

A SOLDIERS' STORY



Service No.: 4720163
Name: Kenneth Steven BENNETT
Nickname:



Medals and Decorations

Australian Active Service Medal 1945 - 75
Vietnam Medal
Australian Service Medal 1945 - 75
Australian Defence Medal
National Service Medal 1951 - 72
Vietnamese Campaign Medal

Rank: Trooper
Service: Army
Enlisted: 3 Oct 1968
Discharged: 3 Oct 1970

Ken was born at Flint, North Wales (UK), on 5 Feb 1948 to John Stanley Bennett and Kathleen Bennett (nee Marston). He was the eldest of four children, 2 boys and 2 girls. His father was a carpenter in Flint. The family migrated from Wales to Australia at the end of 1949 as his father had been seconded to the South Australian Housing Trust to construct houses at Elizabeth. The family originally established at Elder Park, but then relocated to Dawe Park.

Ken commenced his primary schooling at Edwardstown and completed his secondary schooling at Henley High School. On completion of school he undertook a carpentry apprenticeship with his father; he remained in this employ until his marble came out as part of the National Service "lottery" on 3 Mar 1968.

On 3 Oct 1968 he reported to Keswick Barracks (SA) for enlistment processing before being sent to Puckapunyal (Vic) for basic training of 10 weeks. On completion of this training he was allocated to Royal Australian Armoured Corps (RAAC) and remained at "Pucka", being sent to the RAAC Centre for Corps training: during Corps training he damaged his leg and spent 3 months in hospital. As a result he did not fully complete his training as a driver/operator, but on release from hospital was still posted to B Squadron, 3 Cavalry Regiment, at Holsworthy. On arrival at Holsworthy this lack of training was noted, so he was returned to "Pucka" to complete his Corps training before again returning to Holsworthy. He then remained at Holsworthy until late 1969 when he was posted to A Squadron, 3 Cavalry Regiment in Vietnam (SVN).

He undertook a number of operations in SVN, one of these being Operation

"Cung Chung" in Jul 1970, the largest joint Australian /South Vietnamese offensive launched in Phouc Tuy Province at that time. After this operation Ken was promoted from driver to crew commander and given the rank of acting Corporal.

In early Sep 1970 Ken departed SVN by air and landed in Sydney before returning to Adelaide for some well earned leave. During this period he reacquainted himself with Jennifer Eileen Graham, a young lady who was to become his wife: they were married at Enfield (NSW) on 26 Nov 1970. They had 3 children – 2 girls and a boy.

After marriage, Ken decided to remain in Sydney and started his own business in the carpentry trade. Initially the family lived in Parramatta (NSW) before relocating to the Blue Mountains (NSW).

The "rat race" became too much for Ken, so in 1982 he and his family returned to Adelaide and assisted his father in the building trade. They settled in Woodville and remained in that location for the next 24 years, but again fate intervened.

In Late 2007, Ken and his good mate Bert Slaap, won travel auctions to the Bayside Units. The two families came to Tumby and liked what they saw. Bert who had only come on the trip to help Ken look for a house ended up buying before Ken. But not to be denied, Ken bought a house in Wishart St. and moved to Tumby Bay in 2008 to fulfil a retirement dream of a nice relaxed life style and plenty of fishing.

Ken was a keen sportsman in his younger days, having played hockey at state grade as a junior and competed in archery. However his current-day passion is fishing and Tumby Bay has met this requirement.

Ken has also become very involved in community activities; he is a member of the rifle club and is currently the secretary of the "Men's Shed". He joined the Tumby Bay RSL in 2008 and is now the Vice President of the Sub Branch.



Left:
"Stand To"

Right: M113 APC's
Phouc Tuy province

