

AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

Kenneth James Adams

1933 - 2006

By Peter Bruce



Kenneth James Adams was a Queenslander. Born in Murgon, about 70 kilometres west of Gympie, on 27 March 1933, Ken completed his compulsory National Service from August to November 1953. After initial training at 11th National Service Training Battalion in Wacol, Ken was assigned as a rifleman with 47th Infantry Battalion. This Battalion was raised in Egypt and later became known as the 'Wide Bay Battalion'.

After his National Service obligation, Ken remained with the 47th Battalion in the Citizens Military Forces (CMF) until August 1958. After a break from the Army of just over five years, Ken enlisted in the Australian Regular Army on 13 April 1964. He was 31 years old at the time and certainly would have been one of the older recruits at the 1st Recruit Training Battalion where he completed his training in August 1964. Ken was allocated to Artillery and after his initial gun training, he was posted to

111th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery in December 1964.

111th Battery has been ordered to deploy to RAAF Base Butterworth in Malaysia as part of the Australian force during the Malaysian/Indonesian Confrontation. Ken joined the Battery at Butterworth as part of a reinforcement group to replace those members who had returned to Australia after their six-month posting. Ken was allotted Alpha Gun of A Troop under Sergeant Perry. The Battery was equipped with 40mm Bofors guns and was responsible for defence of the air base in the event of an air attack by Indonesian Forces.

In December 1965 Ken returned to Australia with a posting to the newly raised 110th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery located at Woodside in South Australia. With his previous experience at Butterworth, Ken was assured of place in the manning of 110th Battery when it replaced the 111th in Butterworth in June of 1966. This time, Ken's tenure, as with the rest of the Battery was to be a three-year posting.

Returning to Australia at the end of June 1969, Ken opted to stay in the warmer end of Australia and took a posting to 4th Field Regiment in Townsville. The Regiment had been warned out for duty in Vietnam and Ken deployed with the Regiment to Vietnam on 11

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March 1970. In Vietnam, Ken was posted as the Technical Sergeant of the main Quartermasters Store of 4th Field Regiment at Nui Dat. The store was responsible for servicing gun batteries and Headquarters Battery deployed around Phuoc Tuy Province. He returned to Townsville with the Regiment in March 1971 and stayed with the Regiment until November 1981. Ken then took a posting to 16th Field Battery in Tasmania as the Battery Quartermaster Sergeant (BQMS). This Battery had depots in both Hobart and Launceston. Ken remained with the Battery until a Non-Corps posting to 173rd General Support Squadron. This Squadron was then part of 1st Aviation Regiment based at Oakey in South Queensland.

Ken's final posting was as a Warrant Officer Class Two (WO2) with the District Support Unit Townsville. He remained there until discharge on 5 May 1986 after 22 years' service with the Regular Army including five years posted overseas. His Honours and Awards include: Australian Army Active Service Medal 1945-75 with Clasps Malaysia and Vietnam; General Service Medal 1962 with Clasp Malay Peninsula; Vietnam Medal; Australian Service Medal with First Clasp; National Medal; Australian Defence Medal; Anniversary of National Service 1951-1972 Medal; Vietnamese Campaign Medal and Returned from Active Service Badge. His grandson Patrick is now the custodian of Ken's service medals and he wears them with such pride every Anzac Day.

Ken's son David tells of the later part of Ken's life: *"He married Joyce (an English girl) who used to work at the RSL in Townsville. We really liked her, a softly spoken person. She was a little older than Ken and told us of her childhood memories of London being bombed during the blitz. They moved from Townsville to Bargara (north of Bundaberg). Joyce died about a year before Ken in 2005. She always looked after him hand and foot. She was a non-drinker....so what a combination!!! He was then put into a carers home. By then he was on oxygen as emphysema had taken a firm hold. He only weighed 39 kg on passing. Never could give up the ciggies - even then.*

We visited him many times in Bargara before he died. He loved talking to our 3 children who also thought the world of him and visited him also. He was a soldier through and through. I learnt a lot from him, particularly his disciplines, loyalty and of course, on occasions, his abhorrence to authority & the bulldust."

Ken died on 6 January 2006 and left a lasting impression on his family and many friends. Ken really enjoyed his Army life and enjoyed the company of old Army mates. His favourite saying with a drink in hand was, "For the Regiment".

Acknowledgements:

- Kens son David for his personal information about Ken.
- Simon Hearder, John Wilson, Eddie Bessey and Brian Swift for their recollections of Ken.