functions and meetings lately. It's a bit like a "brotherhood" I suppose.

I got some really good feedback on the speech by Albert Burgman that was included in the last news. I have passed the comments on to him. He has promised me some more info to use in later newsletters.

Correct me if I am Wrong.

After quite a bit of "stuffing around" I have

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come up with the following. I know you will correct me if I am incorrect (which I quite often am)-

1st Intake of 12 Bn at Singleton in 1951- in tents

1st Intake 1952 at New Holsworthy- huts and tents. (Kokoda Barracks)

It would appear that some tents were still in use as late as 1954 when the picture in the book was taken.

1/57 was the last Intake of 12 Bn at New Holsworthy.

I have also been informed that some of the guys in the transport platoons went to Puckapunyal with others from 19 Bn to work on the Centurion tanks and other vehicles which were not at Holsworthy.

A recent addition to our directory was one of the instructors in C Company from 1952 onwards. I am waiting to get some info from him so that I can add it to one of the newsletters

I was wondering whether we had any Nashos on our list who did service overseas. I am sure you would have a story or two to tell.

Just for the hell of it, I have included a poem I wrote for my second book You might get a laugh or a memory from it.

The Nasho

By Lawrie Maher

They gave us a rifle and taught us to shoot.
They drilled us, they clothed us and fed us to boot.
Those wise politicians were feared of the hoards
Of wild "commie reds" so close to our doors.

Conscription's the answer the wise men decided
And males of eighteen enrolled and provided
Thousands of bodies to answer their call
From Australia, all over, they came one and all.

We'd short back and sides and shaved every day
But one day we savour-its when comes our pay.
Hand out and salute and Oh yes, "Thank you sir,"
Look out there big city, we're ready to stir.

They taught us to march, they taught us to shoot.
They taught us to wash, iron and polish to boot.
Remember the first task they got us to do?
(Was just magic, really, to more than a few.)

They gave us that footwear, the colour was tan
Then said that they had to be "black" Man-o-Man.
The raven oil splashed, the boot polish flew
But true to the task, the black boots looked brand new.

Parades and drill sessions, P.E. and the rest
Filled all waking hours, we tried to be best
At all competitions our spirits were high
The pride of competing in everyone's eye.

And Oh! Those instructors, we all knew them well
And many had argued they came straight from hell.
But train us they did just as hard as they could
With Bren gun and Rifle and Owen, we're good.

The tug-o-war team is training and straining,
The boxers are skipping but not when it's raining
The hockey team lads are wielding their sticks.
They're really big boys, you should see their... tricks.

Forty-two seconds to strip down a Bren,
You guys must be joking- go do it again.
And no bits left over or hidden away
We have to be ready for Gymkhana day.

An M36, now what the hell's that?
It seems very small -what, wear a tin hat!
Oh my! Bloody hell! It's a flamin' grenade
Excuse me there Sergeant, I need to parade.

"Get back here you weasel and get in the pit
You toss it and wait or you'll be in ..."trouble"
Oh Lord please have mercy on your worthless son"
"I threw it, it's over, Hey guys that was fun!

And when it was finished and homeward we sped,

Our inner spring mattress- a much nicer bed,
Than that old "iron monster" that tortured our backs
No more itchy singlets or undies like sacks.

And fifty years later we look back and ponder
For many a memory's gone from "up yonder".
Like hair and our waistline, how everything changes
Today you won't catch me a jogging the ranges.

The memories fade the older we get
But for many of us, there is still more time yet
To gather our stories and share them around
To re-live some youth and the fun that we found.

Don't let history fade into nothing at all
Go tell those grandchildren and friends one and all
A bullet in anger we may not have shot
But ninety eight days and three years is a lot

And now as we finish this tale of the past
Let's all have a drink- maybe two- make 'em last
For mateship and memories never grow dim
We'll all drill again when it's time to join Him.

Items from members:

From Keith McNeil

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

Ray Grindley, 1/55 12 Pl, C Coy.

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 my corner, I 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.

Barry Hocking

3/53 - 12Bn Holsworthy - 11 Platoon Charlie Company

One of our most hated regular instructors, whose name I will suppress, a Korean Veteran, always gave us a bad time. He appeared to be 10 feet tall, a bully and very aggressive. In retrospect, he was only doing his job and in fact was only about 5 feet 2 inches in height. (I was 6'f 2•h)

After National Service I went back to my civilian life of being a police officer and some years later, whilst performing traffic duty in Bankstown, I

had occasion to stop an erring motorist. To my surprise it was •gmy hated regular instructor•h. By this stage he had left the army. Here I was, now in a position to extract revenge for all his seemingly unnecessary aggressive actions.

It was at this point that I realised that he wasn't such a bad bloke and now that I had matured up from my Nasho days, I realised that his aggressive attitude to us was only to make us try harder and be better soldiers. After a chat, we parted the best of friends. I never saw him again.

Perspective (sent along by John Cripp)

One day, the father of a very wealthy family took his son on a trip to the country with the express purpose of showing him how poor people live.

They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family.

On their return from their trip, the father asked his son, "How was the trip?"

"It was great, Dad."

"Did you see how poor people live?" the father asked.

"Oh yeah," said the son.

"So, tell me, what did you learn from the trip?" asked the father

The son answered:

"I saw that we have one dog and they had four.

We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end.

We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night.

Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon.

We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight.

We have servants who serve us, but they serve others.

We buy our food, but they grow theirs.

We have walls around our property to protect us, they have friends to protect them."

The boy's father was speechless.

Then his son added, "Thanks Dad for showing me how poor we are."

Isn't perspective a wonderful thing?

Makes you wonder what would happen if we all gave thanks for everything we have, instead of worrying about what we don't have.

Appreciate every single thing you

have, especially your friends!

“Life is too short and friends are too few.”

I have reprinted 7 copies of the 12Bn Book and this really will be the last reprint.

Cost will be \$15.00 posted (no increase)

Badges will be \$13.00 posted.

Don't forget if you are looking for gold members, drop me a line and I can include it in the next newsletter- maybe there is a member out there who knows the person you are searching for even if they are not on the directory.

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