

BIOGRAPHY

THOMAS "GRAHAM" HAMPTON

Born in Newcastle, New South Wales in 1957 where I lived until I joined the Australian Regular Army on 25th June 1974.

Following Recruit Training at the 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Kapooka I was allocated to the Royal Australian Artillery and completed my gun course on the M2A2 Howitzers in late October 1994.

My first posting was to the 103rd Field Battery, 8th/12th Medium Regiment in late 1974 which was a Medium Battery and immediately did a conversion course to the 5.5-inch Howitzers. I remained in 103 Medium Battery until the end of 1995 at which time I was posted to 106th Field Battery, 4th Field Regiment in Townsville. The 106th Field Battery was a newly created Battery tasked to conduct the trials of the new medium artillery piece to replace the then current 5.5-inch gun and a suitable gun tractor.

Having been promoted to Lance Bombardier in 1977 and in preparation to be promoted to Bombardier in early 1978 whilst in the field on exercise the new RAP Sergeant stepped onto my gun platform and ordered me off advising me that I was colour blind (CP4 Unsafe) and that I should never have been in Artillery. Upon return to the Regiment I was placed in the Q Store and after 8 hours of folding blankets and cleaning weapons I elected to be discharged and was immediately moved to the Battery Orderly Room where I filled out the paperwork for my discharge.

The Bombardier Clerk at the time, who went on to be a career long mentor and life long friend placed my application for discharge in his bottom draw. After 6 weeks of waiting to be told when I would be discharged, I was adapting to the life of a Clerk. Very few parades, lightly if at all polished boots, coffee all day long etc, so I asked if I could do a Clerks course. Life from that point on changed significantly for me.

From mid 1978 to my discharge on October 1994 I worked as a Clerk Admin posted to, in Corps and out of Corps postings including a 6 months detachment on Exercise Long Look 88 to MODUK an experience I will never forget. Ultimately, I retired from the Australian Regular Army as a Warrant Officer Class One.

Following discharge my first job was as the General Manager of a packaging company with 80 mildly to moderately intellectually handicapped employees with a staff of 12 supervisors. A significantly rewarding position and an experience that I cherish to this day. Unfortunately, due to a significant illness I stood down to recover from an operation.

In late 1996 I was then offered a position as the Coordinating Officer/2IC of a dedicated section within P&O Services that submitted tenders for all the outsourcing the Department of Defence was doing at the time.

By this time, 1998, my wife a returned veteran, of Somalia, was in the latter stages of her career with just 3 years to go and we by then had had 3 children and I made the decision to retire from the workforce and become a stay at home father whilst my wife finished her 20 years of service.

In late 2000 our family moved to Caloundra, Queensland where we remain to this day.

I have 2 boys both of whom are members of the Australian Regular Army, one of which is in the Royal Australian Artillery flying drones, and a daughter currently attending university.

In September of 2005 I along with two others founded the Australian Artillery Association which at the time was simply a website based association. Over the years the Australian Artillery Association has grown significantly with a membership in excess of 1000. So to has the role of the association becoming much more interactive with our members both serving and non-serving and I look forward to the future changes that are planned for the association.

Throughout all of this my wife of 37 years, whom I love dearly, has stood by me supporting and motivating me to be the person I am.

