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Website: <http://12fieldregiment.com>

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## **12 FIELD REGIMENT (VIETNAM) ASSOCIATION**

(A Branch of the Royal Australian Artillery Association NSW Inc)

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now that the winter chills are nearly behind us we will be able to get out of bed without so many aches and pains hopefully.

We would like to thank the people who responded to our request for information on the personnel who were at F.S.B. Coral / Balmoral. The information derived from this exercise has been nothing short of fantastic. I would dare to say we are nearing full numbers on the parts of the Regiment involved. We are still missing addresses on many, and these names will be outlined on the base of this letter in order of units in which they served. We hope you can help us further in this regard.

Your executive has worked hard to get these details for the Coral / Balmoral committee, and as promised earlier, no funding is to be forthcoming from our Association for that given Anniversary. We are doing this work in KIND to the point that our committee paid for the postage on the last mail out until funding is forthcoming from the D.V.A. or private sponsorship. On that note we would like to point out that D.V.A. funding will not be as large as first thought as this event will cost in excess of \$400,000.00 to hold for all units involved. We do not see a snowballs chance in hell of that figure being granted. We would also see a need to gain private sponsorship to cover some of the shortfall. But even given that, there will still be a large shortfall. So at the moment, we do see that we will have to pay our own accommodation and transport to and from the celebrations in Canberra. The Coral / Balmoral committee apologises for this, but we have to be realistic at this point of time. We point out again that all members of the Regiment are most welcome to attend. However, those not included in operation Toan Thang will not be subsidised by the D.V.A. and will have to pay their own way in total. The D.V.A. is very strict in the areas it will support.

### **Accommodation in Canberra.**

As you know Accommodation in Canberra is expensive and scarce. Those coming to the celebrations the following affordable resort style accommodation has been negotiated, it is however up to you to book and secure A.S.A.P. Book now to avoid disappointment. The Federal budget will be on over the same period as our celebrations and the press will book early so get to it. We are trying to get all gunners on this site if possible. The resort is a little north of Canberra on the northern approach on the south of the Bungendore turnoff on the R.H.S. of the Federal highway.

### **The Site.**

### **Eagle Hawk Holiday Park**

**Address and Ph Number.** 1246Federal Highway, Sutton. Ph.02 62416411

**The Accommodation and Rates.**

**Standard Cabin:** \$80.00 per night ((2 Adults), \$15.00 extra for one adult. Microwave, toaster and jug supplied.

**Cottage Unit:** \$115.00 per night. Kitchen facilities. \$15.00 extra per adult.

**Deluxe Villa:** \$135.00 per night for two adults+ \$15.00 extra per extra adult. Full kitchen facilities are supplied.

The site also has a hotel, bistro and restaurant.

The booking fee is one night's accommodation. Refundable on arrival, make sure you mention the Coral Reunion on booking. Do it now to avoid disappointment and a \$5.00 hike in prices next year.

The above information has been passed on in good faith in our newsletter to the members it concerns who are a part of our Regiment who were involved in that given operation. There are two members of your executive committee involved in the Coral / Balmoral Committee. In consideration that this newsletter was being sent to all members of the Association anyway, we therefore see no reason why it should not be included. We hope you all agree.

**RENEWALS DUE NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**Now to other important matters, we are now well into August and sadly it is time for renewals, if you wish to sign on for another year, please forward to our Hon Treasurer Laurie Bird at the post box on the letter head, your subscription of \$10.00. Should you wish to become a perpetual member, please do the same, and post \$100.00. By doing this it will save me reminding you every year to pay up and you will be a member for the rest of your life. Any members who remain un-financial after our next newsletter in the late November Summer edition will not be sent any more notifications or mail outs. Your Association just cannot afford the postage costs for a mere \$10.00 p.a. So please do it **NOW** if you haven't already done so. **At this point of time, there are 108 members who have not done so!!!! PLEASE DO IT NOW. A YEARLY COST OF THREE BEERS. NOT MUCH IS IT?????****

**From the R.Q.M.S.**

Laurie (little) Bird has been working overtime in getting memorabilia sent out and organised for our members He now has a limited supply of Association Plaques (20) available to our members. We ordered 50 as the demand has been strong. I remind you that Laurie does not have the notoriety of a lot of B.Q.M.S or R.Q.M.S. as being tighter than a Fishes bottom and has skimmed his prices to the minimum. The plaques are selling at \$30.00 (plus postage). A mere \$5.00 above the Association cost. That goes back to your Association for the future. I attach a photo of it below. Do not forget the other items that Laurie has for sale as outlined below as well. A big selling item is the 1/3 sized M60 @ \$135.00 each, supply cant keep up with demand on this item and there is a waiting list on that item. All items for sale at this point of time are shown below with their relevant prices.

Top Left: Regimental Plaque \$30.00 + Postage. Bottom Left: Regimental Tie \$23.50 + Postage.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Left: 1/3 size M60 \$135.00 + Postage. 3<sup>rd</sup> Left: Mini cast M60, S.L.R and M16 \$28.00 + Postage.  
Far Right: Regimental Cap \$10.00 + Postage.



In our next newsletter we will have a **FIRE FOR EFFECT** twin pack of white and Red wines in a gift cardboard box engraved in Gold available from the vineyards of the famous Hunter Valley. As you know the Hunter has the best wines in our country and the wines are a fantastic drop. The two packs and box will sell for the low price of \$25.00. There will be a red and white of quality wines in the pack. These wines will be labelled in celebration of the Anniversary of the Regiments First tour in 1968.

The initial costs of this project will be bourn by our Association. The profits will go this way, the cost price plus a dollar will go to our Association, and a few bucks will be going to the Coral / Balmoral Anniversary.

The second item will be a crock of quality Port, once again from the Hunters famous vineyards with the Artillery badge on it and it is a commemorative edition of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Coral /Balmoral. The crock will be in Artillery colours with gold leaf lettering and will sell at the low price of \$39.00.

All orders or the projects must be paid in advance so we can fund them on ordering them, as well as knowing how many to order. An order form is supplied in this newsletter. **PLEASE COMPLETE AND SEND THE MONEY IN ADVANCE FOR THESE ORDERS, I assure you that you will not be disappointed.**

### **RESPONSES NEEDED URGENTLY.**

#### **As you know the Coral / Balmoral 40th celebrations are in Canberra in May next year.**

All the blokes and their partners need to book now for accommodation if they are coming, **Please do not leave it to the last minute, as you will be disappointed. Book Now!!!!!!** The suggested motel is also in this newsletter. We will also provide a web contact for Virgin Airways to book your tickets. Get in now before the prices rise.

#### **A Bombardiers' Directive.**

Recently a Bombardier from our Regiment contacted me in regards to setting up a HARDSHIP FUND for people in need and volunteered to put money in to get the ball rolling. His exclamation was that he had been lucky in life and was more than willing to get this thing off the ground for the sake of the less fortunate amongst us. The generosity of our mates never fails to amaze me, and given my aim in the future to set up a funeral fund, his idea is indeed what we need now, rather than after we have gone I have asked him to set up the criteria for it and we will take it from there. His generosity is a great initiative and we thank him for it. He wants to remain anonymous at this time. Mate THANK YOU.

#### **A New Co Patron.**

It gives us great pleasure to announce that Major Ross Bland (ex L.A.D.) first tour, is now our co patron with Father John (Tinks) Tinkler. Ross is most deserving of this honour and we congratulate him on it.

He was a career soldier and put his heart and soul into his career and the well being of his soldiers.

On return from Vietnam on the first tour, L.A.D. in Artillery was disbanded and it did look that 12<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment was going to be disbanded as well. Fortunately the Regiment survived, due to the Governments commitment to send another Artillery Regiment to Vietnam to support our infantry. The Regiment chosen was 12<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment that the government had eyes on disbanding. The L.A.D. was raised again in total under the leadership of this great man, he did it with the professionalism that only he could produce. I, the writer make no bones about it that I respect and admire him, as well as most of the soldiers under his command. Ross related a story to me after I congratulated him. When in Nui Dat the L.A.D. Fellas got a half a day of on a Sunday arvo. Early in the piece we were all required to wear long sleeves. It appears the L.A.D. boys were having a game of footy, and Ross stuck his head out the window to see what was going on. He spotted a man with no shirt on, and yelled, "That \*#%&#\$ Man with no shirt on get the \$%#@\*&^ thing on now or I will charge you!!!!!!".. The man put his shirt on and his collar showed a cross on each lapel. It was TINKS!. You are both wonderful human beings. Tinks was no fighting man, but by the Jezus he is a mans man. (Sorry Tinks)

But I didn't take his name in vain. It was spelt wrong, I was only a Gunner and only the Grammar messed it up. Tinks had two major failures in his life,

- 1) He failed to convert Alan Floyd and me to Christianity.
- 2) He failed to make POPE, if any one deserves it, Tinks is the man. But you have to be very old, like a drink and crotchety for that role and Tinks fills only one of those three categories.

#### **The February 2008 Regimental Reunion.**

Planning is well underway for our Regiments 40<sup>th</sup> first tour reunion in February next year. I remind every member that all are welcome for this event. Your accommodation choice has been sent to you, and I advise that you book in soon to your choice of accommodation. Our committee has established the entrance price of \$70.00 per person. We are sure you will agree, given the program, this is indeed great value. I do ask

you now to make the commitment to come and forward a deposit for yourself and partner, an amount of \$20.00 each. Deposits and full entry will be refunded up to three weeks prior to the event should you not be able to make it. **The 2<sup>nd</sup> of January** will be the cut off date for the final payment of the full ticketed price of \$70.00 per head. We assure you that within our package you will be getting more than your two years Association fees back by attending the reunion. We do hope you can make it. The final warning order will appear in our summer edition newsletter in November.

### The 2011 Regimental Reunion.

Yes we know it is early days yet to be even thinking about the second tour Anniversary. But our committee needs to ask you all a couple of questions in regard to this. The items will also appear on your questionnaire. In consideration that 104 Field Battery are holding their reunion in Darwin in 2010 on Anzac day, when and where should the second tours Anniversary be held.

In consideration that most functions happen in the Eastern states, I consider it is high time the sandgroppers were given a go, as the cost for them to come over here all the time is enormous. I will leave it up to you all to vote on, and the city with the highest vote count will be it.

### A Remembrance Day to remember.

This year on Remembrance Day in the sleepy little township of Ouyen, (South of the Border, down Mexico way (Victoria) population, 60 people, 70 Dogs, 20,000 sheep and 25 police officers, all of which man breathalyser test kits, and all are strangers from out of town, who the Floyd brothers have never laid eyes on, are having their Remembrance Day dedicated to Vietnam Veterans of which there are 14 in the town and surrounds. The Floyd boys were both members of our Regiment. Allen reached the dizzy heights of Gunner on the least senior Gun in 102 Field Battery, and he was the junior Gunner. That alone tells you that Al was at the end of the queue when brains were handed out. Now his brother Graham made it to the dizzy heights of W.O.1 after his fine service with 104 Battery. Both of the boys served with our Regiment in Vietnam in 1968 / 69. I would like to ask as many fellas from the Regiment who can attend to turn up and give Ouyen and the Floyd boys a day they wont forget. Imagine the wealth that could be generated in this little town? It may even stop the bored coppers trying to ping **INNOCENT** interstaters for D.U.I.

There are a few of us going down and we would like to see the main street filled again for the first time since the Koo Wee march in the First World War. Bring your hutchies and blow up beds, the town will be booked out with the three available beds, usually reserved for the drovers and their dogs. I always wondered why Alpha gun crew, 102 Bty was always scratching, what was the old saying? Sleep with a dog long enough and you will get fleas!!!! Al WE LUV YA. And a few of us will be there to fill the street of Ouyen.

### A Web Site for the Association.

Over the last eight weeks or so we have been working feverishly on getting an economical website going for our Association. I can tell you it has been a lot of work by a few differing people. It is my pleasure to inform you that your Association now has a Website. It is still under construction but well on the way, and will be updated constantly. So what you have got to do is list it under your favourites' and make a hit or 2 on it every day. By doing this we will gain seniority on the search engines and gain first page status under Artillery, where we belong. There are people who I would like to thank in this project, Mr Graham Hampton who is the Webmaster for the Australian Artillery Association Website. **Mate, thanks**, this would not be possible without your expertise and kindness. Mrs Lorraine Lament, (Blues wife) ex H.Q. Battery first tour. Lorraine got the ball rolling initially and got us of our bottoms to get things moving. Lorraine, we are hoping will be the assistant Web mistress if that is the right word. Lorraine thank you, as I mentioned in the Bombardiers' directive it is amazing as to the thought fullness of a lot of people from the Regiment and now their wives.

Whilst I am on the subject of thanking people, a little mate of mine, Billy Collier gave to our Association a box of computer paper, 2500 sheets in all. Billy was a Gunner in 102 Battery as well as a driver and is a bloody good bloke. Also I must mention that we will have a one page area in the R.A.A.A. (N.S.W.) Artillery Association site as we are a branch. We will have a link section on that, that will direct you to our main site. Our main sites address is <http://12fieldregiment.com> or <http://australianartilleryassociation.com> Click on it now and have a gander. The site is in its early days, but we have made big inroads in just a few weeks. We now want quality photos of the two tours to put on the site. Please send them direct to me by email or post copies to me. The three best photos as judged by the committee, will win a prize from the Q store. Remember to put captions on them. Enjoy the site!!!!

I have run out of space again, but as per usual I would love to thank all of our helping hands that contribute to our group. To the Executive a big thanks AGAIN. To the Batteries committee, I express thanks to you all. But Ray Carlin deserves special mention due to the tremendous work he has done in an area we will all appreciate in the future. THANKS MATE. Well done!!!!!!!

### Sick Parade.

#### I have been informed that John Bird and John Gainsford are not well.

We would like all of their mates to make contact with them to wish them a speedy recovery. The Association has already done so, but we are sure the both of them would like to hear the best wishes of all their mates. Please send them a card, or better still contact them, they would love to hear from you. **Sick Parade** will be included in every news letter from now on, please assist and let us know of any of your mates who are not well. Lets hope it is not used very often. I thank John Harms for John Birds notification and Neil Mangels for John Gainsfords. I would also like to point out to you that our own John Harms has sent me very important documentation that he acquired from a V.C. P.O.W. he captured during our tour. The documents have been transcribed in English and contain certificates for a soldier of the V.C. units for individual bravery and notification of medals allocated to her. There are also photos included of the differing areas that they had as R and R breaks. These photos and transcriptions are available now on the Web site in the history section. Keep your eyes peeled.  
No one else in Australia has this information, so this is a first for our Association.

#### In Conclusion.

As you can see we haven't been sitting on our hands, and it is all systems go. I do encourage you all to participate in buying things from our Quartermaster as this is the only fund raising option that we have. Our fees are set at a limit far lower than many other Associations and we want to keep it that way. With your support in buying the Quality goods on offer from the **R.M.Q.S.** is the way we can do it, these prices have also been cut to the quick. Please help!!!! We can fund our Reunion in February with your purchases and still retain what we have now for the second reunion plus interest. We are **NOT** a profit making Association but we must maintain a good figure in the black for our survival into the future.

I also remind you all that we are an Incorporated Association and are accountable to our members at all times for scrutiny in any part of the operation of YOUR group. Your committee are also volunteers', and I assure you that many costs incurred by them are waived due to their dedication.

**I also ask of you all that you notify us of a change of EMAIL address. We have no less than 40 people that changed their address without notification. This adds to the cost of our Association in mail outs to you. Please help!!!!!!!!!!**

I thank you for your time, and do ask that you make an effort to find the following missing members of THE REGIMENT of ARTILLERY. The names of these people are listed on the sheet: "Operation Toan Thang - Details needed"

Best wishes, Cossie and our Committee.

#### Stop Press:

**Not long before the publication of this letter a much Revered Gunner of our Regiment has donated a substantial amount of money to our Association. Sadly, he does not want to be identified. He is a man who I see as a kindred spirit to us all, and I love him as a brother. I have sent him a letter of gratitude from us all. This is far more than he requires or wants. He is the man made in heaven for the Regiment without a doubt.  
Mate the REGIMENT loves you. No more PLEASE!!!!!!!!!!!! GOD BLESS YOU. You are to kind!!!!!!**

**Questionnaire to all members of the Association (and non-members)**

**Name of Member / Non-Member**.....

Please read carefully and fill in to the best of your knowledge. There is a reunion planned for the entire Regiment (both tours) for February next year. This will be funded by our Association to the tune of \$12,000.00. The reunion will run from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of Feb. 2008. It is the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reunion for the Regiment's first tour. We want as many people to attend as possible from both tours. The reunion will be held at the Bankstown Sports Centre.

**Will you and you partner attend this reunion?**

(Tick one only)                      **Yes.....**                      **No.....**                      **Number of people attending:.....**

There is an Anniversary celebration event for the Battle of Coral / Balmoral being held in Canberra in May. This is being subsidised, by a point, by the D.V.A., to the Veterans who figured in that given operation. It will be a part subsidy only. All Veterans of the Regiment can attend, regrettable those not involved in that action will not have D.V.A. assistance. That includes the soldiers of the Units that were involved that weren't present on that given operation.

The people who were not involved and choose to attend are most welcome, but the total costs will be borne by them. The D.V.A. has strict guidelines and we are bound to follow them.

I point out again that no funding will be forthcoming from your Association for this Anniversary Celebration.

Will you and your partner attend this 40<sup>th</sup> year celebration of the battle of Coral / Balmoral, regardless of involvement or not?

(Tick one only)                      **Yes.....**                      **No.....**                      **Number of people attending:.....**

Sadly no money will be forthcoming now to those in financial difficulty from the D.V.A. to either Function, so we are on our own again to get ourselves there and rub shoulders with the other poor people. That is an experience on its own.

I do understand that our first questionnaire was confusing to say the least, but now you have just two very simple questions to answer. It isn't hard, just tick two areas, send it back to our Secretary and Bobs your uncle. To those who responded earlier, please do not send it again and we thank you for responding early. I think you understood. You were senior Gunners obviously.

To all who are coming in February please send a \$20.00 deposit per head, for yourself and your partner, now. Payments should be made in full by the 2<sup>nd</sup> January '08, of \$70.00 per head. Refunds will be paid three weeks prior to the reunion should you then be unable to attend. I do remind you however that January 2<sup>nd</sup> is the cut-off date and nothing can be done after that date.

Kind regards to the Regiment,

Cossie and your Committee

