



12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association (A Branch of the NSW RAA Association)

12 Field Regiment

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MEMORABILIA SPECIALS

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02 49548248

birds_12@optusnet.com.au

President's Letter

Gentlemen and Ladies

Well another year has passed and, as we approach our fourth year of Association, it is time for me to stand down as President at our A.G.M. on the 6th of March 2009. I leave this post with both pride and sadness. The pride is derived from the support given to me by the committee members over the years and who are responsible for a strong and viable Association.

I am saddened to the extent that I will no longer have the privilege of serving a great organisation.

I do thank all those very kind people that have heaped praise on our committees for our efforts since our humble beginnings in 2006. It is very hard to find dedicated people willing to stand for a position, but I do ask that if there is anyone out there wishing to stand at the A.G.M. and do a good job, please do so but do it with **TOTAL COMMITMENT** and our Association will continue in good stead in the future.

VALE GEOFF KNOX

As many will know, Geoff Knox passed away a couple of months ago after a long and painful battle with cancer. Gunner Geoff Knox was loved by both 102 Battery members and those of the Battalion we supported, 1R.A.R. Over one hundred 1 R.A.R., H.Q. Battery and 102 Battery members and wives were at Geoff's funeral. Gunner Knox himself would have been proud of the turn out.

Two weeks after Geoff's passing, Grandson (Max Geoffrey - 10.5 pounds) was born. He looks just like Geoff!!!!

Members will be chuffed to know that a certain anonymous member has named his latest race horse "Gunner Knox" and has told me personally that part

of any prize money that "Knoxy" wins will be donated to our Association by him. I don't remember Geoff being a sprinter, so I hope this horse is a Melbourne Cup winner!!

AGM

Our A.G.M. will be held on Friday, 6 March at 2.00 P.M. sharp. It will be held at the Georges Hall Golf Club, 255 Henry Lawson Drive, Georges Hall N.S.W. 2195. This club is situated near Bankstown and over-night stayers could stay at the Travelodge Bankstown attached to the Bankstown Sports Club where we had a good time last year.

Some rule changes which were discussed at our A.G.M. at Bankstown last February are being proposed. The rule changes will be outlined in the Secretary's Notice of AGM/EGM Meeting in an insert to this Newsletter. The full agenda for the AGM and associated functions are also attached as an insert. Please read these and return the relevant papers to John Allen as soon as possible.

MEMBERSHIP

I am disappointed to report that 26 memberships have not been renewed as of 1 September (our annual renewal date).

We received one resignation over the last year. There is still time for outstanding membership fees to be paid prior to the March AGM/EGM. Please note that non-financial members cannot vote!

SPECIAL THANKS

In closing, I would like to acknowledge some special people who have made my role as President less arduous than it would have been had I been left

to my own devices!

Laurie (Big) Bird has done so much!!!! A great Treasurer, a fantastic organizer, great Q store Sgt and most of all a bloody good bloke. Laurie has been a great support and calming influence on me, especially for our inaugural Regimental reunion in February 2007 and other functions for the Coral commemorations. Both Laurie and Cherie are our true and great friends.

To Neil and Liz Mangels, our original Vice President and Secretary, what a good job they have done in getting the Association organized and also establishing the Coral Artillery listing that previously was non-existent in DoD.

John Allen, our Secretary, made the mistake of contacting me around 15 months ago prior to our 2008 A.G.M. As well as being a good Secretary, particularly on matters constitutional, he has turned our Newsletter into a very professional document and makes my President's Letter fit one page, not 3!!!

Thanks also to VP John Sullivan and Committee Members Kevin Scrimshaw, Graham Ryland, Rick Cranna, Grahame Collins, Dick Gray and Lachlan Donald. Also, a special thanks to Graham Hampton, our webmaster, and Dame Leonie Jones, documentary maker extraordinaire—both honorary members of the Association.

Finally, to all members, can I say thank you for the privilege of serving you as President. Subject to the results of proposed changes to our Rules, the next two years will probably be as exciting as the first three. I know that the best interests of 12 Field Vietnam veterans will remain a priority.

Rob (Cossie) Costello

Summer 2009

2009 EXTRAORDINARY & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & FUNCTIONS

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

The Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) and Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the 12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association will be held on Friday, 6 March 2009 at the Georges Hall Golf Club, 255 Henry Lawson Drive, Georges Hall NSW 2195.

The EGM will commence at 2.00pm sharp and will be followed after a short break by the AGM. The relevant papers for each meeting are attached herewith.

It is anticipated that the EGM/AGM will conclude at 3.30pm after which light refreshments and drinks will be served.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

The EGM will consider a number of amendments to the Rules of the Association. Each matter must be voted on individually and, to be resolved, each matter **must have not less than a 75% majority of all members present and entitled to vote (ie currently financial, Full, Life or**

Perpetual members). No proxies are permitted at EGMs.

The AGM agenda is limited to the receiving of various reports and the election of office bearers. Nominations for positions of office bearers must be made on the Nomination Forms attached herewith. Nominations should be sent to the Secretary at P O Box 312, BELROSE 2085 or jallen@datamasteranz.com

Proxies may be given by financial full, Perpetual and Life members to another financial member with a limit of five proxies held by that member. Unlimited proxies may also be held by the Chairperson of the meeting. The Secretary must be advised of all proxies held not less than 24 hours prior to the meeting. Proxy forms are attached hereunder.

FUNCTIONS

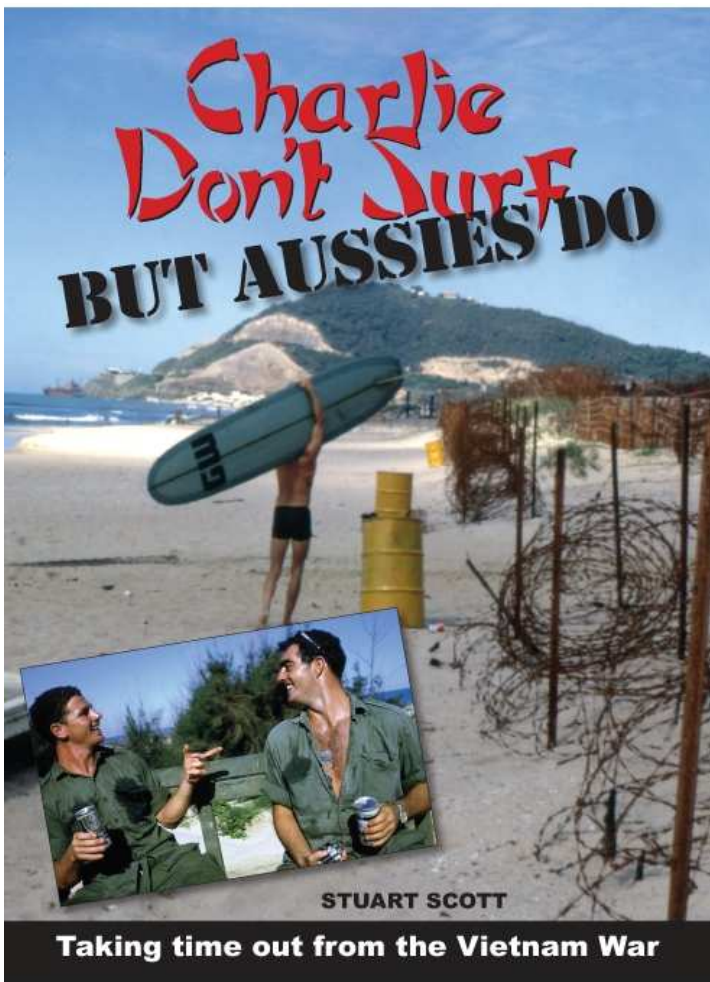
Light refreshments and drinks will be available after the Annual General Meeting at no cost.

Pre-dinner Drinks will be provided at no cost from 6.30pm Friday and for two hours. Beer and wine only!

AGM Dinner will commence at 7.00pm at Members' cost. Please advise any dietary issues. The first public screening of Leonie Jones' documentary "They'll come looking for you" (the words of a US Brigadier General, Big Red One on leaving the Australians to construct FSB Coral) will follow dinner (55 minutes).

Shell Drake Golf Trophy will be played on Friday, 6 March at 7.00am. Rules are Ambrose 4 ball best ball team event. Prizes for closest to pin and longest tee shot. Please organise your team and forward to the Secretary as soon as possible. Late registrations might not be accepted due to local demand.

Where are they now! Stuart McKeown and Alan Floyd



Right people, right place, right time!

The photo of these good looking, even sober, blokes which ended up on the cover of "Charlie Don't Surf, Aussies do" was taken on 11 June, 1968 at the Peter Badcoe Club, ALSG, Vung Tau.

Obviously Stuart McKeown (left) and Alan Floyd had arrived at the Peter Badcoe Club at Vung Tau with 102 Battery after Operation Toan Thang and FSB Coral.

There is no picture of how they looked some three days later!

Stuart says the wet areas in and around their shirt pockets are not sweat.

"This is because we were not able to take unopened cans from the Badcoe club. We had bought a couple of

"roadies" to drink elsewhere or take back on the truck to Nui Dat."

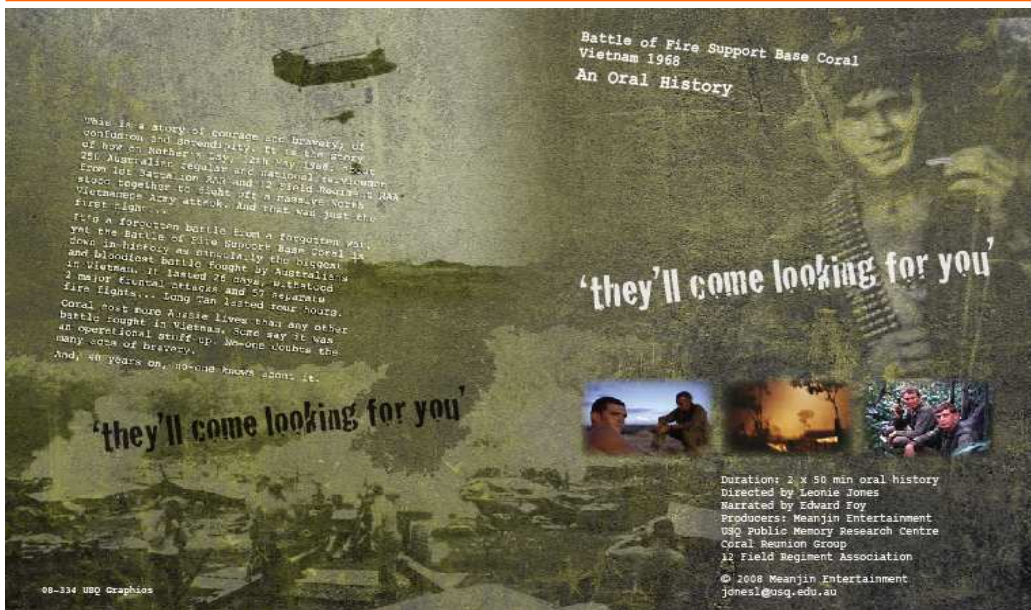
Stuart has seen the error of his youthful ways and now drinks a mellow red at Hillarys on the coast near Perth. Alan lives at Ouyen, a town located in the middle of nowhere according to the Melbourne Age (and they should know!).

"Charlie Don't Surf But Aussies Do"

available from www.charliedontsurf.com.au for \$30.00 postage paid Australia-wide. Let Stuart know you are a member of 12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association.

Send your WHERE ARE THEY NOW pics and a short story to: jallen@datamasteranz.com

THEY 'LL COME LOOKING FOR YOU



"It had more casualties than Long Tan, more Australians killed, more Australians wounded and the North Vietnamese suffered more casualties and that's not taking anything away from Long Tan, but Coral is just not well known; it's just disappeared off the face of the earth."

Lt Ian Ahearn, Gun Position Officer 12 Field Regiment (1968)

THE CREATION OF THE ORAL HISTORY OF CORAL BY LEONIE JONES

The Battle of Fire Support Base Coral was singularly the biggest and bloodiest battle fought by Australians in Vietnam and, although the Battle of Long Tan, fought as a patrolling action in a rubber plantation for 4 hours in 1966, is most identified with Australian action in Vietnam, the Battle of Fire Support Base Coral is known in the military community as the most significant attack on Australians. On 13th May 1968, a superior NVA/VC force attacked an ill-prepared Australian fire support base in Bien Hoa Province.

Over the next 26 days, the base withstood two major enemy assaults as well as continued sniper attacks. The Australians also actively engaged the enemy in 56 fierce jungle contacts to bring an end to the Communist objective of a decisive attack against Saigon as part of the "mini Tet" offensive.

It has been my privilege to research, record and tell the story of Fire Support Base Coral.

In late 2007 after having completed the documentary and oral history of the Battle of Milne Bay 1942, my cousin Barry, a "nasho" who served with 5 Battalion in 1969, suggested to me that the real story of Vietnam was not Long Tan, but the Battle of Fire Support Base Coral and suggested I talk to (2Lt) Garry Prendergast of 1RAR Coral Reunion Group. A little research on Coral had me asking the same question

most people do when they hear about Coral... "Why don't we know about this?"

Garry and I decided to commence an oral history and documentary project on Coral. Garry has certainly been the backbone of this project. The aim of the project is to promote, develop and preserve Australian social and military history by establishing an audio/visual record of 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR), and 12 Field Regiment Royal Australian Artillery veteran's experiences. Its purpose is to increase community awareness of the events, preserve a cross-section of unprejudiced knowledge of veteran's experiences and place on record these stories for public memory.

Soon after commencing the project, I received a long, heartfelt email from the President of the 12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association, Rob Costello, who told me the artillery story of Coral. Rob has since become my primary connection with 12 Field Regiment. His support and guidance has been unwavering and this project is richer for his involvement.

From an initial handful of interviews in Canberra, I have been fortunate to have interviewed 115 veterans of the Battle of

Fire Support Base Coral. It is the most complete oral history archive of the battle on record.

These interviews have been conducted all over Australia in lounge rooms, hotel rooms, TV studios, the Duntroon Historical Homestead, boardrooms, RSL Clubs and in Vietnam under rubber trees. This has been an enlightening and at times emotional experience for both me and the veterans. It has uncovered discrepancies with the official history of FSB Coral and it has also unearthed a treasure trove of artefacts such as original 8mm movie footage, photos, letters, dairies, maps and documents – not to mention boots, backpacks, pieces of enemy mortar and splintex. All this information provides an additional dimension to the veterans' oral accounts.

In order for this oral history to reach a wide national audience and become public, I have written and directed a 55 minute television documentary featuring over twenty veterans. The documentary is in final post-production stage and will be completed by February 2009. My approach to the television documentary is based firmly on the digger's own memories, and as such was not bound to a style dictated by official military history sources or traditional historical documentary approaches.

Rather, the oral histories imposed itself on the documentary style resulting in the narrative being driven by the digger's own memories.

All the material for the television documentary has been sourced directly from the oral history interviews. All the still photographs and film footage has been sourced from veterans, the Australian War Memorial archive and the Vietnamese Government.

While the documentary is in its final edit and must be finalised for broadcast, the oral history project continues to grow. I also intend to make available a longer oral history version incorporating more stories than 55 television minutes will allow.

Since commencing this project, the Battle of Fire Support Base Coral has become the focus of my PhD studies through Monash University.



VIETNAM VETERANS' FAMILY HEALTH STUDY

General Peter Cosgrove has joined the campaign to encourage Vietnam-era service families to register for a study to research the long-term effects of war service on families and children.

General Cosgrove, one of Australia's most respected soldiers and a Vietnam veteran, is supporting the Vietnam Veterans' Family Study which is currently recruiting participants.

Invitations to participate in the study were sent to randomly selected Vietnam-era army personnel – 10,000 each of those who served in Vietnam and those who did not.

General Cosgrove was one of those Vietnam veterans who was randomly selected to participate in the study, and I was pleased to hear that he,

his wife and his family have signed up.

A letter from General Cosgrove has been sent to all participants who have not yet responded to their original invitation, encouraging his former colleagues to register for the study.

General Cosgrove wrote, "I am asking for you and your family to participate in the program. Your contribution will help shape approaches and policies which will not only aid those in need from that era but many thousands of young men and women in uniform and their families in the future."

The preferred recruitment target is around 5000 each of the randomly selected Vietnam veterans and Vietnam-era service personnel, and 5000 of each group's children. This will allow the

study to provide many comparisons, including more rare medical conditions.

To date 2200 Vietnam veterans have responded. Only 1200 of those who didn't serve in Vietnam have responded.

If you have received a letter inviting you and your family's participation, please respond as soon as possible.

If you have not been invited to participate in the RANDOM sample, you may VOLUNTEER.

You can register by calling
1800 502 302

or

www.dva.gov.au/vvfv

or

mailing in a completed registration form.

Copies are available on-line; photocopies are acceptable.

Urgent

Urgent

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Urgent

New Members

Edmund Shea
Apollo Bay Victoria
A Bty, 12 Field Regt
edmundshea@bigpond.com

Jamie Ford
Ingham Qld
HQ Bty 12 Field Regt

WELCOME!

ARMY COMBAT BADGES - LATEST UPDATE

The latest round of applications for ACBs should be approved shortly.

The next group to receive their badges will be:

Austin, Soper, Galland, Twomey, Davenport, Alexander, Shea

Two other applications were rejected on the grounds that

those members had already made an application through another organisation.

If you have applied through another organisation and have NOT received your ACB, you should follow up through that organisation rather than making a fresh application through the 12 Field Regiment (Vietnam) Association.

If you have applied through the Regiment in the last four months and have NOT been listed here, please contact the Secretary immediately.

New applications are also welcome. Please ring 0407 672849 or jallen@datamasteranz.com and an application form will be sent to you.

104 BATTERY NEWSLETTER

104 Battery is looking forward to the next reunion to be held in Darwin on 22-28 April, 2010. If you are planning to attend, you will need to book very soon to enable the committee to schedule other activities. Below is the information relating to the types of accommodation:

FREESPIRIT RESORT DARWIN
901 STUART HIGHWAY
BERRIMAH N.T 0828

PO BOX 3149
PALMERSTON N.T. 0831
PH 0889350777

EMAIL

frd@freespiritresorts.com.au

PLEASE BOOK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO YOU DON'T MISS OUT

There are various types of accommodation available ranging from the top of the range self contained cabin starting at

\$165.00 per day on a 2 person basis down to tent sites at \$28.00 per day.

Anyone who has not received this information can be included in future updates by contacting Bob Eddington, P O Box 107, Denham. 6537
Phone 0899481995
Mobile 0428930722
Email bobeddington@wn.com.au

John Sullivan

FINREPINTSUM

Cash \$ 2,513.07

Invested \$17,850.17

Tot Cap \$26,027.14
(includes stock)

(Financial Report Intelligent Summary)