

Major Allan James Campbell

Eulogy delivered by Major Nicholas Wilson
on behalf of 4th Field Regiment

Allan James Campbell was born on 13th March 1946, and enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in 1963 as a young, fresh faced teenager. After recruit training, Gunner Campbell was allocated to the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery as a surveyor and upon completion of his initial employment training course, he was posted to 131st Divisional Locating Battery, the pre-cursor to today's 20th Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment. In 1965 he qualified both as an Artillery signaller (or ECN 361) and Basic Radar Operator. He was subsequently promoted to lance bombardier in August 1965 and bombardier some two months later in October. The then Bombardier Campbell was posted as a Radar Detachment Commander when he deployed to South Vietnam in May 1966 at the young age of 20 years. On completion of his tour, he returned to 131st Divisional Locating Battery and was promoted to sergeant in January 1967. Those of us who are blessed in math will note his speedy climb to senior non-commissioned officer of some three and a half years – certainly not abnormal in times of war but reflective of his talent. Allan returned to South Vietnam in February 1968 for a short period and was posted to 19th Composite Regiment and 5th Field Regiment.

Subsequently posted to School of Artillery on promotion to warrant officer class two in November 1970, Allan again left Australia in December to attend the Royal School of Arty (London) Gunnery Staff Locating Officer Course and Methods of Instruction Course prior to reposting back to School of Artillery, Manly. It was shortly after this period that Allan determined to change his career path and applied for a commission. He was promoted to lieutenant in 1975 and was posted to 4th Field Regiment in 1976 after a short stint at District Support Unit Townsville as the Range Control Officer. Allan completed the quartermaster course in 1977 and was posted as Quartermaster 4 th Field Regiment, a job that the Regiment has always valued and continues to maintain today despite external pressures to reduce officer vacancies.

Promoted to captain in September 1977, Allan was posted back to School of Artillery, Manly as an Instructor in January 1980. This posting was relatively short after he once again found himself in 131st Divisional Locating Battery by October 1981. On promotion to major in 1984, Allan's sphere of influence expanded further and he successfully undertook an overseas posting as the Advisor Artillery in Malaysia. Upon completion of this posting, Allan returned to Australia and took up the appointment as the Second-in-Command of 4th Field Regiment – a position he held until retirement. Allan discharged from the Regular Army in August 1990, however continued serving under a DA50 contract until December of that year. His awards include: Vietnam Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, National Medal, Defence Long Service Medal with 2 x clasps and the Australian Defence Medal.

And thus ends some 27 odd years of service to Army and the RAA, or so it would seem... But not so. Allan continued to provide much needed advice and counsel to several generations of servicemen throughout the 1990s and the new millennium. He was of course a much valued member of the RAA Association, Gunner's North, the RSL and indeed the Regiment, and short of his extended travels, he was a constant and welcome guest at many Regimental activities. For that he will be long-remembered.

But for many of us, particularly the officers past and present, we knew Allan on a different level. Noting I had yet to join the Army when Allan left it, my first impressions of him are as a respected and much loved honorary member of the Officers Mess. As a new lieutenant, it could be daunting, yet Allan, together with a band of faithful friends, went out of their way to help you feel welcome. As a captain returning to the unit and again as a major, I have seen this cycle repeat itself continuously and with no less vigour than I experienced a good many

years ago. Allan may never know how grateful we, as young officers, were and I can only hope that he indeed enjoyed his time informally instructing us over a cold one.

It is therefore with deep personal regret, and on behalf of the commanding officer, Andy Combes, that I must tender our sincere sympathies to Claire and family on Allan's passing. He will be remembered as a stalwart of the Regiment, a man who served well beyond the minimum with both pride and professionalism. But more than that, he will be remembered as a friend and a gentleman, and that above all titles is something to be revered.

Ubique Allan,
Where Right and Glory Lead

Major Allan James Campbell

Colonel Arthur Burke, OAM (Retd)

Allan Campbell was a Gunner who was equally at home with locators or field gunners and who was both liked and respected in both camps. Born in 1946 on the outskirts of Brisbane to a home keeper mother and a bridge building step father, Allan grew up in the tough post Second World War years. On the good side, he had a horse on which to ride to and from school, but on the down side, he was obliged to leave school at 14 years of age to earn a wage to supplement the family income.

On turning 17 years of age in 1963, Allan joined the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) at 11th Field Regiment and liked it so much, he enlisted in the Regular Army two months later. He was allocated to the Royal Australian Artillery as a radar operator and posted to the 131st Divisional Locating Battery which, in those days was an integrated CMF and Regular Army unit split between North Fort and Manly in Sydney. Australia's entry into the Vietnam War and the selective conscription scheme led to the 131st becoming an all Regular unit and moving to Holsworthy in late 1965.

There, Allan's unit was tasked to provide a detachment to the 1st Australian Task Force in Vietnam and he was one of the proud bombardiers selected. From May 1966, he battled to keep his ANKPQ1 ('Alphabet') radar operational, including during the lead up to the Battle of Long Tan. Returning to Holsworthy, Allan was promoted to sergeant and, such was the shortage of radar-qualified senior non-commissioned officers, that he deployed to Vietnam again in February 1968.

With sufficient time in Australia to perform very well on the Warrant Officers' Locating Course at North Head, Allan packed his bags again but headed off to England this time for the Long Locating Course at Larkhill. In return for this overseas trip, he found himself on the staff at the School of Artillery at North Head, Sydney for the next few years.

It was whilst partying with friends down at the Fisherman's Club at Manly that he met and asked Claire for a dance ... and the rest, as they say, is history. Despite Allan's two left feet on the dance floor, he and Claire have been dancing together ever since.

In 1975, Allan was commissioned and posted to the District Support Unit Townsville and then 4th Field Regiment. These were great family times for, though the boys were quite boisterous and hard work, he spent many pleasurable days taking them camping, fishing and generally keeping them out of trouble. Mess life was also a key social centre for he and

Claire and the name Cambellina's Wine Bar was an ongoing memory of the night he ended up in the rose bushes.

With the 1980s came a posting to Canungra where Allan's dedication set him up for a two-year appointment to the Australian Army Advisory Team in Malaysia. In late 1986, a highlight of Claire and Allan's lives began in a very large home with house help, many visiting friends and plenty of cheap beer. His talks on camping and the introduction of Happy Hours to the area were legendary.

However, life is a two-way street and their housekeeper helped Allan become a very good cook, excelling in curries. For years afterwards, it was a genuine pleasure to be invited to the Campbells' for a curry night. Allan was also a leading light in the local Hash House Harriers in Malaysia and, though this kept him very fit, the beer wagon at the end of the Hash seemed somewhat to undo the good work of the running.

Following a brief Sydney posting, the family headed back to Townsville where Major Allan Campbell completed his Army service as the second-in-command of 4th Field Regiment. Curries, happy hours, fishing and camping all complemented this period. He was a very active Officers' Mess President and returning home with eyebrows missing from carpet burns playing mess rugby were part of his life.

With the wanderlust in their veins, Allan and Claire travelled through Europe in a Volkswagon Combi, visited the rest of the world and then joined the Grey Nomads camping around Australia where fishing trips were always a priority. Earlier this year, he returned to Vietnam in a veterans' group and thoroughly enjoyed the company of his old Army mates, especially Gunners like Juergen Raasch and Barrie Winsor.

Allan was a great family man. His younger escapades with the boys were later transferred to his beloved grandchildren. Family gatherings were regular highlights on Nana and Poppy's calendar and young questions like, 'Why does your face have so many cracks in it?' kept conversation lively.

Some years ago, Allan had heart surgery. He survived it well, but recently problems reoccurred and he went downhill very quickly. His passing on 19th June 2009 was a great shock to his family and the Gunner community at large.

Vale Allan James Campbell—locator and field gunner, soldier and officer, party lover and world traveller, curry chef extraordinaire, loving family man. Summoned to the Great Gun Park up above at only 63 years young. I thank Robyn Campbell, Kevin Browning and Geoff Jebb for their assistance with this tribute.