

Colonel Beresford (Berry) Lindsay Nyman, MBE, LVO

The Advertiser
Saturday 11th February 2012

Colonel Beresford Lindsay Nyman was born in Sydney on 13th September 1932 and passed away on 4th January 2012 in Adelaide. Berry Nyman was born into a military family. His early memories were of his father being away during World War Two and his mother Mel enlisting the support of her mother, sister and niece to help look after three very energetic boys.

There was never any doubt about his calling. Mel's pet name for him was Soldier Boy, which Berry pronounced Zozoboy from an early age. His teenage years were during the war and the aftermath, and in 1948 he left school and applied for the Royal Military College, Duntroon, starting in 1949.

He graduated as an artillery officer at the height of the Korean War, and transferred to the infantry to go to Korea as a platoon commander with the 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment.

He had first met Jennifer Hunter in Sydney when he was still at Duntroon and they were married in 1958, shortly before he came to South Australia to work at the Weapons Research Establishment at Salisbury. Within a few weeks of the birth of their first child, Veronika, the young family went to the US Air Defence School at Fort Bliss, Texas.

When he returned, Major Nyman was put in command of the Australian Army's only regular air defence unit, 111th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery at Holsworthy. Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War meant that after a further study period at Camberley Staff College in the UK, he was posted to Saigon.

There he was principle Personnel Staff Officer at the Australia Force Headquarters from 1968-1969. The important and demanding role saw him awarded an MBE.

A further honour followed back in Australia when he was Liaison Officer for the 1970 Royal Visit, and was appointed LVO, or Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order.

The Vietnam War turned out to be a watershed of sorts. When posted to Woodside he met mother of four, Phillippa Murrell, and their relationship – along with his emerging symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder from his war experiences – would lead to a breakdown of his marriage to Jennifer.

The family moved to Melbourne when Berry was made colonel and appointed Chief of Staff, 3rd Division Field Force Group, but after a year he left Jennifer and moved in with Phillippa and her two youngest children. They would marry in 1977.

His next posting as Director of Operations, Canberra saw him frame the rules of engagement and oversee the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Sydney in 1978, a task he relished.

He saw further appointments in the Army before finally retiring in 1986. A great sadness in his life was the death of his eldest daughter, Veronika, in a car accident in 1984, aged 24.

Berry and Phillipa lived in retirement in the Canberra and southern NSW region before returning to Adelaide following the deaths of his mother and father. He arrived in Adelaide in 2003, just in time to march in the Anzac Day Parade. As Vice President of the Walkerville RSL he conducted the dawn service at Walkerville Gardens until his health began to fail.

He is survived by three daughters, three stepsons and a stepdaughter, four grandchildren and five stepgrandchildren.

RAAHC