

**Fraser Maxwell Gibson** was born in Melbourne on 21 March 1947 and completed his secondary education at Ivanhoe Grammar School in Melbourne. He would become the older brother to Fergus and Guy. Fraser found work as a Sales Representative with GM Furniture. He joined the Army as Air Cadet 39548 and on 12 July 1967 commenced officer training at OTU with Class 3/67. Fraser was allocated to 25 Section, 9 Platoon, C Company. His 'Father' was David Eyres. In his senior term Fraser was a Section Commander in 2 Platoon, A Company.



Fraser graduated with his class on 21 December 1967, was allocated to the Engineers and posted to 2 RTB, Puckapunyal, to await his flying training. On 22 December Fraser became a member of the Australian Staff Corps. He was attached to the Ground Liaison Section at Eastern Command from 8 October 1968 until commencing his Basic Flying Training with Course 1 at Point Cook on 13 January 1969. This was followed by the Operational Conversion Course (Rotary Wing) at RAAF Amberley commencing 14 July 1969. On completion of his training, some six months later Fraser was allocated to 171 Air Cavalry Flight. He was posted to Vietnam, and 161 (Indep) Recce Flight, from 10 September 1970 until 9 September 1971.

From the 161 Recce Flight website: On the 21 December 1970, Second Lieutenant Gibson was tasked to direct artillery fire onto a target in the Long Hai mountains, an area in which the enemy is known to engage all aircraft in range of his weapons. During the subsequent low level damage assessment of the target Second Lieutenant Gibson noticed another possible enemy location nearby. Knowing very well the dangers involved, Second Lieutenant Gibson immediately commenced a reconnaissance at tree top height in an effort to locate any enemy in the area. During the reconnaissance the aircraft was engaged by the enemy and received a number of hits from a sustained burst of machine gun fire. Although the aircraft was extensively damaged, Second Lieutenant Gibson was able to land it in a safe area thereby preventing further damage.

On the 3 March 1971, Second Lieutenant Gibson was flying a Sioux helicopter in direct support of 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment. During the afternoon, after initiating a contact with a superior enemy force, a platoon called for maximum fire support to extract themselves from a dangerous situation. In order to mark its location to supporting arms the platoon requested that additional smoke marker grenades be dropped into its position.

Whilst Second Lieutenant Gibson flew his unarmed aircraft low over the contact area in an effort to drop smoke grenades to the platoon his aircraft was hit in the engine and cockpit area by ground fire. With great skill and determination Second Lieutenant Gibson was able to land the aircraft in a safe area thereby saving his passenger from injury.

In carrying out his task as a helicopter reconnaissance pilot Second Lieutenant Gibson has displayed an extremely high order of determination and aggressiveness which has enabled him to consistently obtain valuable information on enemy movement and installations. His personal courage, determination and enthusiasm were at all times evident in the eight hundred hours of flying support he provided to ground forces. His conduct has been an inspiration to the other pilots of the unit and brings great credit upon himself, his Regiment and the Australian Army. The Australian Government Gazette of 17 December 1971, records that Fraser Gibson was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross. Back in Australia, on 29 May 1972 Fraser was posted to 182 Recce Flight.



In 1968 Fraser had married Gayle. They had a daughter Gabrielle and a grandson Fraser. Fraser died peacefully at East Melbourne on 15 March 2023. A private service and burial were held.