

Brian James (Macca) McDowell

1938 - 2024

By Peter Bruce, OAM

Brian McDowell, known to his Army mates as Macca, was a Sydney boy, however very little is known of his early life. Indications show that he joined the Australian Army around 1956 and one of his first postings was to 1st Field Regiment, then stationed at Holsworthy in western Sydney. Macca deployed to Terendak in Malaya with 103rd Field Battery in October 1961. The Battery had relieved 'A' Field Battery and was integrated with the British Army's 26th Field Regiment. 103rd Field Battery also became the first Australian battery to be issued with the new 105mm L5 Pack Howitzer.

Macca's postings indicate he had a strong desire to stay in the Sydney area. After his return to Australia in late 1963 he joined 12th Field Regiment located at Holsworthy. In October 1965 he returned to Malaya with 'A' Field Battery and was again stationed at Terendak. Macca and the battery remained in Malaya until September 1967 when they were relieved by 107th Field Battery and returned to Holsworthy.

12th Field Regiment had been warned out for service in Vietnam and Macca deployed to Vietnam with 104th Field Battery in May 1968. He served a 12-month tour with the battery and returned to Australia in May 1969.



Bombardier Brian McDowell fencing contractor to 'A' Field Battery.

Macca remained with 12th Field Regiment on their return to Australia and moved to 'A' Field Battery. He deployed to Vietnam for a second tour with 'A' Field Battery in February 1971.

He had been promoted to Bombardier and developed a reputation as the battery fencing contractor when deployed at Fire Support Bases.

In May 1971, Macca moved to the Workshop of the Detachment 131st Divisional Locating Battery. He remained with them until returning to Australia in July 1971.

Macca remained in the Army for 21 years. A private funeral service for Macca was held in Sydney on 8 February 2024.

Acknowledgments:

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