

Vale Nipper O'Brien

The old and bold of the Ipswich Batteries will recall with great fondness one Warrant Officer Nevill John 'Nipper' O'Brien who was a guiding light to the Nashos of the 1950s and the CMF Gunners of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Nipper joined the Regular Army when it was reformed in 1948 and served through till 1976, his last six years being with the Emergency Reserve.

He 'grew up' in 1 Fd Regt in Sydney and became a well respected cadre member of the 11th National Service Training Battalion at Wacol, Brisbane during the 1950s.

As Nasho came to an end, he returned to Sydney at the School of Artillery. Nipper was the BSM of 105 Fd Bty when they moved up to Brisbane in 1960 to form the new 4 Fd Regt at Wacol. He then served in Malaysia with 103 Fd Bty as the BSM 1961-63.

Nipper loved the Brisbane area and rejoined his old 30 Mdm Regt Gunner mates at Ipswich as the cadre WO in the now 5 Fd Regt. Again, he was seen as a role model for all ranks.

Promotion to Warrant Officer Class One came with a posting to 8th Cadet Battalion—a stepping stone to the zenith of his career as RSM of 1st Aviation Regiment, his terminal posting.

In addition to qualifying for the Australian Service Medal 1945-75 (Clasp SE Asia), the Australian Defence Medal and the Pingat Jasa Malaysia, Warrant Officer O'Brien was a recipient of the Long Service and Good Conduct, and the Meritorious Service Medals.

Nev had not enjoyed good health in his final years of service and this became a significant detractor to his enjoying retirement. He settled in the Glasshouse Mountains area and, though forced into seclusion by his health, was always willing to contribute his knowledge to those who asked.

His family recently moved him down to Tanah Merah, south of Brisbane where he passed away on 23.9.2010. The Association's condolences go out to his widow, Maureen and her family.

Vale Nevill John 'Nipper' O'Brien—a well respected, dedicated professional soldier with the highest standards of the old school. Gone to that Great Gun Park up above to assist his mates once more.