

AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

Adam (Jock) McMillan

(22 March 1949 – 26 February 2006)

**Adapted By Peter Bruce, OAM
From a Eulogy given at his funeral by his son Adam.**

Jock's journey began when he was born in Edinburgh, in Scotland, in March, 1949. This was only four years after the end of the Second World War Jock's father Adam had served in the British Army and Army service continued to be part of the family story. Jock's parents, Adam and Alma, had four sons, and Jock was the eldest. After him came George, then Andrew and Gordon – good Scottish names! We have to admit that Mum's first born son was the apple of her eye; her blue eyed boy who could do no wrong.

Their mother Alma was always restless, and when the boys were young she decided that they should migrate and packed them all off to live in Canada. But that didn't work out, so she moved them back to Scotland. Then in 1962 she thought they should try Australia, so off they moved again. This must have worked, because even though she kept moving them about, at least she stayed in the one country!

One day, after their move to Sydney, Jock came home from school to find that his parents had moved during the day. Young Jock wasn't fazed; he simply sat on the fence until someone came for him! Jock had a very strong sense of responsibility towards his family. As the eldest, his rather eccentric mother really depended upon him and he felt this strong sense of responsibility for a very long time.

Jock left school very early and had a few unskilled jobs, and then at 18 he joined the Army. This was in 1967. It was soon after he joined up that he met his mate Laurie Owen, who was to stay his very close friend over these next nearly 40 years. They served in Vietnam with 12th Field Regiment together in 68-69, and created a close bond, not only between them, but with many other mates who served with them. The experience of serving in Vietnam was a huge turning point for Jock, one that was to shape the rest of his life.

After Vietnam, Jock served in Singapore with 108th Field Battery as part of the 28th ANZUK Brigade for 18 months and he was there when he celebrated his 21st birthday. It was in late 1971, when he was 22 that Jock met and married Sharon Woolley. The marriage of these two very young people only lasted a short time. Jock was discharged from the Army in 1973 and went off to West Australia to work in the mining town of Mt. Tom Price. But he returned to Victoria and bought his first truck in 1974. In '76, Jock met and married Jocelyn Sly and a couple of years later they moved to Geelong. His mates Laurie and Leo were here and by then he'd become very involved in the Geelong Branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association.

The move to Geelong was a good decision, Jess then Adam was born and their family was complete. Jock sub-contracted his truck to Geelong Fabrication and later worked as a rigger for Leyton Construction. He was working at the cement works when they closed down and he moved on to installation work for Telstra.

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There was also an additional source of income when Jock and Laurie, together with Jocelyn and May, had a commercial cleaning business for six years, as well as their regular jobs. It was when Jess and Adam were young that Jock and Jocelyn bought a holiday shack at Lang Lang. The McMillan family had many happy summers at Lang Lang. There was plenty of time for fishing and a great community of friends. Jock loved it all.

Another of his passions was the Carlton Football Club. Jock was a member of Carlton for a long time and he was faithful to the Blues through thick and thin. And there have been quite a few thin years in recent times!

Jock was very generous towards his mates if ever they needed him. It only took a phone call from a mate, asking for help and Jock would drop everything and take off to do what he could. Mind you, often his family were left to finish cutting the lawn, or to complete whatever it was that Jock had been doing when he took off!

We have to say that Jock could be stubborn and forthright in his views, which often got him into a bit of strife. But that same pig-headedness came to the fore with his passion about the rights of the Vietnam Vets. He was a strong union man, but when it came to the rights of the Vets to pensions and welfare, he didn't care which side of politics was in power, he lobbied whoever he could to present the case for the Vets.

Jock really enjoyed the times he spoke to Year 10 school students, as part of the Australian History curriculum. He was able to give the kids a great, first-hand account of the experience of himself and many of his fellow Australians, who were sent to fight in Vietnam. Jock was a very social man and anywhere he went he would manage to find a mate to share a beer, which we know was very important to him. Jock was a loveable, stubborn rascal and at the same time, a loyal friend.

After Jock and Jocelyn separated nine years ago, Jock moved around a lot. Perhaps there was a lot of his mother Alma's gypsy-like genes in him? He eventually settled into a place at Hamlyn Heights. Over the last five years, Jock's health has been steadily going downhill. Noel Brunt and Mick Maddern have been really good mates who have looked out for their friend Jock and kept an eye on him. They have been wonderful with their help and support and all of Jock's family and friends have thanked both, Mick and Noel, for looking after him so well.

Jock's ill health finally overtook him and he died peacefully at home on Sunday the 26th of February. Jocelyn, Jess and Adam sincerely thank Laurie and May for their friendship and support over the last 40 years and right up until the present day.

You will all miss this man who has been such an important part of your lives. You will miss his larrikin ways, his immense loyalty to you all and his generosity of spirit. Jock's service was completed with the words of a lovely Native American Blessing:

A Native American Blessing.

*Listen to the wind---for it talks. Listen to the silence---for it speaks.
Listen with your heart and you will learn and understand.*

Acknowledgements:

- J F (Frank) Corcoran, JP F Fin, Editor of 104 Battery Germ Journal.
- Laurie Owens who sent Frank the Eulogy from Jock's Funeral Service.