

## 4 RAR NATIONAL REUNION – SEPTEMBER 2021

### “GO, OR NO GO?”

#### General

As all will know by now, the 2021 national reunion is planned to be held In Canberra from 19 September to 22 September 2021. While the major event at the reunion is a Commemorative Service for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Nui Le, the reunion will also give everyone an opportunity to remember all the members of the battalion who paid the supreme sacrifice in a range of conflicts since the battalion was raised on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1964.

The reunion will also be an opportunity, maybe the last due to the advancing years of many of our members, to catch up with old comrades with whom you served in the battalion over the long period since 1964. To this end, the national reunion committee based in Queensland has been flat out with the detailed planning.

To say this has been challenging is a massive understatement. Not only has there been difficulty in planning an event remote from Queensland, but the challenge has been exacerbated because of the Covid 19 pandemic which, until early December 2020, prevented a ‘live’ reconnaissance of Canberra. Although, I must acknowledge that having Don Miers, ex B company 2<sup>nd</sup> tour, living in Canberra to do some of the legwork has been a godsend.

Added to the situation, despite the availability now of vaccines, is the spectre that an outbreak of Covid somewhere in Australia during the reunion, or prior to it, could see some lockdowns which may have serious financial or other implications for those attending, if they cannot return to home.

Conscious of this, the committee set a ‘drop dead date’. This is the last date at which point a decision must be made whether to proceed with the reunion or cancel it. 31 May 2021 is the last date at which time we can place orders for merchandise, confirm transport for events, confirm entertainment for the dinner, give notice to the host venue, the Ainslie Football Club, and guarantee that accommodation discounts will remain available.

The next reunion planning committee meeting on 21 May 2021 will inform and guide the 31 May decision.

#### Sitrep

Currently:

- Only 223 have registered for the reunion – we need a minimum of 300.
- Of the 223, only 115 have registered for the dinner - we need at least 175.
- Only 123 have registered for the ‘Meet and Greet’ – we planned for everyone to attend this event. (It is difficult to understand why people would come to the reunion and not attend the ‘Meet and Greet’!).

- Only 76 have indicated they need transport. We need 250 for the books to balance! (NB: It will be too late on the day to just climb on a bus if you have not booked.)
- Only 32 have placed an order for a photograph. This number does not make the arrangements necessary financially viable.
- Merchandise is not an issue, as we only order what is paid for. The issue here though is **31 May**. If not ordered as at this date, merchandise will not arrive in time for the reunion.
- Minimum order for the Port or Muscat Decanter is 50. Only 7 decanters have been ordered to date.

## Conclusion

31 May 2021 is fast approaching and, to put it bluntly, from the numbers indicating attendance and participation as outlined above, things don't look good from both the Covid situation and, consequently, financial viability to ensure that at the very least we break even.

The 'ball is in your court'! If we don't get the numbers, we will not be able to proceed with the reunion. The committee, therefore, will be guided by the response over the next four weeks.

We are aware that for many, the situation is extremely difficult, particularly for our New Zealand brothers, who would like to attend.

An obvious question will be, what will happen if the reunion is cancelled? While the committee has not discussed this in detail, clearly there are some events which will proceed with or without the reunion. These are the Commemorative Service on 20 September organized and funded by DVA and the Last Post Ceremonies at the Australian War Memorial on 18 and 21 September respectively. None of these events has direct funding implications for the reunion planning committee. But the detail for this contingency is yet to be determined, other than the fact that members will be able to attend under their own arrangements.

Be assured, however, a full refund, less unavoidable administrative expenses already incurred, will be made. Such expenses will be taken from the reunion registration fees which were notified as non-refundable.

We will be in touch again with everyone after 31 May. In the meantime, if anyone has any questions, and or suggestions, these should be directed to our Association Secretary, Ms Wendy McLean.

Greg Shannon  
Vice-president  
Reunion Planning Committee