

## **RABAU HOTEL FRANGIPANI FESTIVAL TOUR 2017**

Day One Monday 11 Aug

### **“WARWAGAI – WELCOME”**

Depart Australia to Tokua Airport-Rabaul via Port Moresby. Upon arrival in Rabaul you will be met by Susie McGrade and taken to the Rabaul Hotel – the oldest hotel in the New Guinea Islands Region and on famous Mango Avenue, the heart of Rabaul. This will be our base for the duration of the trip.



Mango Avenue, together with the huge mango trees which lined it, were completely bombed to rubble during WWII; rebuilt by a thriving community until almost destroyed during the twin volcanic eruptions of 1994. One of the oldest hotels in Papua New Guinea, the Rabaul Hotel has hosted many celebrities including HRH Prince Andrew, and witnessed some amazing periods of history.

After getting settled in our rooms we will indulge in *Kulau* – young coconuts holding fresh coconut water, and other cocktails, as we attend the official **Ki'bung - Welcome to Rabaul**, sponsored by Rabaul Hotel Proprietor Miss Susie, and the McGrade Family.

Day Two TUES 12 Aug                    **“RABAU RECONNAISSANCE”**

After a traditional hearty Rabaul breakfast including *Kulau* (coconut water), tropical fruits and PNG tea and coffee, get set for a full day tour of Rabaul, including the Lark Force and 2/22nd Memorial, Montevideo Maru Memorial, Rabaul Museum, Yamamoto's Bunker, Peace Memorial

***Background:*** *Lark Force, was an Australian combined force of about 1,750 including: 2/22Bn (54%), 1 Independent Company (16%), several artillery units (16%), New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (5%), and several other attached units. The civilians included families who worked in the various occupations supporting a plantation and trading economy in the then New Guinea islands.*

*There are many stories about Lark Force, Montevideo Maru, Tol and the desperate struggle that many Australian soldiers found themselves in as they tried to escape and evade the Imperial Japanese Army in the jungles of East New Britain.*

After lunch we will then travel to the North Side to visit the Submarine Base and trek up the hill to see the tunnels and Japanese Gun overlooking the entrance to Rabaul

We will return home in time for a swim and perhaps a few cocktails, before heading into the Phoenix Room for Dinner for a special Rabaul Chinese Banquet. Following dinner, some of us may wish to join those in discussion in the Conference Room about today's Tour and reflect on Rabaul's historical events.



### Day Three WED 13 Aug      **“LEST WE FORGET”**

Following breakfast, we will head out towards Kokopo, stopping at the WWII Barge Tunnels & Japanese underground Hospital before heading to the Kokopo War Museum. Lunch will follow at the famous Ralum Club, near the original home of Queen Emma, and then we head out to the beautiful and serene Bitapaka War Cemetery to pay our respects to all those who died in defence of their nation. Here we will place floral tributes at the Cenotaph and take time to reflect.

The Australian War Graves Cemetery at Bitapaka, contains graves and a row of honour panels displaying names honouring Australians and those from other Commonwealth countries killed in the New Guinea Islands. Bitapaka also holds the original memorial for the men of the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (ANMEF) killed near Kokopo in September 1914 when Australia occupied German New Guinea.

Fiji's Victoria Cross recipient Corporal Cpl Sefanaia Sukanaivalu is also buried here.

We head back to Rabaul pass Vunakanau Airstrip from where the Hudsons and Wirraways took off on that fateful January day in 1942. We follow the windy roads along the notorious Toma Ridge and stop for a photo opportunity at Coastwatchers/Malmaluan Lookout. We stop at the Cross Roads where Lark Force tried to make their escape. We then descend down the famous and winding Burma Road

We head back to the Rabaul Hotel for a swim and dinner in the Phoenix Restaurant.

After dinner we take in the day's events in the function room. Rabaul's diverse history may be discussed including the earlier loss of Australia's submarine AE1 with all hands at the beginning of WW1 at the time of Australia's occupation of German New Guinea in September 1914.

### Day Four THURS 14 Aug      **“LOCAL DELIGHTS”**

Today we travel through what was once a very busy China Town and Malay Town and the old Rabaul Golf Course. We will visit the smoking Tavurvur (Matupit) volcano and natural bubbling hot springs; we may even boil a Megapode Egg! A local from Matupit village will tell the story of the Rabaul volcanos and recent eruptions and the impact of this force of nature on the community.

During the war the Japanese Imperial Army built baths here and frequented with the oppressed comfort women. We will then drive over the former Lakunai airport, now covered by metres of volcanic ash, and visit the last remains of a crashed Betty Bomber at Matupit Island. Some may wish to visit the site of the first Europeans, German Missionaries, to land on Matupit beach. After Matupit we will also visit the world-renowned Volcano Observatory on top of famous Tunnel Hill and the WWII site known as Frisbee Ridge where the anti aircraft guns were located.



On the way back to the Hotel we stop at the Rabaul Bung (Market) to breath in the culture and look at the local produce. Guests may even wish to try the local obsession – “Buai” Beetle Nut with lime and mustard. Guests may also wish to try the local ‘karamaps’, PNG takeaway food of banana, fish & greens wrapped in banana leaves.

Guests will return to the hotel for lunch and an afternoon siesta.

After a siesta guests will have the option of exploring the local area on foot, accompanied by local guide or taking a small bus ride to the Rabaul shops or perhaps visit St Martin’s Elementary School to hand out books, pens, footballs etc. anything you may wish to bring from Australia as a good will gesture- (optional?)

Or visit the wonderful ladies of the Rabaul Town Clinic if you have any left over Panadol, etc to donate to the Clinic they would be so grateful

At approx. 17hours we will make our way down to the New Guinea Club where the rest of the afternoon will be spent sipping on local (& imported) refreshments including the Famous South Pacific Lager at the New Guinea Club with members of the Rabaul Historical who will regale in the Story of Rabaul ! Tropical Dress.

A light Supper will be served afterwards back at the Hotel.



#### Day Five Friday 15 Aug           **“FRANGIPANI FESTIVAL FESTIVITIES”**

Guests will rise early and make their way to the Rabaul water foreshore to witness the local Tolai (Rabaul indigenous people) Custom of “KINAVAI”. This is performed by the TUBUAN Society. This is a Tolai secret men’s society The dance and the ceremony is an ancient tradition and still very much a private event however for the Frangipani Festival it is being performed – keeping culture alive.

After the Kinavai, guests will return to the Hotel for Breakfast and then back to the foreshore at the Rabaul Yacht Club for the “McGrade Family 2 Stone Kanu Cup” followed by the Independence Day festivities.

Lunch will be served back at the Hotel followed by a much need rest.

At 1800 hours, Guests will be transported to the open field to see the BAINING FIRE DANCE. Another very special and traditional dance where men from the Baining perform a dance on the open flames, in fantastic wild and colourful costumes lead by snake handlers.

A late supper will be held back at the Hotel.

Day Six SATURDAY 16 August “FRANGIPANI FESTIVAL  
FLOAT PARADE”

This is a day of casual fun. After breakfast guests will make their way down outside the Rabaul Hotel, along Malaguna Road to witness the Annual Frangipani Float Parade.



The Annual Frangipani Festival is a time for the locals to reflect and commemorate the 1937 and the 1994 Volcanic Eruptions. Rabaul was almost destroyed by these mammoth events but the people of Rabaul persist and continue to live in the shadows of these mountains despite the mighty forces of nature!

Once the Float Parade has passed the Judges Table twice, guests will then be transferred down to the judging area in Rabaul Town for the rest of the Frangipani Festival Festivities.

This will be the last day of our Tour and we hope you witness the best of Rabaul !

Lunch and Dinner will be served at a time of the Guests Choosing.

Day Seven SUNDAY 17<sup>th</sup> August “IOURO”

Luggage should be left outside the room ready for collection prior to an early Breakfast in the Restaurant (or if you prefer sandwiches to take with you?) before heading to the Airport for departure.

**“IOURO (Goodbye) AND Boina Tuna (Thank you)!**

