

Warrant Officer Class One Michael Edgar Ponder

Provided by Major Darryl Kelly OAM

Warrant Officer Class One Mick Ponder was born in the rural Victorian town of Hamilton. He attended the Hamilton Primary School and completed his secondary studies at the Hamilton Technical College. On leaving school Mick knocked around the local community in a number of jobs, mainly as a farm hand.

Mick decided that he needed a change in vocation and he enlisted in the Australian Regular Army on the 10th of October 1973. Following recruit training Mick was allocated to the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery as a gun number. His initial posting was to 4th Field Regiment where he qualified as a detachment commander, signaller, operator command post field and he finally choose to change over to the Q store stream.

During the ensuing years Mick was posted to 1st Division Artillery, 1st Field Regiment and 2nd/10th Medium Regiment with another couple of postings to 4th Field thrown in for good measure. He was promoted through the artillery ranks finally receiving his crown in October 1991. With the absorption of the RAA Clerical and Logistic Trades into Ordnance Corps, Mick laid up his white lanyard but not his love for the Royal Regiment.

Mick soon made his mark within the Ordnance community and was posted to a number of senior logistic postings in Brisbane and Darwin and was promoted to Warrant Officer Class One on the 18th of January 1999. The culmination of his career came when he was appointed as one of the first Royal Australian Ordnance Corps Conductors in modern times. His badge of office, being his coveted Conductors Batten adorned his casket at Micks farewell.

Over the past few years Mick battled cancer which spread throughout the lower parts his body. As he fought the illness he took a turn for the worse last year which resulted in the amputation of the right leg, first below the knee and a short time later, the same leg needed to be taken off above the knee. His mates rallied around him and conducted a successful fund raising activity in an effort to make his life just a little more comfortable.

Determined not to be beaten, Mick again fought on but the illness had again taken hold. Mick lost his battle on the morning of Sunday the 15th of February. Mick was farewelled at the Royal Military College Chapel on Friday the 20th of February and his casket was carried by a number of his mates from both Artillery and Ordnance Corps.

As a celebration of Mick's life was portrayed at his farewell, he was remembered for his love of life, devotion to his family and his love for the Army. He was a renowned sportsman and committed himself to maintaining the highest level of fitness that was the envy of men more than half his age.

Mick Ponder's honours and award's include the Australian Active Service Medal with clasp East Timor, the Australian Service Medal with clasps Sinai and East Timor, the

Australian Defence Medal, the Defence Force Service Medal with four clasps, the Multi National Force and Observers Medal, the United Nations Medal with ribbon UNTAET and a Commander 1st Division Commendation for his outstanding performance as the Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant of the 1st Command Support Regiment.

Mick is survived by his devoted wife Margaret, son's Daryl (RAN), Matthew (RAAOC) and Stephen. He is also remembered by his daughter-in-law Melissa (RAAF).

Lest we forget - Michael Ponder.

RAAFHC