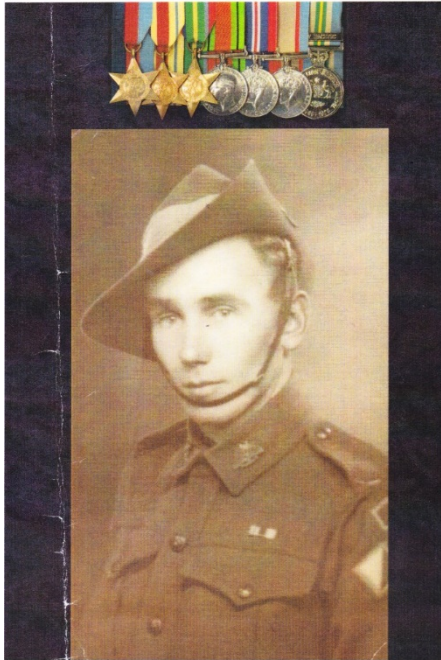


AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

VX17950 Frank James Bone

31 October 1922 – 6 June 2015

By Colonel Arthur Burke, OAM (Retd)



Frank Bone passed away peacefully on 6th January 2015. This was the end of an era in Queensland as Frank was the last attending 2/4th Field Regiment veteran at the 7th Division Artillery luncheons.

Frank was born in Adelaide but spent his early working life in Melbourne. He was an Army Cadet serving with 110th Field Battery of 10th Field Brigade AFA when the bugle's call for the Second World War sounded. He enlisted on 2nd November 1939. Grand-daughter Angelique Peters tells the story that, when the recruiting officer asked how old he was, Frank truthfully replied, "seventeen". "You mean 18", replied the officer explaining that this was the acceptable age for wartime enlistment. "Still 17", said Frank and marched out. A moment later, he marched back in and said he wanted to enlist. "How old are you?" said the officer. "Eighteen" replied Frank and was duly signed

up.

Gunner Bone was allotted back to his 110th Field Battery and three weeks later, the unit had been mobilised and was in camp at Mount Martha. When the 7th Division AIF was raised, Gunner Frank was one of the first to volunteer on 28th May 1940. He found himself allotted to the fledgling 2/4th Field Regiment, already under training at Puckapunyal.

Initially a gun number and then a driver, Frank served loyally with the 2/4th embarking on October 1940 and fighting through North Africa, Palestine and up into Syria. Following the Armistice in Syria, the pace of soldiering really slowed down as the unit went into an occupation role. This was far too dull for Frank, so he transferred to the Australian Army Service Corps (AASC) 7th Division and was allotted to the Petrol Company. Then in January 1942, he was posted to the 2/5th Company AASC and returned to Australia with this unit in March 1942.

Back in Australia again, Frank moved to the 2/2nd Australian Supply Depot Company and had a second tour in New Guinea for four months. After that it was the 2/8th Australian Supply Depot Platoon followed by the 2/12th Australian Transport Platoon. This unit took Frank to North Borneo in May 1945 with the 9th Division.

When the 2/12th returned to Australia, Frank was posted to the Victorian Lines of Communication Details Depot in Melbourne. He decided that the Army was the life for him and signed up with the new Australian Regular Army in September 1947. Following four months at the 1st Recruit Training Battalion as an instructor, Franks' technical proficiency was recognised, and he joined the staff at the Army Technical School.

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Three months later he took the next step upwards to the School of Military Engineering. When the National Service Scheme of the 1950s began, Frank became a troop sergeant in the Royal Australian Engineers Recruit Training Squadron. He worked hard imparting his knowledge and experience to the recruit sappers for some 18 months. In November 1951, he was rewarded with a posting to the Royal School of Military Engineering in the United Kingdom where he was a student and then instructor for 15 months.

Of course, the payback from this sojourn was an instructional posting as a warrant officer class two at the Australian School of Military Engineering on their return to Sydney in 1953. Frank was posted to the Headquarters of 5th Corps Engineer Regiment in November of that year where he remained for two years. His final posting was to the 20th National Service Training Battalion from which he retired on 13th March 1956.

Frank married Joan after the War and they had two children, Stephen and Karen (later deceased). After the Army, the family lived in the Brisbane suburbs of Manly West and Macgregor before moving to Russel Island in 1985. Frank had always made friends easily, but it was on the island that he became a leader in the drive to establish an ex-services club.

He organised barbecues and dances at the local community hall, led work parties setting up boxing for the club's foundations and conned local businessmen into donating concrete. Slowly but surely the club that the locals built took shape and continued to develop into the delightful retreat it is today. The Club became Frank's life and he would always be there for 'fives' at 5pm daily for his beer or two. He served on the RSL Sub-branch and the Club's committees and was admired for his enthusiasm and drive.

Fishing was a passionate pastime of Franks and his grand-daughters recall being taught the secrets of catching fish, the patience of waiting and the enjoyment of eating the fresh seafood. "He taught me how to shell prawns", told Angelique, "and to this day, I am quicker than the average sheller".

Frank never forget his Gunner roots and was known as the 'overseas member' of the luncheons at the Sherwood Services Club. He was admired for the many modes of transport it took to come to Corinda – car, water taxi, bus, then another train, or in later years, a lift from another kind member from the wharf on the mainland. He loved the camaraderie of his mate's and the fellowship of their wives and widow and always had a story to tell.

The man was always adventurous. For his 90th birthday, Frank wanted a flight in a helicopter. As he was being assisted into the aircraft by the pilot, he was asked if he was afraid. "Afraid? Not me" said Frank, "I'm not afraid of anything – I'm 90!"

Frank had a fall not long after his last lunch at Corinda; caught a bug whilst rehabilitating and never really recovered. Vale Frank Bone – soldier, loving family man, a power behind the Russel Island RSL Club and always a Gunner. Gone to the Great Fun Park up above at 92 years of age to join his beloved Joan and Karen.