

## AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

### VX 120503 Lance Bombardier Raymond Vincent (Mick) Heffernan

(31 October 1923 – 30 August 2014)

By Colonel Arthur Burke, OAM (Retd)



VX120503 Raymond Vincent (Mick) Heffernan passed away peacefully in Brisbane on 30 August 2014 at 90 years of age. Mick was a stalwart of the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment Association and a big, dedicated, family man.

Mick was big—big in stature, big of heart and big as a friend. He was not a small man and, as a signaller with headquarters 2/4<sup>th</sup> during the Second World War, will be most remembered in his role as a young 19 year-old DonR (dispatch rider). He somewhat dwarfed a rather small motorcycle as he putt-puttered around from headquarters to batteries to observation posts delivering messages.

He was big of heart, always friendly and endearing in his approach and typified the saying, 'would give you the shirt off his back'. Mick established the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment reunions and gatherings in Brisbane in 1986 and was the power behind a healthy 2/4<sup>th</sup> attendance at the 7<sup>th</sup> Division Reunion in Bundaberg in 1987. This was the time when today's '3/4<sup>th</sup>' Field Regiment in Townsville sent commanding officer Arthur Burke and unit history officer Greg Bilton to reforge links with its predecessor unit. Mick welcomed them with open arms and really made the youngsters feel at home. Over the years, he continued to run the 2/4<sup>th</sup> gatherings, always dipping into his pocket for those little extras that were required for a successful function.

Mick was big as a friend—and he had many across the ex-service communities of all his wartime contacts: 7<sup>th</sup> Division, 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Anti-Tank and 2/6<sup>th</sup> Field Regiments, 2/25<sup>th</sup> and 2/33<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Battalions and of course all his 2/4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment mates. Following the Bundaberg reunion Arthur Burke obtained permission for his 4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment to wear the colour patch of the 2/4<sup>th</sup> and this began a closer relationship between him and Mick. When Arthur was next posted to Brisbane, he began attending the 2/4<sup>th</sup>'s gatherings at the Sherwood Services Club and was always welcomed warmly by Mick. Eventually Arthur took over conduct of these functions from Mick, but the old dog was always there as a mentor, advisor and close friend.

Mick was dedicated—to his unit Association, to his associated wartime unit associations and to his friends. Without his detailed planning, many of the 2/4<sup>th</sup>'s functions in Brisbane would not have occurred: his unit's birthday celebrations, the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its raising and the joyous Christmas parties became legendary. His dedication was recognised by the Association by the award of life membership. But he was also a dedicated supporter particularly of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division and the 2/25<sup>th</sup> and 2/33<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Battalion Associations, recognised by at least two life membership awards. Then there was his dedication to his friends, an area in which he excelled. His warm welcomes, his 'Is there anything I can do for you' attitude, and his loyalty to the widows of passed 2/4<sup>th</sup> veterans were all most commendable.

## AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

Finally Mick Heffernan was a family man. He had three families—the intimate one with Gladys, the loving patriarch with his children and their families, and his 2/4<sup>th</sup> family. Glad was never left at home and always included in everything he did. It was evident when Mick began a sentence and Glad finished it that they were in tune and on the same wavelength. Conversely, Glad was a tower of strength to Mick and ably supported all his many endeavours. With his children and grandchildren, he was a loving family patriarch who never missed an opportunity to attend school occasions, sports and family gatherings. With his 2/4<sup>th</sup> family, he was the perfect Queensland secretary. He kept 'headquarters' in Melbourne up to date with his state's members, chased up mates who had missed one of the regular lunches and in later years became a reliable point of contact for the widows.

As the years have passed, the number of 2/4<sup>th</sup> veterans attending functions has been surpassed by the number of their widows attending. Mick was the last of the veterans regularly attending at the Sherwood gatherings—now there will only be 2/4<sup>th</sup> widows and family members. Mick's passing is thus the end of an era and a very sad time in the history of the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment in Queensland.

Mick is survived by his loving wife, Gladys and five sons, Graham, Ron, Ray, Russ, Rod and their families. Vale Raymond Vincent (Mick) Heffernan—stalwart of the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment Association and a big, dedicated, family man; now serving again with so many of his mates in that Great Gun Park up above.

### **Acknowledgements:**

- Jodie Richter courtesy of the Courier Mail.