

# The Towner News

2/4 RAR Association Newsletter



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

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## Committee

**Patron:** BRIG Paul S. O'Sullivan AM  
MBE (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 253  
Financial members  
Spread the word  
Renew Today**

## From the Editor

Well, I thought that at this time of the year I would have found myself enjoying Western Australia, Rick Canhan would have been participating in his 'Back To the Track' quest and the AGM would have been happening under the guise of David Beacham the W.A. 2/4 Association Rep.

Unfortunately, August still finds us in the grip of the COVID epidemic, more so for those of us in Victoria. So, from the Editorial team I hope everyone stays safe and stays positive, despite the odds.

The 2/4 Association is still meeting on designated meeting days, making sure that all with the Association is up-to-date and functioning smoothly. Membership is steadily increasing, and our merchandise is not gathering dust in Dunny's garage, with sales continuing at a good pace.

This newsletter has some great contributions from members apart from me, so have a good read and if you feel like having a go and writing an article for the next issue... do so. For those of you who have contributed to this newsletter, thanks, your work is much appreciated.

Well, that is enough from me, once again stay safe and enjoy this issue of 'The Towner'.  
Cheers Bob

2/4 RAR Association Treasurer.  
[committee@24rarassociation.com](mailto:committee@24rarassociation.com)

## Patron's Message

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

During these extraordinary times of COVID-19, I want to express my hope that all members of the 2/4RAR Association, their families, loved ones and friends are safe and well, and continue to stay that way.

Through the Regimental network across social media, I see the camaraderie that continues to bind the members of the Battalion as a special "band of brothers".

It is a unique, lasting bond forged through the experience of service in 2/4RAR, and it indicates the willingness of members to support each other through the sort of tough times we are currently experiencing.

As a representative of the National body of RAR Associations, I encourage you to reach out through the 2/4RAR Association if you need assistance or support of any kind.

I look forward to sharing with you our collective recovery from the effects of this pandemic, and trust that my next message to you will be in much improved circumstances. In the meantime, be well, stay well.

Duty First!  
Paul O'Sullivan

## President's Message

G'day and many thanks to Kim and Bob for the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of The Towner News.

Hope everyone is weathering the pandemic restrictions and all the very best to those members and families in COVID-19 lockdown in Victoria or elsewhere.

Recently Jason Harrison advised us that 2 RAR (Amphib) would be providing a cake, an invite to morning tea at the Edgar Towner, VC Club and flying the 2/4 RAR Flag, so we can gather and celebrate the anniversary of 2/4 RAR's 47<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Well done!

Hope we can get as many as possible to the activity back in the Home of the Battalion, on **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020**. Devastating Dave Lowe has also booked the RSL for us to gather afterwards at the RSL Townsville for light refreshments.

Great to see that Greg Mills has also organised the SQ mob to gather in Brisbane to celebrate our birthday. Hopefully other state reps with regions that have relaxed their restrictions may also arrange gatherings. As I write this I note Kim Porter has messaged his loyal lads to gather in Adelaide.

Sadly, it has been a bit quiet with all the cancellations but let us work towards getting back to some normality in the near future.

Reminder all. The committee made a decision at the height of the pandemic restrictions to cancel our AGM in Perth. With borders closed it was impractical to continue. As a consequence the Committee agreed to continue to remain in their roles for the coming year and hopefully we will see some stay on, with perhaps some younger 2/4 RAR veterans coming onto the Committee at the AGM in 2021.

Again, all the very best to you and your families and may all those on the sick or injured list get better soon. Please let me know if you have been ill or in hospital. May be able to visit you (if you are in Townsville) or send a get well card on behalf of the Association.

Duty First and Happy Birthday 2/4 RAR!

Regards and respect from Merv Diction

## 2/4 RAR Pipes and Drums

Article by Greg Pritchard

I was a piper in the Battalion Regimental Pipes and Drums, as with all the members of the Pipe and Drums we were all sourced from the rifle companies and held a field role of Infantry/Stretchers Bearers.

A typical day of learning the pipes or drums would start with PT then into one on one training learning the bagpipes with one of our N.C.O's either Simon Bedding or Zeb Patraka then, Drill with Kevin (Rocky) Coulter and unit history with William (Jock) Gall. The afternoon generally consisted with individual practice on the pipes blowing in reeds to enable you to play on one of the many guard mounts that we attended.

### The Pipes and Drums Members

Over the years the Pipes and Drums membership waxed and waned, but managing to hold a core skill set to continue to train the new members and perform the regimental task throughout the Unit. The numbers of the 2/4 Pipes and Drums increased in 1981.

The members between 1981 and 1986 were:

Pipe Major W02 Jock Gall  
Drum Major Sgt Dick Damen  
Drummer/Bugler Cpl Allan (Foxy) Gray  
Drummer/Bugler Cpl Rocky Coulter  
Bass Drummer/Bugler Pte Bob Casey  
Tenor Drummer/bugler Pte Jock Smith  
Drummer/Bugler LCpl Tim Macey  
Piper Cpl Zeb Patraka,  
Piper LCpl Simon Bedding,  
Piper Pte Michael Dyson,  
Piper Pte Greg Pritchard,  
Piper Pte Craig Cooper (Vale).

All members of the band enjoyed a great work environment.



Drum Major Dick Damian

## 2/4 RAR Pipes and Drums *continued*

### Taskings

The Pipes and Drums were kept busy performing on the unit guard mounts and parades, playing for the unit dawn services including playing through the lines at the wee hours of the morning to wake the Unit personnel, the Unit's Freedom of the City of Townsville and Saint Patrick day was always a highlight for the Pipes and Drums. We also put in a good effort to prepare the band hut and surrounds to receive the company CSM's and other members from other units and Brigade to enjoy a dram or two and a performance by the Pipes and Drums.



*WO2 Jock Gall chatting to Pte Greg Pritchard*

We were not restricted to performing for the Unit with external tasking coming in to perform at Nursing Homes, the blessing of the fleet as well as numerous street marches and Tattoos. The Pipes and Drums also competed in the Regimental Pipes and Drums competitions held at Singleton Army Barracks on an annual basis, where our skills as musicians were put to the test. It also gave us a chance to catch up with the Pipes and Drums of other units and compare notes. In 1988 the Unit Pipes and Drums performed in the Bicentenary Military Tattoo which was one of the largest deployments of military performers and lasted 5 months.

Regards

Greg  
Pritchard



*Saint Patrick's Day*



## 4 RAR REUNION



### **4RAR, 4RAR/NZ (ANZAC), 2/4 RAR and 4RAR (CDO) NATIONAL REUNION – CANBERRA 19-21 SEPTEMBER 2021**

The reunion coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Operation 'Ivanhoe' and the Battle of Nui Le, the last major battle fought by Australians in Vietnam. The anniversary of the battle will be commemorated on 21 September at the Australian War Memorial during the Last Post Ceremony

All former members, partners, families and friends are invited to attend.

#### **A special invitation is extended to:**

NOK of members KIA in all conflicts.

Members and partners of V Coy and W Coy, 1RNZIR.

Members and partners of supporting arms and services associated with the battalions.

To register to attend or for further information contact:

The Secretary  
4RAR Assoc, QLD Inc  
P.O. Box 7167  
Sippy Downs QLD 4556

[Secretary@4rarqld.org.au](mailto:Secretary@4rarqld.org.au)  
and/or  
0417 715 779

Noel Fairley  
President  
4RAR Assoc, Qld Inc  
0431 945 954.

## Life after 2/4 RAR

*Bob Parker*

### **Bob Parker - Delta Company 1983 to 1988**

I thought I'd drop a line about what I'm up to now. I completed 23 years in the ARA and had various Regimental, Instructional, Overseas and Operational deployments.

Memorable moments from my time in Delta include a trip to Butterworth (1987), PNG (1985) and leading the winning Section (Spt Sect) in the 1987 Military Skills competition. When I transitioned to civvy street in 2005, I had the qualifications and experience for a defence industry company, based in Canberra that was seeking workers and I still work for the same company LOPAC some 15 years later.

LOPAC [www.lopac.com.au](http://www.lopac.com.au) was founded in Canberra in 1975 and is widely recognised as a small, successful defence industry representational, consultancy, and project management company, through its endurance in the market place, its achievements on behalf of clients, including, Orbital ATK, Hughes Defense and Intelligence Systems, Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace and Supacat Ltd.

### **Combat Capabilities**

LOPAC's marketing and analysis skills were critical to the selection of the Supacat <https://supacat.com/> "Nary" High Mobility Transporter (HMT) for JP2097 REDFIN - Enhancements to Special Operations Capability. The subsequent REDFIN phases required detailed customer engagement by LOPAC over many years before contract award was achieved. LOPAC was able to leverage this success to enable the selection of the HMT by the ADF and the NZDF. Within Australia the HMT is operated by the SASR and the Commando Regiment (see attached photos).

Other combat capabilities delivered include the Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace (KDA) <https://www.kongsberg.com/kda/> Remote Weapon Station (RWS) suitable for .50cal or 40mmAGL for ASLAV and another KDA RWS variant can be fitted to the HMT and suitable for .50cal/40mm AGL and also has a Javelin Missile Post. LOPAC also made significant contributions to Orbital ATK's marketing of the Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile capabilities for the RAAF's F/A-18G Growler fleet.

All our projects were completed on time and within budget and all Australian industrial involvement commitments were met or exceeded. Various smaller projects, including the rapid acquisition of SATCOM equipment to the ADF for use in Afghanistan on behalf of Hughes Defense and Intelligence Systems.

### **The Future**

In the Winter months I enjoy cross country trekking in the Alpine country and those skills picked up digging to Stage 3 in Hervey Range come in handy digging snow bivvies (see attached photos).

Currently LOPAC is assisting with LAND19Ph7 Ground Based Air Defence <https://www.kongsberg.com/kda/news-and-media/news-archive/2017/nasams-solution-for-australian-army-ground-based-air-defence/> for our Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace client and this will run over the next three years and then personally it will be time to retire to warmer climates and sip G&T's.

Cheers,  
Bob Parker  
Duty First

## Life after 2/4 RAR

## Bob Parker continued



The Supacat HMT provided to the ADF and the NZDF can be configured as either a 4 wheel or 6 wheel drive.



Alpine country . . . sleeping above 2000m



## Making the best of Covid 19 Restricted Anzac Day



David Munro  
(Ford)  
served in the  
Battalion  
1975—1980

Anzac day  
In  
Fitzroy Crossing  
WA  
With David &  
his Family



Anzac day was  
different for all of us  
this year.  
Glad to see it was  
celebrated in special  
ways all around the  
country.

## Remembering the 2/4 RAR Sallyman

Taken from an article written for the Salvation Army  
Red Shield Appeal 2020 by Bob Bakkers D Coy 2/4 RAR 1980's

At some time in the latter part of 1981 the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion as part of the Operational Deployment Force, (ODF) had its first Battalion Exercise at full strength including the newly formed D Company, whose manning were mainly new soldiers just posted to Townsville Qld from the Infantry Training Centre, Singleton NSW. The D Coy Commander was a LT Kenny MM, a highly decorated soldier from Vietnam, alongside an experienced Battalion Sergeant, Sgt McCosker as CSM. The Platoon Commanders were new graduates out of Officer training at Portsea and Duntroon, with the Platoon Sgts' being just recently promoted. The Section Commanders too were newly promoted men, mainly from 3RAR at Woodside SA. All in all D Company was regarded as a 'ragtail bunch' by the rest of the Battalion, with the Company itself keen to prove its professional worth.

The Battalion exercise was held in a vast area to the north of Townsville in an area known as Mt Spec. The training area extended from the Paluma ranges to the back of Tinaroo Dam west of Cairns some 350 kms. Even though Mt Spec had been extensively used by the Army during WW2 for battle training, it had only just re-opened since that time to Defence for training activities due to the newly formed ODF role.

The Battalion Commander was keen to put his men through their paces, especially his new rifle Company, D Coy. Tasks for the Companies were gruelling, with acclimatisation to the tropics for the new soldiers being non-existent, D Coy especially found the going tough.

After being in the field for around 10 days, with rations and water running low, D Coy found itself off grid, lost and with no radio communications to BHQ, because of its radio batteries going flat.

Map reading skills were put to the test and the Company, keen to re-establish contact with the Battalion kept patrolling aimlessly through the unknown and dry arid territory. Water and rations ran out by day 2 of their predicament. Salt had formed on the eyes of a few soldiers, one of the platoons had walked into a barbed wire fence during a nights patrol causing some horrific injuries to the forward scouts.

On Day 3 with D Coy still trying to walk its way to the Battalion operating area, the situation was becoming dire. LT Kenny MM called a halt and decided to rest the men while he worked out how to get out of this situation. A report comes in from the forward platoon that a car engine has been heard and that a recon section has been sent to investigate. This was the first time in 3 days that the Company had some form of contact with the outside world.

Around 30 minutes passed when in the distance a vehicle approached the D Coy position, it was the 2/4RAR Sallyman, who was also lost and trying to find the main Battalion operating area.



## Remembering the 2/4 RAR Sallyman continued

Lucky enough he still had a good supply of Coffee, tea, Jube and biscuits on hand to save the D Coy soldiers, who by now were completely exhausted. The 2/4 Sallyman literally saved the day for D Coy.

After a few hours he and the Company OC headed off in the Sallyvan to find BHQ. Some 3 hours later the Battalion trucks appeared and transported the exhausted D company soldiers back to Lavarack Barracks D Coy in its thanks to the 2/4 Sallyman raised a large monetary donation on its first payday back from the field, with each soldier giving \$20 out of his pay in appreciation. The Company also purchased a new urn for the 2/4RAR 'Hop-In' centre.



Nigel Roden current Sallyman for 2RAR (AMPHIB) writes:-

The Sallyman Team continues to serve in the ADF after 120 years - on base, in the field and on operations. The Team of 4 Sallyman/Trucks also provide support to ADF families and veterans in the Townsville community, via defence connected organisations and the Salvation Army'S Community Service providers.

Our team's current fleet of Toyota Landcruiser Sally Trucks are fatiguing, and in order to continue our mission, we need to raise money to sustain and continue our mission. We need to raise money towards this goal, and have christened it '**Operation SallyVan**'

If you'd like to consider your support and donation to this project please donate to the following account and mark it '**Operation SallyVan**' in the details/note section of the transfer, and email us notification of your donation to [nigel.roden@salvationarmy.org.au](mailto:nigel.roden@salvationarmy.org.au) (Also allowing receipts to be sent)

RSDS Townsville  
Bank: Defence Bank  
Account number: 20531852  
BSB: 833205

## AI Service Medals—Pat (Spud) Cairns



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Spud served in the Battalion 1977—1981

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## Up and coming events

### 2/4 RAR Association Events

August the 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 marks the 47<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the Battalion. Events are planned in Brisbane, Adelaide, and Townsville, all abiding the COVID Laws particular to their States.

So, if you are in these areas and feel safe in doing so, try and attend.

Contact your State and Area 2/4 Association Reps for any further information.

#### **Brisbane**

Gary Jiear

**0417 723 500**

[gary-jenni@bigpond.com](mailto:gary-jenni@bigpond.com)

#### **Adelaide**

Kim Porter

**0417 468 186**

[yrtnafri51@hotmail.com](mailto:yrtnafri51@hotmail.com)

#### **Townsville**

Dave Lowe

**0459 222 252**

[davesjoy@bigpond.com](mailto:davesjoy@bigpond.com)



## Membership

Your Membership Maybe due now.

It's that time of the year again, around August, that a lot of us will find that our membership for the Association has expired. You should have received an Email from the Association in relation to this .... Actually we have sent it twice now.

Many have taken 'the never have to pay again option', and that is the life subscription at \$180, which also gets you a great certificate, often seen on Facebook.

Otherwise it's the \$15 a year, with it being due at this time. Either way, having your membership up to date keeps the Association alive.

So check to see if you are current on the 2/4 RAR website.

Any queries in regards to this you can contact me through the Association Email, address found on page 1.

Cheers and stay safe, and have a beer for the Battalion's birthday this Saturday August 15th.

Bob Bakkers

Treasurer

Stay tuned for the next  
issue of  
"The Towner"  
out just before Christmas.