

The Towner News

2/4 RAR Association Newsletter

II/IV



The 2nd/4th Battalion
The Royal Australian
Regiment Association

PO Box 240
Thuringowa Central Qld 4817

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www.24rarassociation.com

From the Editor

Well this is the first of what I hope is more 2/4RAR Association Newsletters from now and into the future.

I intend on keeping everyone up to date with Association news and what we are all up to around the country.

What we did as a Unit for just over 20 years is important too, so I will endeavour to incorporate stories of past 2/4 exercises and Battalion life and personalities.

Getting this Newsletter to all is paramount. So one can get it by email or I can post a copy to you. If you know of someone who may want to keep up or re-connect just forward me their name and contact details and I will do the rest.

My contact details are below, or post your articles to the address above.

Cheers Bob
2/4 RAR Association Treasurer.
committee@24rarassociation.com

Committee

Patron: BRIG Paul S. O'Sullivan AM
MDE (ret'd)

President: Merv Diction

Vice President: Ken Ellis

Secretary: Gary Jiear

Asst Secretary: Bill Marklew

Treasurer: Bob Bakkers

Merchandise: Martin Dunn

Web/IT/Media Member: Gary Jiear

Asst Web/IT/Media Mbr: John Mark

Personnel Member: Bob Weir

We have 250
members and our
numbers are
steadily growing.
Spread the word.

Patron's Christmas Message

Brigadier (Retired) Paul O' Sullivan AM MBE messages that:

I extend my very best wishes for a happy and safe Christmas Season to all members of the 2/4RAR family. I hope it is a memorable one for you and that 2020 is another great year for the Association.

I have been most impressed by the way members of the Association have marched proudly under the Battalion Banner at major Commemorative Services around the country during the year. You are a great credit to the Battalion and the Association.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at next year's AGM in Perth.

Duty First.

President's Message

As President of the Association I wish to extend the Association's Season's Greetings to all members and family of 2/4 RAR and 2/4 RAR Association.

The Association grows year on year from humble beginnings and thanks for this goes to the stalwarts of the Committee. Thank you all for your sterling efforts to maintain the thrust. This year particular thanks goes to our newest Life Members Nicole Hawken, David Lowe and Gary Jiear. Well done and congratulations. Particular thanks goes also to Gary Jiear for his dedication to the Association and the Secretary role in which he excels and is well supported by Jenni.

Many thanks go to Ken Ellis for his work with the Council to have the 2/4 RAR plaque installed in ANZAC Memorial Park Townsville, Well done!

Soon, hopefully, we will also achieve our aim to have another 2/4 RAR Plaque in place in the home of the Battalion in Samichon Lines.

Watch this space!

President's Message *continued*

I would very much like to thank Bob Bakkers and Kim Flanagan for all their great work in the Treasurer role which is vital to the success of the Association. Bob also recognised that we have not had a newsletter for a very long time and put a lot of time and effort into producing a fine newsletter for the Association. Thank you both for the time and effort you have both put in to achieve this.

For those on the Committee I have not named personally, we continue to be blessed by your efforts so please keep up the great work.

Very importantly, we thank you all as Members of the Association for your membership and the contribution you make in this way. Without you all, we would not be able to continue the memory of our premier Battalion.

There is mention elsewhere in this newsletter regarding AGM 2020 so I will remind or alert you to the 25th Anniversary of the de-linking of 2/4 RAR to form 2 RAR and 4 RAR.

On 1 February 2020 we intend to remember this day by the dedication of the 2/4 RAR Plaque in ANZAC Park Townsville. This is something I feel that should have occurred whilst 2/4 RAR was an active Battalion of the Regiment but I think back then, we were too consumed by being the best rather than memorialising our unit.

We also have verbal agreement from CO 2 RAR (Amphib) to place another of our Plaques in Samichon Lines but at this stage it is unlikely that we can conduct both dedications on the same day.

I would also like to remind or alert you that some of us will be heading out to Longreach for ANZAC Day 2020 commemorations. We are in the process of purchasing another banner so that those remaining in Townsville can march behind the banner locally.

I would like to encourage all those who can, to march behind the 2/4 RAR Banner in those cities that we have them.

Lest We Forget.

What the 2/4 RAR Association Committee is about

I don't know if any of you fellows out there realise, but there is, and has been a group of 2/4 men and women around Australia that volunteer their time tirelessly to keep the Association afloat and keep you the members happy. Most, if not all have external jobs and commitments.

Since 2013 past soldiers/officers and their wives/partners have filled roles needed for the Association to function. They have and do meet on a regular basis to sort and run the Association's business and events. Much of the behind the scenes work is supported by wives/partners and the whole Committee thing is a big joint effort.

Without the time and dedication by people like Dave and Joy Lowe (instrumental in the organising of two reunions and a whole lot more), Paul Jacobson, Nicole Hawken (Treasurer for 2 plus years each), the website being held together by Gary Jiear and John Mårk with Merv Diction and Bob Weir always on hand to show 2/4 support, the Association simply would not exist. Your Birthday cards (Bill Marklew), Key rings and Life Subscription Certificates (Bob Bakkers), and the 2/4 Merchandise (Martin Dunn) do not just miraculously appear in your mail, someone has to put them together and send them.

The Committee is all for making members from all around the country feel a part of the organisation, hence the AGM being held at different locations around Australia each year. So far we have had AGM's on the Gold Coast, Canberra, Hobart, and Townsville, with the reunion being held there every fifth year. The AGM for 2020 will be in Perth, with SA maybe being next after that in 2021. Ken (Boof) Ellis has been instrumental in organising 2/4 RAR Plaques to be placed in dedicated areas around the country as well.

Your State Reps hold get togethers occasionally, so if there is an event near you please show your support and try to attend. You can find your State Reps on the Web Site.

Anzac Day turnouts around the country are important 2/4 rally points. I can tell you personally that it feels great marching along side the men I served with, so if you haven't in the past try and be a part of this event in the future.

What are you up to now? *Bob Bakkers*

As this is the first edition I suppose I will write about myself.

I discharged in 1986, was in Delta Coy from its beginning in September 1980, for the Battalion's role as part of the ODF.

Having been in 11 PL, 10 PI, 12 PL and CHQ for my 6 years, I saw the light and moved onto greener pastures as a civilian. I became a Carpenter and after an apprenticeship in Melbourne I moved back to Townsville in 1992 and started a Building/Renovation business. Which I worked at for many years.

2008 volunteered my time to the Army History Unit. Designed and put together the Army Museum Nth Qld for them and got it ready for their opening in 2011.

Beginning of 2012 saw me receiving a phone call from 3RAR who had just moved to Townsville from Holesworthy, asking if I could help them set up their Museum and get it ready for Kapyong Day (what was Kapyong I thought!). Anyway, I took my team from Jezzine, began work at 3RAR and have been there ever since, just across the road from where 2/4 once stood. I start my 9th year in 2020 with them as Head Curator. Found out what Kapyong day was all about too!

Oh, I also volunteer and maintain the old Townsville pioneer cemetery and conduct History walking tours around town. Being the 2/4 RAR Association treasurer adds to my day as well.

So "what's your Story since your time in 2/4?"

Write something down and get it to me. A few lines would be great.

- ◆ Email: committee@24rarassociation.com
- ◆ Post to: PO Box 240, Thuringowa Central Qld 4817

Who is up to what?

Phil Smailes

Organised a 2/4 Marquee, and along with others attended the Infantry Muster this year in Gympie. You will hear more in the next edition.

“Back to the track 2020”

In July/August 2020 approx 120 restored WW2 vehicles will travel from Alice Springs to Darwin; retracing the trek made by Australian Units during WW2.

One of our 2/4 members Rick Canhan, is participating in this Military Vehicle Club event that will see him drive his Willy's Jeep which he has been painstakingly restored over the past few years. Rick needs and is seeking some personal funding to help him achieve this. Whilst this is not an official fundraising event Rick hopes to also raise some money in his endeavours for 'Mates 4 Mates'.

In light of this, the 2/4 Association will be adding \$500 to Rick's Mates 4 Mates fundraising efforts. If you would like to personally support Rick in his quest to drive from Alice Springs to Darwin, or add to his Mates 4 Mates fund you can find him and his details on FaceBook or contact me through the Association.

2/4 RAR guys still active in the ADF

Working at Lavarack Barracks... again some 30 years later, I have bumped into many 2/4 guys that still serve. Past 2/4 members are the Head Curators of all three Battalion museums here at Lavarack and nearly all of the volunteers at the 2RAR Museum are men from 2/4 RAR. The 2 RSM's from 2 RAR and 3 RAR, 2019, were even old 2/4 RAR members. I have bumped into people like Chris Feeney, Paul Prickett, Jeff Currie, Mal Gray, Chips Rutherford, Bob Dabinet (even though he was 3RAR too), and Darren Carter, to name but a few.

Though some of these fellows have now retired it's great to see that they had solid Army careers that began with or involved a stint in 2/4 RAR. I'm sure that there would be a host more still around the traps.

What was the Battalion doing in 1980

In 1980 the CO was LT COL Bishop and the RSM was WO1 B L Lesueur. It was a very active year for the Battalion, with its rapid expansion to meet the ODF commitments of Third Task Force.

The ODF was raised on the 7th Sept 1980.

Our training areas would include the Mt Stuart Training area, High range, Mt Spec in the Paluma area, Tully and areas in the north of Australia.

Unit Exercises for the year were:

- ◆ Exercise EL Alamein –11-29 Feb 80, B Coy and Mortar PL.
- ◆ Exercise Tropical Encounter, TEWT for all 2/4RAR officers in Cairns. 7 Mar 80
- ◆ Zimbabwe – Rhodesia, 27-29 Feb 80. Lt P Martin, Lt P Thompson and Cpl 'Bones' Brady participated as part of Commonwealth Monitory Force.
- ◆ An Exercise in PNG with 2PIR followed by some adventure training. 13-23 May 80
- ◆ Tully Jungle Warfare Training. 2/4 RAR is the first Unit in Australia to attend the training at The First Division Tropical Training Centre (TTC).
- ◆ Exercise Mangrove Jack 26-30 April 80. Officer Training Exercise in Logistics held in Far North Qld.
- ◆ Exercise Tropic Lightning. Hawaii in June 80.
- ◆ Exercise Overlord 2, 21-29 July 80, involving the whole Battalion just north of Cooktown. Fighting the 'Musorians'.
- ◆ Exercise Third Burst, 25-29 Aug. A Battalion live fire at the High Range Training Area involving RAAF, 4 Field Rgt, 3 Field Engineers and 3 Cav Rgt.

In amongst all of this the Companies ran their own Exercises'.

The Battalion also participated in the Townsville Centenary (14-16 June), which marked 100 years of military presence in Townsville.

Holding the Freedom of the City for 2RAR, the Battalion had the honour of leading the City March ahead of all the other Units of the Third Task Force.

All the above information comes courtesy of the 2/4 Battalion 1982 Magazine.

Up and Coming Events

In 2021 the Association is looking to get together on Norfolk Island for ANZAC Day. What an experience to be a part of the Battalion marching as a large contingent on the Norfolk Island ANZAC Day Celebrations.

We will keep you all posted on the event schedules etc as they occur. Book your spot as soon as you can.

For further information please email Dave Lowe on the Association email address.

In Closing

To help make it an ongoing concern your input and contributions would be greatly appreciated otherwise you're just going to get what I can think of.

I aim to put one of these newsletters out quarterly.

Well that's about it for the first 2/4 RAR Association Newsletter. Just send anything that I can publicly print to:

Mail: 2/4 RAR Association, PO, Box 240,
Thuringowa Central, Qld, 4817

Email: committee@24rarassociation.com

Cheers Bob Bakkers.

“Have a great Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year”.

