



2. THE 193

Vale

25 Jan 32 Colonel D. R. Kepper, MID, Psc-tt 26 Jan 98

Colonel Dimitri Richard (Doc) Kepper was born in Tallinn, Estonia on 25 January 1932 to **George and Lucy Kepper**, who had some years earlier migrated from Estonia to Australia and became Australian citizens. Dick's birth occurred during a subsequent visit to Estonia.

Dick Kepper grew up in Willoughby NSW and completed his education at Nth Sydney Boys Technical High School. He was selected for entry to the Royal Military College class of 1950. Early in his service as a staff cadet he was to be identified, initially by the legendary **RSM, WO1 'Fango' Watson** as 'Doctor Kepper' abbreviated to **(Doc)**, because of the initials of his Christian names. The nickname stuck throughout his Army career and beyond. As a cadet he was seen to be reserved, very competitive and somewhat intense, his sporting interests included rugby and squash. He graduated into the RAAC as a **lieutenant on 9 Dec 53**.

He served as a Troop Leader at 1st Armoured Regiment until late 1955, when he was seconded to the Department of Supply's Tropic Trials Team for nine months. Short postings back to the Armoured Regiment and 12 National Service Training Battalion followed.

In November 1956, he was posted to the UK for armoured corps technical training during which time he was promoted to Captain. On return to Australia in May 1958 Dick was posted to the Armoured School at Puckapunyal as an instructor followed by two years service as Adjutant at 1st Armoured Regiment. During a nine month detachment to the Army Design Establishment, Dick met and later married **Miss Faye Robinson**. In Jul 61 he was posted back to the Armoured Centre to command the Gunnery Wing.

Promotion to the rank of Major in July 63 saw Dick posted to the staff of DARMD in Canberra. July 64 saw the Keppers back in the UK for the RMC of Science course followed by attendance at the Staff College, Camberley in 1965. A year on the Australian Army Staff at Australia House completed a very fruitful two and a half years in Britain.

On return to Australia in early 1967, Dick served with HQ Eastern Command in Sydney prior to an impending tour of duty as head of the Operations Branch at HQ, Australian Force Vietnam in Saigon. For his exemplary service especially during the Tet offensive of Feb 68 he was **awarded an MID**. July 68 saw **Maj Kepper** posted back to DARMD, Canberra. On 12 Aug 70 Dick was promoted and posted to command of 1st Armoured Regiment.

It was whilst in command of the Regiment in May 72 in the middle of what was seen to be a most promising military career, that Dick was struck down by a massive aneurism. He was invalided out of the Army in May 73 and in recognition of his outstanding and devoted service was granted the honorary rank of **Colonel on 17 May 73**.

Since 1973, Colonel Kepper lived at the RSL War Veterans Home, Collaroy Plateau, NSW.

For those who served with him, he will be remembered as a **good friend**, a **gentleman** and a fine Australian soldier who has passed through the mud and the blood to the green fields beyond.

