

## **9 Squadron 2015 Reunion, May 15, 16 and 17, Auckland New Zealand.**

Planning is underway with the prime meeting place being the Mercure Hotel in Auckland. This will be the place for our registration and Friday night meet and greet as well as the pickup location for transport to the other events.

Room costs for the Mercure are around \$120.00 per night if you get in early!

### **EVENTS:**

**Friday night:** Registration/ Meet and greet at the Mercure. Floor level to be advised!

**Saturday Afternoon:** Commemorative Service at the War Memorial Museum (Time to be advised!) This event should not be missed for we are hopeful of providing a most moving and wonderful surprise during the course of the service. This is still in the planning/ negotiation stage!

**Saturday Evening:** Formal dinner at the War Memorial Museum. An absolutely wonderful location with views over Auckland and the bay.

This venue has been provided free of charge by the Museum in recognition of the auspicious occasion of the celebration of cooperation and unity of the Australian and New Zealand Armed forces' not only in Vietnam but all theatres of war. This venue has the not insignificant fee of around \$15,000 for venue hire. We are not able to thank the board members enough for their most significant support and donation to this event. It is most humbling!

### **Sunday morning:**

The proposed event for Sunday morning is a service/ commemoration with the NZ SAS at a place to be determined and afterwards morning tea.

This service would require additional funding primarily to cover the cost of the bus. I am guessing at present but believe that about \$30 pp will cover the cost of the bus and refreshments afterwards. If you believe that you would like to attend please drop me a line.

More details will be published once numbers, location and timing is known.

Buses will be available to take members from there to the Auckland War Memorial Museum for the afternoon service and again in the evening to transport members to and from the museum where the sit down dinner will be provided. Please note that while we will provide sufficient buses to transport our members and guests there will only be one trip each way. We will not be providing a shuttle service. If you miss the bus you will need to take a taxi. It is not too far!

The locale of Auckland is a wonderful place to start your tour of NZ. Do not miss however the great food spots along the old wharf area or trips on the ferries. Both the train station and the ferry service are within a couple of hundred metres from the hotel.

Your might also put some time aside for MOTAM. A museum of Transport and Technology that does hold some wonderful aircraft like a Lancaster and Sunderland. We may try to organise a tour. This will take nearly three hours from the hotel.

### **Transport from the airport!**

This can be a curly one and one you will need to think about in advance. There is no rail link to the city!

You can take a bus that from the airport that pulls up behind the Mercure Hotel at the train station. It costs around \$20NZ and leaves every 20 minutes. The bus leaves from the main Taxi

area but you will have to cross past the Taxi's to the next road to get them. Ask someone to direct you if unsure!

You can organise a shuttle pick up for around \$50 pp. This can be done from Australia online! BUT if you are thinking of the Taxi service be warned. This will cost you around \$100 give or take and has cost some travellers in the past around \$200 because of the ride they were taken on. **MAKE SURE YOU KNOW IN ADVANCE WHAT THEY WILL CHARGE!** Do not blindly get into a taxi and pay later! When I visited a few months ago the papers were full of reports of travellers that had been ripped off!

There is also a discount taxi service that is sometimes available and the cost at the time of writing was between \$40 and \$50. **FIND OUT FIRST!**

### **General Food costs.**

All hotels can be quite expensive for food but within easy walking distance of around 100 metres you can pick up a full breakfast for \$15. There is a food court in the Westfield Downtown shopping centre beside the hotel (the top end of this centre has a café with excellent tucker at a great price and is open early), more food courts in Albert Street about 300 metres walk from the hotel. These are Asian and of good quality and ample servings! A food serving will cost you around \$10.

As I have mentioned there is a large array of food providers along the old wharf area. The area provides a wonderful dining experience.

Food costs for the hotel are not included in our fees other than as announced. There will be some finger food Friday night, (main meal Friday night for you to organise as well as Saturday breakfast and lunch) and if we can arrange it at a reasonable cost a recovery breakfast at the hotel. This is still being negotiated!

### **General:**

Should you have further questions regarding Auckland please drop me a line!

### **Weather!**

Bring something warm and perhaps weather proof! If you cannot bring your umbrella then they can be purchased in the nearby shopping mall in the discount store up the escalator! (50 metres away)

### **Medals:**

Please bring and wear them for the commemoration ceremony on Saturday morning and again for Sunday morning. (refer above.)

Caps/ hats. 9 Sqn caps are available for sale before you travel if you wish. Drop me a line!