

AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

Harry Wall

(1915 – 1985)

By Max Wagstaff

First Published in 'Per Medium' August 1995, Bulletin No 15

A great friend of the 2/1 Medium Artillery Association passed away on 6 May 1985.

Growing up in Manly, NSW, as a member of a well known and respected family, Harry joined the 2/1 Regiment when it was originally formed at Ingleburn in 1940. His two brothers, Alan and David, also became members of the Regiment at different times and the three boys were as alike as chalk, cheese and potatoes. Harry served with the Regiment from its foundation until its disbandment in 1945, suffering under the uncomplimentary nickname of "Flamingo".

Some officers would not have regarded Harry as a model soldier. He could only suffer officialdom and playing "silly buggers" up to a point, when the touch of larrikin in him was liable to break out. As a consequence he was prone to move at regular intervals from the rank of Bombardier back to Gunner, and when he was forgiven, back to Bombardier again. He finished up as a Bombardier towards the closing stages of our war, and this delighted Harry, because the special job he was given exempted him from further guard duties. The task was to act as radio announcer and disk jockey on the PA system introduced to our camp at Kairi on the Atherton Tablelands.

This was just the right niche for Harry, who was a born entertainer, popular with everyone, and possessing the natural attributes of a clear voice with pleasant tonal values, savoured with an impish and subtle wit. These qualities were also used to great effect when he acted as Master of Ceremonies at most of any of our camp concerts. After the war, the 2/1 Medium Artillery Association was formed in December 1948, and Harry was appointed to the committee. He had been a continuous member from that date until his death: a period of some 47 years. He has served as President and, of course, has been the Master of Ceremonies at most of our functions.

He was one of the great characters and will never be forgotten. Arguably, he was the best known member of the Regiment and this association. Everybody knew Harry Wall and Harry Wall knew everybody. He is survived by his loving wife, Mary, his three children and their spouses, several grand children and one great-grandchild. To all these people we send our condolences and are privileged to have shared with them a long association with a wonderful man.

It is fitting that this obituary concludes with a copy of Harry's own personal business card which says it all.

Harry Wall

*Last of the big time spenders
Red hot Lover
Extra nice fellow
Master of repartee and shinning wit
Euroka Street Northbridge 2063*