

## AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

### John William Horder

**9 February 1947 – 28 December 2022**

**By Peter Bruce, OAM**

John was a Victorian, born in Ringwood on 9 February 1947. At the age of 19, John enlisted in the Australian Regular Army. After recruit training at First Recruit Training Battalion (1RTB) in July/August 1966 he was allocated to Artillery. He completed his initial Gun Number training at the School of Artillery, North Head in September/October of that year and was posted to 104<sup>th</sup> Field Battery, part of 12<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment based at Holsworthy in western Sydney.

In early 1967. 4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment was warned out for deployment South Vietnam and the Regiment need more manpower. John was one of many posted to 4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, then barracked in Brisbane, and in training for their operational deployment. John deployed to Vietnam with 108<sup>th</sup> Field Battery on 14 June 1967. In Vietnam, John was employed as a Gun Number and an Artillery Signaller with the Battery. He returned to Australia on 28 May 1968. John gained his first promotion to Lance Bombardier in April before his return to Australia.

On his return to Australia, John was posted to 111<sup>th</sup> Division Air Defence Battery (Light) at Woodside in South Australia. This Battery had been deployed to Butterworth in Malaya and had returned to their new unit location at Woodside and was equipped with 40mm Bofors Guns. John joined the Battery and trained as a Signaller and Operator Command Post Air Defence. In August of 1968 John was promoted to Bombardier and remained at Woodside until 1975. In January 1971 he was promoted to Sergeant and made substantive in September 1971. In October 1976 John was posting to the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Recruiting Unit in Adelaide where he remained until July 1978.

By 1978, 111<sup>th</sup> Air Defence Battery (light) were equipped with the Redeye Surface to Air Missile system and John was employed as a Detachment Commander with the system. In August 1978 John was promoted to Staff Sergeant within the Battery.

In 1980 the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) School had been established at Middle Head in Sydney and John was posted to the WRACC School on promotion to Warrant Officer Class Two as an instructor. He remained at the WRAAC School until January 1983 when he returned to a Battery Sergeant Major's (BSM) appointment at 16<sup>th</sup> Air Defence Regiment at Woodside. In January 1985 John returned to Sydney, this time to the School of Artillery at North Head as Sergeant Major Instructor on Air Defence Wing. After two years at the School of Artillery, John was posted to 6<sup>th</sup> Training Group in Tasmania. The following year, 1987 he was promoted to Warrant Officer Class One and appointed Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) of 6<sup>th</sup> Training Group.

On 1 January 1988, John returned to Woodside as the RSM of 16<sup>th</sup> Air Defence Regiment. John remained as RSM of the Regiment for three years. His Commanding Officer at the

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time was Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier) AG Warner, AM, LVO who said of John: "I was fortunate during my period in command of 16 AD Regt to have John Horder serving beside me as RSM. John was loyal, attuned to the working of the Regiment, supportive and always a source of sound advice. He maintained excellent networks in the local and veterans' communities and ran a very good and happy Sergeants Mess where his high standards were clearly evident. I considered him an excellent RSM and he richly

deserved the CGS Commendation he received at the end of our time together".

In December 1990 John moved back to the East Coast and took up the appointment of RSM of the School of Artillery at North Head. His final years in the Army saw him at Headquarters Training Command at Middle Head, Sydney in a number of administrative positions. He discharged from the Army in 1997.

In his later years, John was very involved and proud of his garden and his woodwork. His greatest delight however came from his Granddaughter Scarlet who became central to his life. John died on 28 December 2022 after several health issues. A funeral service was held for John and live streamed on 13 January 2023.

### **Acknowledgements**

- Brigadier AG Warner AM, LVO (Retd)
- Peter Hawula