

AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Norton Whiston

(1909 – 2001)

First Published in Cannonball, Number 43, May 2001

They say that old soldiers never die, they just fade away: Lieutenant Colonel Robert Norton Whiston did just that. He faded away on 20 April 2001 at the ripe old age of 92.

His was a good life. He arrived with his parents and two elder brothers from England in 1913 at the age of four on board the SS Benalla. The family dairy farmed in Nana Glen then on the Richmond and Clarence Rivers. After six seasons in the cane fields young Robert joined the Permanent Military Forces (PMF), and was posted to 1 Heavy Brigade Coastal Artillery as a Gunner at Georges Heights, Mosman.

He worked on the installation of the 9.2 inch guns at both North Head and Cape Banks during the years 1936 – 37. After attending an Anti-Aircraft Course and a Master Gunners course at the School of Artillery, South Head, he reached Warrant rank in the Australian Instructional Corps (AIC) in 1938. As a Warrant Officer he was a Founder Member of the Sergeants' Mess at North Head and later a member of the 1 Heavy Brigade Officers Mess at North Head.

He received a commission as Lieutenant in the PMF in 1941 and spent some time installing the 3.7 inch anti-aircraft guns throughout the Sydney Metropolitan area for the defence of Sydney. He spent two years in Bougainville and Morotai during the war then continued in Australia until his compulsory retirement in 1959 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Robert then spent 10 years in the NSW Public Service before retiring for good in 1969. He enjoyed more than 32 years of retirement and travelled extensively in both Australia and overseas.

He left behind his second wife Anne, daughter Irene Dunn and granddaughter Leonine Donaldson plus two from the next generation, Felicity and Travis.

Acknowledgement:

- This article was prepared by Robert and forwarded by his wife Anne.