

**President:**  
Mr. Graham Floyd  
39 Mitchell Street  
Ouyen Vic 3490  
Ph: (03) 50921045  
Email: 12fdregtraa@gmail.com



**PATRONS:**  
Lt Col Fr John Tinkler (RL)

**Secretary:**  
Mr. Trevor Bryant  
28 Ironbark Avenue  
Flagstaff Hill SA 5159  
Ph: (08) 82707130  
Email: trevjeanbryant@gmail.com

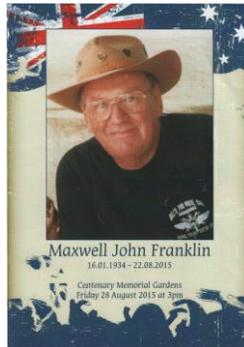
**Vice President:**  
Mr. Neil Mangels  
PO Box 91  
Middleton TAS 7163  
Ph: (03) 6292 1409  
Email: nma77081@bigpond.net.au

**Treasurer:**  
Mr. John Beer  
81 Fawcett Street  
Glenfield NSW 2167  
Ph: (02) 9605 8493  
Email: jbe51622@bigpond.net.au

## 12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association

### INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 38 5/07/15

#### 1. Max Franklin:



We have received many tributes to Max from members who have been saddened by news of his death. Thanks to those of you who have registered your thoughts and feelings.

The following valed message from Cols. Arthur Burke and Ian Ahearn is a good summary of Max's career:

*Sadly, the Royal Regiment has lost another warrior - one of our characters. 3410998 Maxwell John Franklin was born on 16 January 1934 in Carlton, Victoria. At 18 years of age he would have been called up for the National Service Scheme of the 1950s. This obviously created a yearning for further service and he enlisted in the ARA as a mature 27 year-old in 1961. Appointed to the RAA, he quickly rose through the ranks and was a temporary sergeant and gun detachment commander (F sub) in 102nd Field Battery of 12th Field Regiment when it went off to Vietnam in March 1968. This meant that Max was serving at Fire Support Base Coral on 13 May 1968 when the left hand wave of the attack by North Vietnamese Army Regulars overran the infantry mortar position and Foxtrot gun's forward machine gun post. In the words of the GPO, Lt Ian Ahearn, 'The machine gun crew pulled back to the bund of No 6 gun to continue the fight, but the following NVA were quick to attack the bund of No 6 gun with grenades and heavy small arms fire over the top of the bund. This intense fire forced the men of No 6 gun to disable their 105mm howitzer and fall back to No 5 gun. Fierce fighting continued on the left flank of the attack and the Mortar Line found itself under threat of total annihilation until the Mortar line commander called for Splintex to be fired across his position. E sub (No 5) fired five rounds across the Mortar Line and all enemy activity ceased. No 6 gun was recovered before dawn and was so badly damaged that it had to be replaced. Sergeant Franklin returned to Australia, served with Army Guided Weapons Trials Unit around 1972, was promoted staff sergeant and then took his discharge on 13 February 1981. Max had a dry wit and a natural laconic nature that made one want to like him. Vale Max Franklin, gone to the Great Gun Park up above at 81 years of age.*

The following report of the funeral service has been sent to us by member Neil Ahern.

*Trev, last Friday, 28th August, Maxwell John Franklin (Max ) was given a fitting farewell, attended by a huge crowd which could not fit into the Chapel at the Centenary Memorial Gardens, Brisbane. Many of the well wishers were seated outside. In attendance were his many family members including wife Win, children, grandchildren & great grandchildren, and many ex-service personnel. His grandson, Chris gave the eulogy, followed by a tribute from our own Cossie, who held it together pretty well considering.*

*12 Field Regiment, and 102 Btty were represented by the following members:- Stan Carbines - Rob Costello- Dave Thomas- Ray Darragh- Dale Quigley- Geoff Grimish - John Harms- Leonie Jones- Bill Walker- Neil Ahern. Regards, Neil Ahern.*

## 2. Memorial Service for Colonel Michael Crawford MBE (Ret.):

Our member Don Tait has asked that all members be made aware of this upcoming event. Those of you who knew Col. Crawford may wish to attend.

*Memorial Service Notice - Colonel Michael Croom Crawford MBE (Retired)*

*Colonel Michael Crawford MBE (Retired), known to many as Mick, died on the 22nd of July this year. Michael's funeral was held on the 29th of July at St James Anglican Church, Bungwahl, NSW, and was attended by about 130 people. After the funeral, Michael's life was celebrated at the Marine Rescue Base, Forster-Tuncurry, NSW and attended by about 180 family, friends and Marine Rescue Colleagues.*

*The Crawford family understands that many people who would have liked to have attended the funeral were unable to do so. A memorial service for Michael will be held in Sydney. The details are:*

**Day / Date.** Wednesday 30th September 2015 **Location.** St Aidan's Anglican Church, Longueville

**Address.** 1 Christina St, Longueville, NSW, 2066 **Time.** 11.00 AM

## 3. Tribute to Bill Liddell:

Last month we advised members of the passing of Bill Liddell. It seems that many of you knew him well. The following is a tribute from our member Warwick Brooker.

*G'day Trev. Bill Liddell was one of my Survey instructors at North Head in 1967. He was a really decent fellow. The other was Geoff Jebb, whom I just rang with the sad news.*

*Geoff tells me that Bill was Master Gunner at North Head before becoming RSM and later accepted a commission. He resigned from the Army with the rank of Captain.*

*Geoff and Bill were good mates and since Geoff appears to have a photographic memory, he's kindly offered to share some history of their exploits. He has a headful of his time with Bill.*

*Geoff's number here in Canberra is (02) 6249 6532. Feel free to pass that to interested parties.*

*Geoff and John Bertram also worked (and played tennis) together.*

*Regards, Warwick*

## 4. The Continuing Quest for Unit Recognition for the Significance of Coral:

During August, many main-stream Australian newspapers published an article about the efforts being made by our own Scrubber Ahearn (and others), to obtain a Citation for the extraordinary effort of 102 Battery, HQ Battery and other units at Coral. This project has been underway for some years now and Scrubber and his team have put in an exceptional amount of work to get it this far. The newspaper article is a good summary of where it is up to. Many thanks to journalist Mark Jaimeson who has put this report together.

If you didn't get the chance to see it in the papers and would like to know what's happening, please click on this Link which has been sent to us by John Beer.

<http://www.news.com.au/national/heroic-gunners-saved-the-day-and-australias-war-at-battle-for-coral-now-theres-a-push-to-reward-them/story-fncynjr2-1227485086472>

## 5. Missing Person:

John and Lola Brewer are trying to track down an old Arty acquaintance of theirs and have asked for our help. Does anyone have contact details for WO Keith Charleton who was an RSM in Vietnam during the war, and also served at Woodside (among other places)?

## 6. Passing of Capt. Matthew Manning:

Some of you may have crossed paths with Matthew in your Arty careers. The following message regarding his passing has been sent to us by Maj. John Batayola, currently serving as 2IC at the School of Artillery.

*It is with great sadness that I inform you of the tragic and unexpected passing of Captain Matthew Eden Manning. Matthew was a 33 year old Joint Fires Team Commander serving at 8<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery. He had served in Darwin on his most recent posting since January 2015. Matthew was born on the 7th of July 1982 in Brisbane, Queensland, the youngest of three boys. He completed schooling at St Laurence's College. Matthew was appointed as an officer in the Australian Army on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2010 and on completion of study at the Royal Military College Duntroon was allocated to the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery. Matthew was a committed and talented artillery officer who showed much promise as a leader and as a soldier. On his first posting he served at 8<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Regiment in Darwin as a Troop Commander. In 2013 he joined the School of Artillery in Puckapunyal as the Command Post Officer and Operations Officer. In 2014 he qualified as a Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC). In his role as JTAC, Matt was the complete professional; sharp, affable and committed to a job which he relished; providing air support to the troops. Most recently he had returned from secondment to the British Army where he was attached to 127 Dragon Battery, 19 Regiment, Royal Artillery in Tidworth, England. Whilst in the UK, Matthew made the most of the opportunities presented, visiting all corners of the United Kingdom as well as participating in training exercises in Germany.*

*A lover of horseracing, he was happiest amongst friends and family dressed for success at the racecourse. An avid follower of all sports, he played rugby union until he injured his knee in 2013; golf was another of his passions. Matthew was a genuine and well-liked character who will be sorely missed by his colleagues, who will remember him always as a good man taken too soon. Matthew is survived by his parents and two brothers.*

*I will be informing you of details for the funeral and where to send flowers and letters of sympathy. You can direct your queries to me or to the Adjutant 8th/12th Regiment RAA Captain Jared Boyd on (08) 89253835; email:*

*[jared.boyd@defence.gov.au](mailto:jared.boyd@defence.gov.au)*

**MAJ John Batayola** Second in Command School of Artillery, SO2 Head of Regiment, RAA. Tel: (03) 5735 6135

Mob: 0400854323, email: [john.batayola@defence.gov.au](mailto:john.batayola@defence.gov.au)

## 7. Special Appeal - Your Chance to Help a Good and Deserving Cause in Vietnam:

For some years, a group of dedicated ex-gunners and members of this Association have been working hard to support an orphanage and school located in Vung Tau (Anyone remember that place???) Amongst other things, they have provided money, time, labour, mentoring and business skills to help these facilities survive and look after vulnerable local children, and they've done it without fuss and without any thought of recognition.

Our esteemed Welfare Officer Rick Cranna is part of this team and he has identified a serious need for a bus for use between these facilities. The estimated cost of a second-hand bus that will do the job is \$A20,000 which is beyond their resources. Rick has therefore turned to members of this Association for help and is asking us for donations that will help achieve the goal.

A full report with all background information is attached to this Info Bulletin.

If you think you can help, donations can be made by Electronic Bank Transfer to BSB 064-404, A/c Ian Dimond Goal Saver, A/c No 10536210.

## **8. Merchandise:**

QM Laurie Bird reminds members that he still has all-weather Jackets and they remain at the very competitive price of \$55 including postage.

Also don't forget the usual shirts (\$27), caps (\$15) and ties (\$27) etc. that are still available, as well as the CD featuring the 102 Battery theme song The Toucan Battery Blues, and a tribute song to the Centenary of Anzac called Lone Pine Lament (\$10).

Christmas will soon be upon us and any of these items would make magnificent gifts not only for your ex-Regiment mates, but also for family and friends who are proud of your service to your country.

To order please contact Laurie Bird on his usual email address (now restored and working) [birdlawrence@outlook.com](mailto:birdlawrence@outlook.com) or phone him on 02 49548248.

**The Association acknowledges the ongoing support of the Ingleburn sub-Branch of the RSL in the publication of these Bulletins, and thanks them for their assistance.**