

Gerard Eugene Tobin was born on 14 August 1943 to Annie and Noel Tobin. He was serving in the Citizen Military Forces with 2 RVR, Ballarat, in the mid-1960s in the same unit as John Sonneveld (2/68), and like John, was a teacher. John Sonneveld said that Gerry was good for morale in their CMF company, he was all 'fun and games'. In 1968 both Gerry and John decided that becoming a Pilot with the Army looked an attractive life. Both applied for Pilot Training and both were accepted, but first they needed to pass the officer training course run for National Servicemen at OTU. They commenced at OTU Scheyville on 17 May with Class 2/68. Gerry was allocated to 27 Section, 9 Platoon, C Company. In Senior Term, Gerry was a 'Father' to Cadet John Power (who did not graduate), a schoolmate of Les Boag (4/68). Gerry went well in the 'Junior' Term of the course, but by the end of the 'Senior' Term was struggling. Maybe his 'fun and games' approach did not impress the Directing Staff. He was given the option to 'Repeat' the 'Senior' Term, which he accepted. However, it was not to be. Gerry left the course before completing his 'Repeat' term. John, however, passed the Scheyville course, and his flying training, and for decades flew helicopters for various organisations.

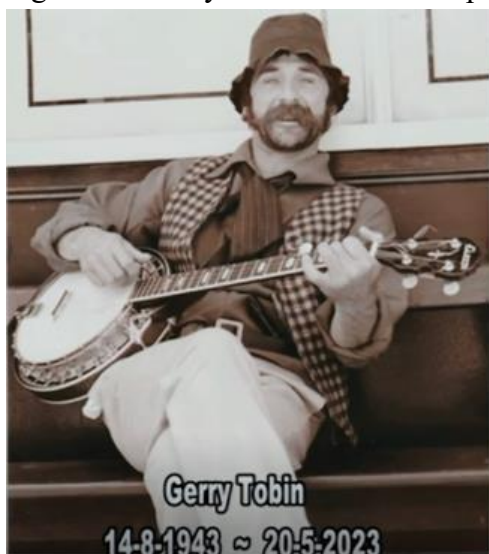


Returning to Ballarat Gerry rejoined 2 RVR in early 1969 as a Temporary Corporal. No doubt due to his teaching location he discharged some six months later. From 1979 to 1981 Gerry was the School Principal at St Augustine's School in Maryborough, Victoria. The St. Augustine's Parish remembered Gerry as a 'once met, never forgotten' type of person.



Leaving teaching, Gerry went to work at Sovereign Hill, Ballarat's world-renowned tourist attraction. He was a jack-of-all trades there for some thirty years: a musician, performer, larrikin etc, the face of Sovereign Hill. Gerry was also seen in television advertisements, a familiar one being for Ballarat's Cheapest Cars where Gerry drove people around in an ex-Army early model Hi Ace bus with the catch-cry of 'Stop the Bus!' In 2004 Gerry competed in the World

Goldpanning Titles and as President of the Victorian Goldpanning Association helped to bring the championships to Sovereign Hill for the first of numerous times. Gerry married Rozzie and they were together for 48 years before Rozzie passed away several years ago. Their children were Paul, Damien and



Deborah, who had also worked at Sovereign Hill. Gerry died peacefully at Ballarat on 20 May 2023.

Gerry leaves behind his children and five grandchildren. Family and friends joined together at the Ballarat Funeral Centre on 29 May to farewell him.

Deborah spoke on the family's behalf and entertained the attendees with some of her father's antics.

Below: Gerry Tobin at work at Sovereign Hill, Ballarat.

