

AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

1202032 James (Jock) McPhail

(1 April 1947 – 7 October 2013)

By Colonel A B Burke, OAM, (Retd)

Born in Paisley, Renfrewshire, in Scotland, James (Jock) McPhail passed away on 7 October 2013. Jock was a reinforcement gun number to the 105th arriving in South Vietnam on 3 June 1969 and remaining with the battery till it returned to Australia on 4 February 1970. He was a member of Dave Gratwick's Echo gun for this whole period. Dave said, 'Jock was a great fellow and a good gun number. I recall him well and he got on well with all the crew. I recently saw a TV programme about the Jack Daniels distillery and fondly recalled Jock then as his trade was a 'cooper'.'

All those at the 105th Field Battery reunion at Maroochydore a few years ago will recall the night of triumphant celebration when Jock announced that he had finally received Australian citizenship and therefore was no longer 'a bloody foreigner'. He was the heart and soul of that evening.

Jock has not been well for some time and was moved into a nursing home where he could be better looked after. Lou Schembri was his official guardian as all his family were still in Scotland. Jock wanted to go home and see his family once more and, a few months ago with the help of a volunteer carer, he made the pilgrimage. On return just recently, he had a fresh spark of life and was so happy, telling anyone who would listen about his great siblings.

Following a very happy evening at the nursing home, he sustained a massive heart attack during the night and was found dead in his bed in the morning.

Paul Stevens who attended the funeral reported that there were about 50 people including five from the Tigers. Jock left the Army in September 1970 and went to work in the Mt Isa mines, then went to Western Australia and finally settled in the Latrobe Valley working around the power stations.