

AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

8257714 Sergeant Wayne Keith

(2 July 1957 – 1 January 2014)

By Warrant Officer Class Two Mick Dewar
First published in Cannonball, April 2014
Edited by Troy Keith

Sergeant Wayne Keith was born in Melbourne on 2nd July 1957, eldest son of five children to Mervyn and Eileen Keith. He was a well-liked character of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery who passed away on 1st January 2014 in Brisbane after a short battle with Brain Cancer.



Wayne enlisted on 21st July 1976 following in his Grandfather Thomas Currie's footsteps, serving in World War II with the 23rd Battalion AIF. His father, Mervyn Keith also participated in National Service. After completing his basic training Wayne was sent to the school of Artillery to commence his Initial Employment Training. He completed his Gun Course in December and was posted to 8th/12th Medium Regiment. Wayne was promoted to Lance Bombardier on 14th October 1982, to Bombardier on 2nd May 1983 and Sergeant on St Barbara's Day 1996.

Sergeant Keith is one of the few Gunners to have served with each of the Royal Regiments key capabilities. He was a gunner and signaller in the gun regiments of 8th/12th and the 1st Field, he served in 131st Divisional Locating Battery and the short lived RISTA Regiment, and 16th Air Land

Regiment as an Assistant Ground Control Liaison Officer.

Wayne was first posted into the Ground Liaison role with the 1st Ground Liaison Group in 2008. This was the job he found the most rewarding through his career as he could blend his two loves of the Army and aircraft together. He enjoyed meeting new people and could strike up a conversation with anyone who would care to listen.

Wayne also loved the jets, in particular the F-111 and their long range ground strike capability. Wayne discharged from the Army in 1979 as a Gunner, but after only four months elected to get back in. He deployed on a rotation to Rifle Company Butterworth, Malaysia in 1984 with Bravo Company 3rd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment. His Honours and Awards include the Australian Defence Medal and the Defence Force Service Medal with three clasps. He was also awarded an Australia Day Medallion in 2003. Wayne accrued 37 years of dedicated service with the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery. Wayne loved the Army, the opportunities it gave, the exercises and the chance to see the country. Most importantly he loved the Army for its companionship, the friendship of his mates, fellow soldiers, Air Men and Air Women.



In the latter half of his service, he made a lot of sacrifices to be able to remain in the Brisbane area to support his family, sacrifices that were greatly appreciated by his son's Troy and Aaron. Wayne was a family man first then a soldier for his country.

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The Funeral Service was conducted at the Albany Creek Cemetery, Brisbane on 8th January 2014. The principle mourner was Brigadier Gavan Reynolds, AM, the Commander 6th Brigade (CS and ISTAR) with Lieutenant Colonel Bernie White, Commanding Officer of the 16th Air Land Regiment and many former and current serving members of both the Army and Royal Australian Air Force. It was clear that Wayne had made an impression on so many lives and that he would be sorely missed.

Brigadier Reynolds in his eulogy said of Wayne: *"A professional soldier of 37 years of*



service within the Army and the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, Wayne's career was varied though predominantly centred on units located within the South East Queensland region. He made many sacrifices and declined numerous career opportunities during his lengthy service to ensure that his family was always a priority and he remained in close proximity to them. As a testament to his commitment, he would commonly claim 'family first', even the daily trip from Brisbane to RAAF Base Amberley did not sway his

devotion. His career highlight was his most recent appointment as a Ground Liaison Officer and working with the men and woman of 82 Wing, RAAF Amberley. Wayne is survived by his two sons Troy and Aaron."



Acknowledgements:

- Warrant Officer Class Two Mick Dewar.
- Troy Keith.
- Cannonball – The Journal of the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company.