

## AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

### Lieutenant Colonel Henry Arthur Francis Benson, DFC

7 November 1930 – 29 May 2014

By Peter Bruce



Born in Sydney on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1930, Henry Arthur Francis (Harry) Benson enlisted in the Australian Army in 1951. He graduated from Office Cadet School Portsea on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1952 and was allotted to the Royal Australian Artillery. After initial Artillery training, and a posting to 1<sup>st</sup> Recruit Training Battalion, Harry was posted to 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment. Harry then joined 'Army Aviation' with 16 Air Op Flight in Canberra in January 1954. In 1957 he returned to 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment until 1959 with promotion to Captain.

From October 1959 until December 1960, Harry was attached to Australian Army Staff (UK) for Air Operations Training. He was subsequently posted to 16 Army

Light Aircraft Squadron at RAAF Base Amberly on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1960. Staff appointments to Headquarters 3<sup>rd</sup> Division followed where he was eventually appointed Brigade Major. Harry attended Staff College in 1965 before an attachment to Australian Army Staff (Washington) and promotion to Major for more flight training. Harry was posted to Vietnam on 10 June 1968 as Officer Commanding 161 (Independent) Recce Flight. For his service in Vietnam as the Officer Commanding, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Harry returned to Australia on 18 June 1969 to the position of Chief Flying Instructor with the Aviation Regiment. In January 1971 Harry was promoted Lieutenant Colonel and posted as an instructor at Army Staff College. He transferred from the Regular Army to the Army Reserve in early 1972 and was appointed Commanding Officer of 7<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment in Sydney. A final posting saw Harry at Headquarters Training Command.

Harry had not been well for some time and passed away peacefully in a Buderim Nursing home. A funeral to celebrate his life was held on 4 June 2014 at the Gregson & Wright Chapel in Maroochydore. Harry was a Life Subscriber to the RAA Association in Queensland and a pioneering Army Aviator.

Harry was survived by his wife Nan, daughters Louise and Sue and their extended families.

#### **Acknowledgements:**

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- Notes from the late Arthur Burkes files
- Bill Mellor for his notes on the service of Harry
- 7<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment Profiles