

THE EXHIBITOR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ARMY MUSEUM OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



AMOSA

April 2018

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 1

50th Anniversary—Coral and Balmoral

Inside this issue



This was a series of actions fought during the Vietnam War between the 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) and the North Vietnamese 7th Division and Viet Cong Main Force units, 40 kilometres (25 mi) north-east of Saigon. 12 May—1 June 1968. 1 ATF was redeployed on 12 May to obstruct the withdrawal of forces from the capital, with two battalions establishing a Fire Support Base named FSB Coral. Poor reconnaissance and inadequate operational planning led to delays and confusion during the fly-in, and the Australians had only partially completed FSB Coral by the evening. The North Vietnamese mounted a number of battalion-sized assaults on the night of 12/13 May, with a heavy bombardment from 03:30 signalling the start. Exploiting the disorganised defence to penetrate the Australian perimeter, the North Vietnamese 141st Regiment temporarily captured a forward gun position during close-quarters fighting, before being repulsed by superior firepower the following morning. Casualties were heavy on both sides but the Australians had won a convincing victory. The following day 1 RAR was deployed to defend FSB Coral.

Coral was again assaulted in the early hours of 16 May, coming under a heavy barrage followed by another regimental-sized attack. Again the base was penetrated but

after a six-hour battle the North Vietnamese were forced to withdraw after suffering heavy losses.

Expecting further fighting, the Australians were subsequently reinforced with Centurion Tanks and additional artillery.

The Australians moved against the communist base areas east, with 3 RAR redeploying to establish FSB Balmoral on 24 May, 4.5 kilometres (2.8 mi) to the north. Now supported by tanks, which had arrived

from Coral just hours before, the infantry at Balmoral were subjected to a two-battalion attack by the North Vietnamese 165th Regiment. Following a rocket and mortar barrage at 03:45 on 26 May, the attack fell primarily on D Company before being repelled with heavy casualties by the combined firepower of the tanks and infantry. The next day the Australians at Coral assaulted a number of bunkers that had been located just outside the base, with a troop of Centurions supported by infantry, destroying the bunkers and their occupants without loss to themselves.

The battle continued into June as the Australians patrolled their area of operations. However, with contacts decreasing, 1 ATF returned to Nui Dat on 6 June, being relieved by US and South Vietnamese forces.

The battle was the first time the Australians had clashed with regular North Vietnamese Army units operating in regimental strength in conventional warfare.

During 26 days of fighting the communists sustained heavy losses and were forced to postpone a further attack on Saigon, while 1 ATF also suffered significant casualties.

Casualties

26 Australians killed and 28 wounded with the communist army losing 267 soldiers.

Details of the exhibition launch are contained on Page 3 in this Newsletter.

Thanks to Peter Haran for his dedication in preparing the Display for the Museum.

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Dates 2018

- AMOSA History Lunch—16 May 2018
- 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Hamel, France on 4 July 2018.
- 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Amiens, France on 8 August 2018
- Centenary of Armistice—11 November 2018

From the Manager

After the traditional slow start to the year as we, and the community in general, recover from the Christmas and New Year slumber, the Museum is moving towards our usual, fast tempo of activities. New staff members, Captain David Munro and Sergeant Deborah Spicer, have settled well into life at the Museum and previous incumbent Danee Davis is coping well with the heavier workload that has come his way in the Curator (Army) position. It has been pleasing to see new volunteers join our ranks and I apologise to those of them that I have yet to sit down with and have a chat to – I will get around to it in due course. My thoughts are also with those volunteers who have had recent health concerns: hopefully you will soon be back at Keswick, enjoying your time at the Museum. Wayne Birch, after four years of fine service as the Assistant Manager in uniform has transformed seamlessly into a volunteer as the Curator (Foundation) and it is pleasing that both he and Grant Kuchel have remained as a part of the volunteer community after their military careers ended.



*Major Christopher Roe
Manager*

The History Lunch will be almost upon us at the time of reading this article and indeed the whole of History Month will be busy and challenging for us. There will be a number of events to conduct, tours to run and functions to cater for so I acknowledge, in advance, all those who so willingly assist in these matters, often completing mundane background work with no

complaints: thank you one and all. There is also a major push to bring Building 136 (Archives & Research Centre) to a compliant level of safety and, concurrently, to make the best possible use of it as a research and, potentially, display space.

The major focus for the galleries themselves is to attract visitors into the Museum itself and, to this end we keep working on our marketing, profile and advertising campaigns. This has featured a number of mail outs to civilian and military audiences and ongoing work on a new website. It might seem strange that, more than four years in to my tenure as Manager, I see such an obvious priority as a pressing one but we now have a facility even more worthy of patronage. Many modern, striking and experience related developments have taken place, and we now demonstrate enhanced levels of compliancy with the important parameters of safety and security in all aspects of Museum operations.

I appreciate the patience of our volunteers in assisting the uniformed element complete tasks given to us by our own Headquarters. We try to moderate the impact of these at the volunteer level and while compliance is usually non-negotiable, I can safely say that these policies have, as their intent, the best interests of the Museum and its workforce from, respectively, a security and safety perspective.

I hope that by the time of reading this we will have seen an increased number of visitors to the Museum and that they tell us, when we ask them, that they saw a Museum brochure, received a letter, or visited our website and were encouraged to attend as a consequence. Thank you.

Christopher Roe Manager

Harry's Corner



Hi there! I took the opportunity to show a few friends over our Museum over the Easter period. They were impressed with the new exhibits and some of the interactive displays. The new sniper hidden in the 10,000 steps of the Kokoda exhibit looks ominous!

It's still under construction but I am sure that Neil and Stephan will get it all working! The Beersheba diorama has had a 'face lift' with buttons to press and stories to be told about the progress of the battle. The Coral/Balmoral display is looking pretty cool with a lot of work being completed by Peter Haran and his helpers. It is co-located with the aeromedical display of the Iroquois



helicopter Casevac exhibit that we launched last year. Our Museum shop has opened for patrons to buy a book



or a piece of memorabilia. Sadly no chocolates yet but I understand Joy is moulding some 'Slouch Hat' chocolates for sale in the shop. Sadly the display appears to be "Hamster

Proof!

The Theatrette is working well with short film clips of battlefield and various conflicts. Tobruk was my final stop with my friends. The Bren Gun firing at an aerial target, the crackle of the radio, the soldier using a mine detector and the graphic mural behind the display make this a 'must see' in our Museum. Sadly I



couldn't offer my friends a meal as part of the tour. Maybe next time? Now to prepare for the History Week luncheon and a wonderful lunch prepared by Trudy and Dave! See you all on the 16th!

Exhibition Opening—Coral/Balmoral 9th May ...

50TH ANNIVERSARY BATTLE OF FIRE SUPPORT BASES CORAL & BALMORAL MAY 1968



The Army Museum of South Australia has completed a major exhibition commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral in South Vietnam in May 1968. You are invited to attend the opening of the exhibition and hear from two veterans who will give us an eye witness account of the battle. If you attend the opening, medals should be worn. The opening will be performed by Lieutenant Colonel David Brook RAA (Retd) who commanded a gun position at FSB Coral. Refreshments will be served after the opening.

WHEN
Wednesday 9th May 2018
10am—11am

WHERE
Vietnam Gallery
Army Museum
Keswick Barracks
Anzac Highway Keswick

RSVP
If you intend attending!
amosafunctions@gmail.com
Or mobile 0438 875 900
before 1 May 2018

VISITS
If you are unable to attend the opening, please visit the Museum during our normal opening hours of
Mondays 11.00am to 2.00pm
Wednesdays 11.00am to 2.00pm
Sundays 12.00noon to 4.00pm



The Army Museum Of South Australia has completed a major new exhibition commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral in South Vietnam in May 1968. The exhibit will be officially opened on Wednesday, May 9.

A significant number of invited veterans from the action will be present on the day – two of them will give short accounts of the battles, which occurred from May 12 to June 1. All members of AMOSA are invited to the event, which will begin at 10am and conclude about 11am with refreshments. Medals should be worn. The opening will be reasonably low-key in recognition of the Official service to be held at Torrens Parade Ground on Saturday, May 12 – the actual day the battles began.

Any AMOSA members who know of any veterans who were part of the Coral/Balmoral battles in 1968 should advise them they are more than welcome to come along on May 9.

50th Anniversary Of The Battle of Fire Support Bases Coral/ Balmoral May 1968

On Wednesday, May 9 10am-11am

Peter Haran

Dikko



Conservation ...



The Conservation Restoration volunteers have been very active this year, supporting the museum in many and various ways, with a wide variety of their personal skills. Our thanks go to these

volunteers for their participation to achieve the high quality results which have been reflected in the comments given by their peers and visitors to the Museum. Our restoration is continuous and with the acquisition of the Studebaker truck we have more challenges to conserve this vehicle to a standard ready for preparing it for display as an outside exhibit.

Restoration has started on the 18lb Limber as one of our next major projects. With the completion of the 4.5" Limber now on display, we are in the process of restoring

the wooden wheels for it, (under the supervision of our resident Wheel Wright) see attached photo's of the metal tyre being cut and welded to retighten the



spokes to original tension. Well done to our volunteers who are continuing to expand their skills in developing new skills. *Graham Janz*

AMOSA's NEW ACQUISITION.....

On Monday 4th September 2017 AMOSA took delivery of one of its recent, and larger acquisitions, courtesy of excellent service provided by Shipp Bros Towing. The item is correctly described as a 'Truck 2 ½ ton GS (6x6), Studebaker'; a photo of one such truck is shown below (ours does not look quite so pristine, but we are working on it!).



Studebaker US-6 2 1/2 Ton 6x6 Cargo Truck (G-630) Closed cab.

(Note the ¼ window, partly open & 90 deg bend (Note, no ¼ window & more rounded mud-guard) at the rear of the mud-



CCKW Fuel Truck, 750 gallons, 2 1/2 ton 6x6. 1941 photo

An earlier, and very similar looking vehicle was known as the GMC CCKW (nicknamed 'The Jimmy'), and, while many of the GMC's were fitted with

a canvas roof on the driver's cabin, many were also fitted with a normal steel roof. Both the GMC and Studebaker trucks were fitted with 'outward-opening front windscreens'; these came in very handy in hot weather, or when driving at night without lights, in very dusty conditions (opening the windscreen sometimes helped to see where you were going!). Some members may be unfamiliar with the military title of the vehicle mentioned above, so a brief layman's explanation is:

'2 ½ ton' refers to the official payload which this type of vehicle was capable of transporting over almost all types of terrain. The 2 ½ ton description gave rise, particularly in the American forces, to the nick-name 'deuce and a half';

'GS' refers to 'General Service', in other words the type of vehicle was used widely for all types of transport tasks, over all types of terrain, during field operations.

'(6x6)' describes the number of sets of wheels, AND the sets of driving wheels, similar to the very common description used today, ie. 4 x 4 vehicles. The rear wheels are best described as 'dual tandem wheels', with the wheels on only one rear axle driving during normal operation, but when '6-wheel drive' or 'low range' is selected, the wheels on the other rear axle, AND the front axle receive power through the transfer case and ALL road wheels drive the vehicle. This arrangement enabled a good driver to successfully negotiate almost any terrain, even when loaded or towing heavy loads.

The Studebaker was first manufactured in 1941, and was used widely by American forces when they entered WW2, and then later in the Korean war. It was later adopted by the Australian Army in (roughly) the late 1950's, replacing the well-known 'Blitz trucks' of WW2 fame, and in turn being replaced in the late 1960's or early 1970's by the 4-wheeled truck built in Australia by the International Harvester Corporation, and known widely as the 'Mark 3'. The service provided by the latter was soon bolstered by the introduction of the 6-wheeled 'Mark 5', both of which were absolute 'work horses' for the Army during Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Studebaker designed and built this 6 x 6 truck, and between 1941 - 1945 produced almost 200,000 vehicles,

while the Reo Corporation produced an additional 22,000 under the same contract; you could only tell the difference by reading the nomenclature plate on the dashboard. In its day it was the main vehicle issued to units for field operations. It's role including:

- Transport of all types of cargo;
- Transport of troops within the combat zone;
- Transport of munitions, particularly to, and by artillery units;
- Towing of field guns (including the gun detachment and their kit, gun stores, and front-line ammunition - the gun issued to artillery field regiments at the time was the 25-pdr gun, the weight of which was almost 2 tons;
- Fuel / water tankers;
- RAEME workshop vehicles; and
- On rare occasions, when modified, as a prime mover for a semi-trailer.

The Studebaker was fitted with a petrol-powered 6-cylinder side valve motor, driving through a 5-speed crash gearbox - being of American manufacture, it was naturally



The photo is of a 'stack' of GMC trucks, clearly showing the more 'rounded' rear edge of the front mudguards - when there is a will there's a way!

left-hand drive. Some vehicles were fitted with a self-recovery winch behind the front bumper bar.

When the Studebaker trucks were 'pensioned off' by the Australian Army, many were converted for use as 'logging trucks', or as a platform for drilling rigs, because they were



The photo directly above is of a line-up of Studebaker trucks 'in their day'; the 3rd veh from the right is fitted with a self recovery winch, identifiable by the cut-away section in the middle of the front bumper bar.

sturdy vehicles capable of carrying loads well in excess of the official 2 ½ tons, and operating reliably in rugged terrain. Sadly, after leaving the Army, the one which we now possess was converted to right-hand drive, and the driving cabin and bonnet require some 'conservation'!

Having joined the (then) CMF, as a recruit Gunner in 13th Field Regiment in 1962, I completed my first Army driving course on Studebaker trucks in July 1963; the licence code was 'K1', and all Artillery drivers completed the extra training in 'gun-towing' so were awarded a K1 (GT) licence. As we were always short of drivers, even in later years as a sergeant and an officer I was still driving the Studebaker, Mark 3, or Mark 5 trucks, particularly on the longer trips from Keswick to Cultana and return; it was always great fun, and I'm grateful to the Army for giving me such good driving experience!

Geoff Laurie

From the Medal Room

Sergeant Alfred Willis White DCM, MM



Alfred joined the 12th Battalion, as part of the 11th Reinforcement contingent. He enlisted on 10th August 1915 in Adelaide and embarked on the HMAT A24 *Benalla* on 27th October 1915. He was wounded on 9th September 2016 (suffering shell shock) after transferring to the 50th Battalion. He was wounded again on 26th August 1917 (gunshot left leg) and then again on 10th August 1918

(gassed in the field), Remarkably he survived and returned to Australia on 1st April 1919 on HMAT *Shropshire*. His citation for the Military Medal (George V) described actions for conspicuous gallantry on the night of 24/25th April 1918 during the counter-attack in the vicinity of Villers Brettoneux. On 15th April 2018, four of the officers in his company had been evacuated and he took charge of the unit, handling it

with skill and coolness throughout. He was also awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for the example he set in command of the company under the harassing fire of artillery and machine-guns. During World War II he enlisted in the RAAF on 11th June 1940 and discharged 14th October 1941 at the rank of Sergeant. He reenlisted in the Army on 16th October 1941 and discharged 10th June 1942 at the rank of Lieutenant. His medals are displayed in the AMOSA Medals Room.

Keven Draper



The Medals Room

Rusty Iron from Grandad's Shed

A serving member based at Keswick brought in a sword to AMOSA's Edged Weapons Section. A lengthy clean with a steel wire wheel on a bench grinder took off the worst of the red flaked rust. This allowed the sword to be identified as a British Wilkinson product about 120 years old. Terry Izatt got out his trusty smartphone and found from the Internet that it was an 1897 British Infantry Officer Sword (still the official issue of the British Army). Barry Leon and the owner agreed that it could be brought back to a reasonable condition and a suitable donation made to AMOSA if edged weapons spent some time and expertise on it.



The first damage to be repaired was various bends in the blade. A very nervous owner winced as serious force was applied by hammer and vice to the blade. While not completely straight, a great improvement resulted. The next major task was to remove the remains of the hilt. The metal parts were rusted solid and the wooden grip and sharkskin cover were missing. With assistance from Conservation and

Restoration's Graham Jenz and Paul Fribbins, Barry and Terry's expertise and judicious use of heat, lubricants and lots of force, the guard, back strap, pommel and locking nut were removed from the tang without damage. Now for the heavy work! Application

of wet and dry sandpapers from 80 (to remove the worst of the discolouration and pitting) to 1200 grit (to take off the scars of the rougher abrasives) and most grits in between disclosed fine etching on the blade and some numbers on blade and guard. Micromesh of even finer grits brought up some shine to the steel. The next stage was polishing with Barry using Tripoli (rotten stone) first on its polishing wheel followed by jewellers rouge (iron oxide) on its dedicated buffing wheel. Now the blade shone! My turn on the rotary polisher to duplicate Barry's work on the guard. On with the safety equipment (the PPE in this case a helmet with face mask) and I advanced on the machine. Stop, Halt from Barry and Terry "take off your AMOSA lanyard, and no loose clothing near rotary equipment!" No need to say more. Safety first. I will from now on keep the lanyard in a pocket, The final polishing brought out the Royal Cypher of George V (reigned 1910 - 1936) on the guard beautifully. Barry now reassembled the sword with the pommel getting a final polishing to its original condition. A coat of beeswax to protect from rust should last when not ruined by fingerprint acid. All in all it turned out to look a fine piece.

Michael Cleary



75 Years of Army Catering Corps



"Come and Get it "

It was Napoleon Bonaparte who famously said that an army marches on its stomach. There are many recipes created for his battles which pay testimony that he at least, liked to dine well. Alas, the average soldier was not so well looked after. Sir Cedric Stanton Hicks, a New Zealander and a Professor of Human Physiology and Pharmacology at the University of Adelaide; was concerned that the inadequate and wasteful way soldiers were fed which meant that they were not fit for war. Hicks waged his battle with a reluctant military establishment and his proposal was accepted on 12 March 1943 and the Australian Army Catering Corps was formed. Thanks to the work of Sir Cedric, rations were calculated on a nutritional basis rather than a monetary one. He also saw the need for durable combat rations protected from deterioration and infestation in tropical war zones. It was noted that cooks were often selected on a punishment basis and supervised by inexperienced and disinterested junior officers. Inadequate cooking equipment also contributed to wasted food. Hicks championed the use of the Wiles steam cooker to produce quicker and more effective cooking of vegetables and conservation of food value with the bonus of reduced fuel usage. The Catering Corps was 5 years old when Dave was born. He enlisted in 1970 as a cook with a view to employment in civilian life. During his three years in the Regular Army he



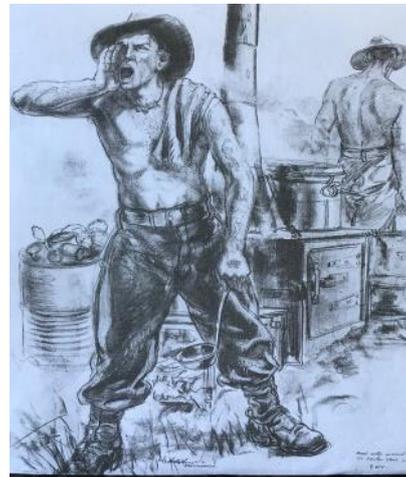
Dave Duncan

worked at Keswick Barracks in both the Other Ranks Mess and the Sergeant's Mess. He later joined the Army Reserve as a truck driver.



Trudy Babinskas

Trudy Babinskas joined the Army Reserve as a cook in 1981 whilst a police officer. Her Army cooking has been primarily in field situations with 3 Field Ambulance, Transport and Recruiting. She is a committed "cookaholic" and is determined to improve the dining experience for visitors to AMOSA. CAPT David Munro has recently transferred to the museum and has admitted to a time as a cook with RAAF. We look forward to his input for "fine dining" as only the RAAF can. **Trudy Babinskas**



QR Coding?



As you wander around the Museum, you may not notice a small badge or QR code on some of the display items. "What are QR Codes?" I hear you say. They are a barcode type system developed originally for parts in the Japanese car industry. On your phone or tablet, you can download a free application to read a QR code. By pointing the camera in your phone at the code, you

will be able to watch and listen to an audio video sequence which will give you a brief description of the display item and perhaps some history about its use. The use of QR codes will allow patrons to watch videos and hear stories using their own phone or tablet. Thanks Sue Urban for introducing this innovative software to our Museum to enhance the listening and viewing options across the displays. We intend expanding the number of codes on other items throughout 2018. **Nick Williams**

What's Happening

Neil Wilson, Stephan Landherr and others are busy with innovative interactive exhibits like the Vickers Machine Gun and the sniper in the Kokoda display. We plan to develop an AV sequence on the wall behind the trench system over Flanders Fields. We are also considering a dogfight or an artillery bombardment to add an element of realism into the trench display.

We have recently taken delivery of a Landrover which has been refitted with a 106mm Recoilless Rifle as used by the Anti-Armoured Platoon in an Infantry Battalion.

Soldiers from 3 RAR loading a HEAT round into a M40A1 106mm RCL mounted on a Landrover.



Museums Overseas

I recently had the opportunity to visit museums in Estonia, Finland, Egypt and Qatar. We started our journey with a visit to Luxor on the banks of the Nile in Egypt.



The Temple in Luxor has a world heritage listing with preserved hieroglyphics on the walls of the Temple. Constructed in 1400 BCE (Before Common Era!)

In Estonia we visited a range of museums in the capital Tallinn. The Television Tower gave a panoramic view of the city.



A touch screen monitor provided a link between the panoramic view and the buildings viewed across Tallinn from the Tower. The Tower stands 314 metres above the surrounding coastline.

We visited the Military Museum in Tallinn.



The snow and ice provided an interesting backdrop to the outside weapons exhibits reflecting Russian and German occupation in past times.

Many of the exhibits appeared a little old and in need of refreshment.



This diorama was similar to parts of our WWI display. It exhibits the same attention to detail but lacks the AV component of fire control orders or a 'firing' weapon system. Note the identification of a partisan army in conflict over German occupation

We moved on to a new multi- million dollar Museum featuring a submarine, Russian tank and a seaplane.



Seaplane Harbour Museum Tallinn



A small theatre was a feature in the Tallinn City Museum. A versatile space for small groups, functions and AV presentations. This is similar to our Museum and the development of a theatre on the Western side of the Galleries.

All museums visited had a small shop near the entrance to the exhibits. They are a popular place to end the tour and purchase a memento of a visit or a gift for family members who may be accompanying their grand parents.



Our next stop was Rovaniemi in Northern Finland to see the Northern Lights. The closest we came was an impressive photographic exhibition in their local museum.

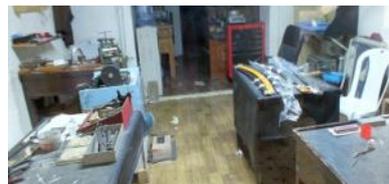
Our museum has some wonderful paintings and backdrops to our displays that add to the quality of the exhibits.. A photo of the Northern Lights was on display.



We were off to Doha in Qatar on our homeward journey. A warm increase in daily temperature from -24C to + 23C.



The benefit of an outside display is emphasized to draw patrons to visit an exhibit or Museum. An 'Antiquities Shop, in the Souk, Doha, Qatar.



In the Souk I found this small shop repairing and restoring swords and bayonets. Reminded me of the 'Leon's Lair' at Keswick.

After visiting fifteen museums while overseas I came to the conclusion that ours already has many of the qualities that are of particular note in them. This is a great tribute to our volunteer and uniformed personnel who work hard to continually improve and update our Museum. Well done! **Nick Williams**

Our History Festival Lunch



ARMY MUSEUM HISTORY FESTIVAL LUNCH

**WARS ... HARDER TO END
THAN TO START 1945-1975-2015**



WHEN

**May 16th, 2018
12 noon - 2.00 pm**

WHERE

**Building 34A Keswick Barracks
Anzac Highway Keswick**

FEATURING • 2 course meal, drinks purchased from the bar, raffle prizes, 3 prominent speakers on their experiences of war and their return to Australia.

Lunch will be followed by a discussion on the topic of the end of a war which is the focus for this final year of 'Centenary of ANZAC'. Tour of the Museum after 2.00pm. Park on the parade ground and you will be directed to the lunch venue.



Name:
Amount paid: \$ Member Non member
No of persons coming in your payment:
Vegetarian/Gluten free meals? Y/N Number required ...
I would like to be seated with:
My contact mobile/phone no is:
Email:

HISTORY FESTIVAL EVENT

ADVANCE TICKETS

**\$25 General
\$20 AMOSA Volunteers**

Limited spaces!

**Book early to ensure we
have a reservation for you!**

**Email your details to:
amosalunch@gmail.com**

BOOKINGS

**By EFT Account Name:
AMOSA Foundation
BSB No 803 205
Acc No 205 150 18**

**By CHEQUE
AMOSA Foundation
Keswick Barracks
Anzac Highway
Keswick SA 5035**

SEATING

**Please let us know who
you would like to be
seated with at the meal
table.**

MEALS

**Please let us know your
dietary requirements well
beforehand.**