

AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

NX18304 Gunner Ronald Robert Dixon MM

1921 - 2020

By Kim McGrath



I had the rare privilege of have a World War 2 veteran Mate living in my hometown of Wauchope, NSW. He was Gnr R.R. Dixon MM and he was an Artilleryman. For a number of years, I have been meaning to sit down with Ron to get his story and anecdotes first hand whilst the opportunity still existed due to the advancing years for all of us. I have now managed to gather the data and it is presented as the following:

Ron was born on Saturday 9th July, 1921 and passed away on Sunday 29th November, 2020. Ron had lived for 36,303 days. Ron was under the sign of Cancer with the modern Birthstone of Ruby. Ron reached 99 years, 4 months and 20 days of age and was in general good physical condition with regular games of Golf, his

favourite pastime.

Ron married Marge on 5th January 1946 and lived around the St. George district of Sydney before settling in the Wauchope area quite a number of years ago. They had two sons and one daughter with 18 Great Grandchildren. On Sunday 5th January 2020 they celebrated their 74th Wedding Anniversary.

Ron was a Gunner in the 2nd/5th Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery and served with that Regiment from its formation until the end of the War. Ron's main job was as an Artillery Signaller with the forward observers and was responsible for the laying and maintenance of the communication lines. The 2nd/5th Regiment was equipped with the venerable 25 Pounder Guns which provided magnificent service for the duration of hostilities. It may be noted that the Regiment also operated a variety of captured enemy artillery pieces to good effect.

For my education Ron lent me his copy of the book "Guns and Gunners" which is the story of the 2nd/5th Field Regiment RAA and was written by John W. O'Brien (Commanding Officer Brigadier J.W.A. O'Brien DSO March 1941 – April 1942). I thoroughly enjoyed the book and was very impressed by the amount of work done by the Regiment, its successes

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and setbacks and also for the sheer volume of ammunition expended in very harsh conditions on operations.

Ron and the 2nd/5th Field Regiment RAA sailed on the Queen Mary to Bombay and then on to Egypt with the objective of striking west towards Tobruk however they were re-tasked to push up into Syria to deal with the Vichy French.

Ron mentioned that on one occasion they were having quite a bit of trouble with a particular French gun. It turned out that the French had placed a Naval Gun into a cliff face cave with what appeared to be a rubber matting cover and from that position they would bring it out to shell our lines. Once they had determined where it was it was only a matter of laying the 25-pounders on to the spot and waiting. They didn't have to wait long and from then on in the French gun was no longer a problem.

Another incident that Ron recalled was that in the dead of an extremely black night whilst he was laying line over rough terrain, and not sure of his exact location, he came across a soldier who lit a cigarette. Not knowing whether or not he was an enemy, Ron was surprised to recognize the face of the infantry soldier as an old Mate of his from Carlton in Sydney, Tommy Jones, with whom he had spent many hours playing Penny Poker. Talk about a small world.



WO2 Andrew Maxwell MM, BDR Geoffrey Grayson MM and GNR Ronald Dixon MM.
Being photographed by LT Philip Geeves in Syria 1942

As a signaller, Ron was continually on duty at the Observation Post during the period from 9 to 22 June 1941 and displayed the utmost coolness under machine-gun and shell-fire. At Qleaa, in Syria, on 22 June, when wounded by a shell fragment from a round that had exploded on a flat roof which was being used as an Observation Post, he continued to transmit fire orders and subsequently repaired the line under heavy shell-fire, carrying out his normal duties until evacuated to hospital on

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23 June 1941. Ron was awarded his Military Medal for great courage and coolness under enemy machine gun and shell fire in Syria between 9 June 1941 and 22 June 1941.

Ron's funeral was held at Wauchope on Monday 7th December 2020

Acknowledgements:

- "Guns and Gunners" by John W O'Brien.