

## **AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE**

### **1204015 Gunner Oswald (Ossie) Walker Yeatman**

**16 October 1954 – 30 March 2012**

Oswald Walker Yeatman was born on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 1954. He was the second child of Allan and Christobel Yeatman. Oswald was affectionately known to his family and friends as "Moon". To his Army mates he was "Ossie". He will always be remembered for his gentle, free-spirited, fun loving nature. He was the person you could depend on to lend a helping hand (be that of a mechanical nature or just a lift along the road). He was never one to let anyone down, because he was someone who was happy-go-lucky with a big soft heart. Oswald grew up surrounded by his loving parents, his older sister Karen, younger brothers Vernon and Peter, sister Selma, younger brothers Ben, Allan, Wilton and younger sisters Salome, Dawnetta and Melissa.

Whenever Oswald was in Townsville he was always around at his late grandmother Eva Geia's place and became her favourite boarder and visitor. He was a welcome visitor amongst her children and various other relations in Townsville and Palm Island. It was his home away from home.

Whenever Oswald wasn't home, he would be visiting his brothers and sisters, his cousins or his nieces place and be spending hours on end with them. Oswald was also a passionate Rugby League supporter especially the South Sydney Rabbitohs and the Yarrabah Seahawks team which his cousin and nephew played for.

He was a regular visitor at Sunday Church service. If he wasn't there he would be visiting his parents at the nursing home in Cairns accompanied by his niece Lucy and god-sister Devetta on a regular basis. There was never a dull moment when "Moon" was around. You could always sense something funny was about to happen or he would say or do something to make you laugh.

Oswald would fondly recall the days when he and his older sister Karen and younger brother Vernon spent their younger days at Oombunghi. He would yarn about how his childhood days were the best because of the love and attention that was shown to them by the Palmer family. He would always say to his younger brothers and sisters never go past the Palmer family because they were the ones who had helped our parents look after us.

He loved going to Oombunghi, where his Uncle Keith lived and whenever Uncle's Gana, Eddie, Ross, Phillip and Boogaroo were there, they would always have some fun together. There would be singing along around the camp fire at night, recording music sung mostly by Uncle Keith and everyone would join him singing, drunk or sober.

During Oswald's earlier years, he was given the opportunity to live with a doctor by the name of Doctor Thomas and his family in Townsville and attended Pimlico High School where he later made up his mind to stay in Townsville and enlist in the Army. Oswald completed his recruit training, Initial Employment Training (IET) as a gun number and later qualified as a driver. After consolidating his training, Oswald was eventually posted to 106 Field Battery in Singapore. There, he made friends for life. Oswald made his family very proud and relished the opportunity to travel overseas. When he came home on leave,

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he would bring home gifts for everyone and was often accompanied by a few of his Army mates who wanted to share in his big family gathering.

The time he spent in the Army was his most treasured memories. There was many a time when Oswald would talk fondly of old friends and what they did when they were away. He came home telling tales of the fascinating places he got to visit and the friendly people he had met. A real highlight of Oswald's life was attending a reunion with his Army mates in Alice Springs in 2000. In 2008 Oswald received his Australian Defence Medal which really made his family proud.

Everyone agreed that Oswald was the one who kept the peace when things started heating up with the boys. To the girls he was their loving big brother and a gentle giant with a kind heart. When Oswald left the Army, he worked at the old mill in Yarrabah and later, alongside his father Allan and brother Peter at the farm at Djenghi. In 1976 the family was relocated to live in Djenghi to help take care of the Communities fruit farming business.

After the farm became no longer viable, Oswald went to work as a truck driver for His Uncle Stanley and Auntie Bessie who ran a small business. He would drive their truck into Cairns to get supplies for their shop and was always ready to lend a hand. When his beloved uncle and auntie died, he decided to go and work on the railways at Hughenden where he also made lifelong friends. He stayed there for about four years before heading back home. All the family thought that he missed them but really he missed the taste of fresh seafood.

When Oswald returned home for good he applied to work in the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) gang driving the work trucks. This was the last of his employment. He was happy when he was out in the trucks with all his mates, most of whom were his school mates or close family.

Before the CDEP was shut down, Oswald was forced to give up work due to medical complications that stopped him from working full time. Oswald was diagnosed as a type 2 diabetic. He did his own treatment of dialysis at home. He was a regular visitor at all the diabetic and renal clinics accompanied by his nephews Alistair and Ben.

In his final days spent at home (Stockyard – Red Creek) he was accompanied by his younger sisters Salome and Dawnetta, niece Therse, nephew Darcy and grandchildren Alistair, Tayrahn and Taliana.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2012, Oswald was sadly taken from his beloved family and called home to be with our Lord and Saviour. Oswald is sadly missed and remembered by all who knew him. Rest in peace our beloved son, brother, uncle, nephew, grandson, grandfather, cousin and mate.

### **Acknowledgements:**

- Jim McFarlane in the UK for providing the initial information and contact with the family.
- Lucy Yeatman and family for providing such a wonderful summary of Oswald's life and a fitting send off to a wonderful man.