

## AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

### 312920 Michael John (Mick) Sullivan

11 August 1949 – 12 March 2015

By Peter Bruce, OAM



Mick Sullivan was one of the many characters of the RAA in the late 60s, early 70s. Originally from Wangaratta, Mick took up boxing at an early age and fought in various armature tournaments during the 60s. He joined the Army in 1969 and was posted to 4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment in Townsville. Mick deployed to Vietnam with the Regiment in March 1970 and was originally an Artillery Signaller in HQ Battery. Promoted to Lance Bombardier, Mick became the Forward Observers Assistant with Whiskey Company. His Forward Observer Party was under command of 107 Field Battery from May to October 1970 when Whiskey Company returned to their parent unit. Mick returned to Australia on the 12 of March 1971.

Mick's mates from Vietnam days recall his cheeky smile and his positive attitude with his usual "no problems mate" attitude, no matter what the situation.

After Vietnam, Michael Corps transferred to the Royal Corps of Transport and was promoted to Sergeant. After several postings Mick eventually discharged from the Army in October 1993. With his final posting in Ballarat, Mick and his family decided to settle in Ballarat for good. As with many military transitions to civilian life, the first 12 months were the hardest for Mick and his family. After a period of adjustment, Mick settled down with a local firm as a storeman and driver.

After several years, Micks health took a turn for the worst and he never returned to work. He did suffer in silence and never let on to his old mates any concerns about his health. Mick became the stay at home Dad for his family while wife Glenda picked up some part time work especially during school holiday times.



Mick always attended Anzac Day marches and Vietnam Veterans Day marches until his later years when his health restricted his attendance. Mick was unable to complete the march himself but absolutely refused any suggestion of a wheel chair. He would watch the marches on television and listen to the services that followed. He would often meet up with mates after the service at the local RSL club. He tried hard not to miss these days but his health occasionally failed him and he could not attend.

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Mick always took the time to talk to his kids about Vietnam. He would even on occasions go to their school and give a talk on Vietnam. He was very popular with all the local kids who loved to question him about his time in Vietnam. Mick of course loved the attention and was always eager to respond. Every morning with his first and second cuppa, Mick could be found doing the crosswords in the Herald Sun and the local newspapers. He would read through the papers and if something caught his eye about Vietnam or boxing, Mick would cut it out and file it away for future reference. Glenda tells us she is still finding bits of paper that Mick had put away somewhere for future reference. Mick might have been physically restricted but he kept his mind broad and active.

In his later years, Mick liked to drink at a couple of the local pubs and went there a couple of times during the week. He also had the occasional flutter on the trots which became an interest for him. In the last 20 or so years of his life, Mick adjusted to the simple life of living in one place, after the nomadic life in the Army. He also adjusted to the not so simple life of helping to raise five children and eight grandchildren. He did this in his quite but soldering way.

### **Acknowledgements:**

- Glenda Sullivan, Micks widow and family for supplying an insight into Micks personal life.