

Vale – John Dawson 1/72

Some months ago one of my Scheyville sons, Geoff Butts asked if I was in contact with his military brother, John Dawson, and if so, could I let him know of a proposed reunion of the 1/72 class.

Having not been in contact with John for more than a decade I went about finding him by contacting the two Dawson's in John's hometown of Uralla. Expecting to locate John and getting a "serve" for being out of touch for so long, I was instead shocked to be told by his brother that John had taken his own life some seven years ago.

Anyone that ever met John would attest that he was a special person who made a lasting impression. A genuine and popular individual, he was articulate and a natural leader of people. This came to the fore when he joined 4RAR as a Platoon Commander in mid 1973. Respected by the soldiers he led and by his peers and superiors alike, John had a deserved reputation for being firm and fair. Such was his standing that our Commanding Officer invited John to apply for a permanent commission.

John was taken by the invitation, but having trained as a teacher, wanted the opportunity to see if teaching was the career for him. It was, and John went on to become a Primary School Principal, a position he held when for reasons unknown to his family, he took his life. At the time of his death he left a widow and four children under ten years of age.

I am sure that all you who knew John will be as shocked as Geoff and myself at finding out of his passing.

*Rob Johnson
Brisbane
4/71*