

## AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

### **Major General Peter Falkland, AO,**

**(5 June 1925 – 25 March 1990)**

**By Peter Bruce, OAM**

Peter Falkland was born in Moonee Ponds, Melbourne on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 1925 and was educated at Xavier College in Kew, Melbourne. He entered the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1943 and graduated in December 1944 as a Lieutenant in the RAA.

In the closing stages of World War II, he served with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force. He later served with 2 Mountain Battery and 2/4<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Regiment in Borneo. During the next 20 years he held a number of regimental, staff and training appointments in Japan, Australia, Pakistan, England and Germany, culminating in the command of 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment at Holsworthy in 1964.

After instructing at the Joint Services Staff College in England he served on the staff of Headquarters 1<sup>st</sup> Division, Army Headquarters in Canberra and as Deputy Commander 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Task Force in South Vietnam in 1970. During his time as acting Task Commander, Peter was instrumental in the infamous withdrawal of the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion from the Long Hais during Operation Hammersley.

Following a year at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London, he returned to spend three years as Director Joint Services Intelligence. In 1976 he was promoted Major General and spent three years as the Head of the Australian Defence Staff in Washington. On return to Australia he served as Deputy Chief of the General Staff in Canberra.

After retirement in 1982 he was an active member of Legacy and was elected President of the ACT Club in 1988. He was appointed the seventh Chief Commissioner of St John Ambulance Australia in November 1984 and was instrumental in conducting a major structural review of the St John's organisation. During his time as Chief Commissioner he was committed towards developing the talents of young volunteers and the Cadet movement. The Peter Falkland Award was named in his honour and is presented to the Cadet of the Year.

Peter was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in the Australia Day Honours List of 1977. He was appointed Colonel Commandant 2<sup>nd</sup> Military District in June 1984 and Representative Colonel Commandant in May 1985.

It was in 1988 he was diagnosed with cancer and although he appeared to have an early remission, the tumours re-appeared in 1989. Peter continued to carry out his duties with St John's until hospitalised in late 1989. He was invested as a Knight of Grace in the Order of St John in 1989 while in his hospital bed.

Major General Falkland passed away on Sunday 25 March 1990. He was buried with full Military Honours following a Requiem Mass at St Christopher's Cathedral in Canberra on 29 April 1990. He is survived by his wife Bunny and three children.

### **Acknowledgements**

- Margaret Jacobson, Divisional Superintendent, Hobart Adult Division, St John's Ambulance Australian, 2006.
- Vietnam, The Australian War by Paul Ham