

AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

Bruce Douglas (Barry) Cane

By Colonel A. R. Burke, OAM (Retd)



Bruce Douglas (Barry) Cane passed away peacefully in Townsville on 3 May 2018. He has been suffering from Parkinson's for some time and took a downwards turn in early 2018. Restricted mobility and lying in bed led to pneumonia which took its toll.

Barry as we all knew him was born in Brisbane on 12 January 1939. He enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in 1962 and quickly rose to bombardier in the command post operator stream. When Major Peter Tedder's 105th Field Battery was selected as the first Australian RAA unit to serve in the Vietnam War, Bombardier Cane was then Captain Alan Hutchinson's forward observer assistant during the 1965-66 tour.

Promoted sergeant, Barry was posted as a drill instructor at the Army Apprentices School. From there, he took on a second tour in Vietnam as the command post sergeant operator with Major Keith Towing's 104th Field Battery - part of the final Australian combat forces in 1971. On return to Australia and promoted Staff Sergeant, he became the battery guide of 104th Battery. His warrant in 1973 led to the appointment of assistant instructor in gunnery with the CMF 2nd Field Regiment in Melbourne.

The year 1976 saw WO2 Cane appointed battery sergeant major of Major Colin Sanders' 101st Field Battery with Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Fitzgerald's 1st Field Regiment at Wacol, Brisbane. His 'galloping horses' promotion to Warrant Officer Class One came in 1979, and after a posting as RSM of 23rd Field Regiment at Kogarah, Sydney, he returned to Wacol in 1982 as the RSM of Lt Col Brian Mitchell's 1st Field Regiment.

Next came the appointment of 1st Division Artillery Sergeant Major, followed by RSM of the School of Artillery with then Lt Col Paul Stevens in 1985. It was there that he was persuaded to accept a commission as a captain in 1988. Barry was posted to Canberra as a Staff Officer Grade Three to Director Colonel Bob McEvoy. In 1989, the Directorate of Artillery moved to North Head in Sydney and Barry, wishing to stay in Canberra, took up his final posting in 1988 as the SO3 of Personnel Overseas Administration at Army Headquarters. Captain Cane finally hung up his pace stick and spurs in 1992.

In retirement, Barry purchased two businesses in Bundaberg - the Steel Shed Construction Company and the Polyethylene Company, the latter developing box and boat trailers. In 2010, he sold both these companies and he and wife Lyn moved up to Tully. After losing their abode to a cyclone, Barry and Lyn moved to Townsville, spending their twilight years with many of their old Gunner mates.

To list Barry's achievements in this short tribute would assuredly omit some of critical import - these will be covered in a formal obituary later. However, let it be said that he was dedicated professional soldier, a great teacher for both young (and sometimes not so young) officers and other ranks, a tragic for Ford Falcon GT HOs, surfer and fisherman, shrewd businessman, a roguish sense of humour, and always an exemplary Gunner. I last saw Barry at the Caloundra National Gunners Dinner 12 months ago and,

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though experiencing some Parkinson's effects, was in high spirits talking with all his old Gunner mates.

At the family's request, Barry was cremated at a private ceremony in Townsville on Wednesday 9 May 2018. Vale Barry Cane – dedicated and conscientious professional soldier, admired and respected RSM of three postings, widely popular with his rascally sense of humour, loving family man and a true-blue Gunner. Gone to the Great Gun Park up above for his final posting at 73 years young.

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