

AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

Captain Kenneth Wilfred Bade

18 October 1938 – 8 January 1966

by Colonel Arthur Burke OAM



Today we remember and pay tribute to Captain Kenneth Wilfred Bade.

Kenneth Bade was born on the 18th of October 1938 in Queensland to Albert and Mary Bade. His early childhood was spent at Rosewood in Queensland. His father had served in the Volunteer Defence Corps in the Second World War, and it was from his father that Bade learned about duty, commitment to his country, and a fierce national pride. He grew up wanting to be a soldier.

When he was 12, Bade moved with his family to Toowoomba, Queensland, where he attended North State School and Toowoomba Grammar School. He joined the school's cadet unit and served with distinction, and in

1956 was made cadet under officer.

An exceptional shot, Bade was awarded his marksman's badge for his proficiency with a .303 rifle. In 1955 he was part of the school's team, which finished first in Australia and tenth in the Empire as part of the Earl Roberts Competition. The team also won the Stevenson Cup the following year.

In 1956 Bade was accepted into the Royal Military College, Duntroon. He underwent training to become an officer in the Australian Regular Army, and took additional courses to better equip him as a leader of men. He also obtained his pilot's licence. At 21 Bade was made a Justice of the Peace and given a diplomatic pass.

After graduating from Duntroon in December 1960 Bade was posted to the 4th Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery. He completed a science degree at the University of Queensland, and during one maths class met his future wife, Robin Anderson. The pair was married at St Lucia Presbyterian Church in Brisbane on the 14th of September 1964.

In 1965 Bade was posted as a forward artillery observer to the 105th Field Battery, and embarked for service in the Vietnam War aboard HMAS Sydney, as part of 1 RAR.

On the 8th of January 1966 Operation Crimp was launched in the Ho Bo Woods. The objective was to locate and destroy a major enemy headquarters known to be in the area. The men of 1 RAR were airlifted into the area, and shortly after entering the woods began to take casualties from enemy snipers. As they advanced they discovered enemy bunkers and a series of tunnels.

That afternoon Bade and his men were moving past a clump of bamboo when a booby trap detonated in a nearby tree. Those nearby were blown off their feet. Bade had taken the full brunt of the blast and was mortally wounded. The company's second in command, Captain Peter Annison, rushed to assist, but it was too late. Bade died as Annison comforted him.

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Bade's body was returned to Brisbane, and a funeral was held with full military honours in the same church where he had married his wife 16 months earlier. His pallbearers were made up of men from RMC and the 4th Field Regiment, and he was laid to rest in the Queensland Garden of Remembrance. He was 27 years old.

Captain Bade's name is listed on the Roll of Honour on my left, among more than 500 others from the Vietnam War. His photograph is displayed today beside the Pool of Reflection.

This is but one of the many stories of service and sacrifice told here at the Australian War Memorial. We now remember Captain Kenneth Wilfred Bade, and all Australians who have given their lives in service of our nation.

Acknowledgements:

- Extract from a Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial on 16 October 2015 delivered by **Brigadier Don Roach AM**
- Vale drafted by **Colonel Arthur Burke OAM** and edited by Australian War Memorial staff