

# RAKE, Harold Robert (4722091 Army)



Image 1 ©Harry Rake 2020

Black and white photograph of Harold Robert Rake, taken in 1971, whilst he was serving with the 8th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment.

<b>Name</b>	<b>RAKE, Harold Robert Private</b>
<b>Service Number</b>	4722091 Army
<b>Date of Birth</b>	23rd June 1950
<b>Place of Birth</b>	Adelaide SA
<b>Resident</b>	Victor Harbor SA

Harold (Harry) Robert Rake was born at Victor Harbor on 23 June 1950, the third son of Eric Anthony Rake and Evelyn May Rake (*nee* Chapman). He was educated at the Inman Valley Public School and the Victor Harbor High School and on leaving school he was employed as a postal officer with the Post Master General's Department (PMG) for four years prior to his call-up at age 20 for National Service on 10 November 1970. Harry underwent his medical examination on 2 May 1970 and classified as "A".

The National Service Act 1964, legislated on 24 November 1964, required 20-year old Australian males to serve in the Australian Army for a period of two years. The two-year period had been nominated by the Army General Staff as sufficient time for recruit and corps training and more than one year of regimental or unit service. The Defence Act was amended in May 1965 to provide that conscripts could be obliged to serve overseas, and in March 1966, Prime Minister Harold Holt announced that National Servicemen would be sent to Vietnam to fight in units of the Australian Regular Army.

The selection of conscripts was based on date of birth, and conscripts were obligated to give two years' continuous full-time service, followed by a further three years on the active reserve list. Although registration was compulsory, a process of selection by ballot determined who would be called up. Two ballots were conducted each year. The ballots contained several dates in the selected period, and all males with corresponding birthdays were called up for national service. The ballot was conducted using a lottery barrel and marbles representing number of days in each year. The selection was based on what day in a 365 day calendar a birthday fell on. All males upon attaining the age of 19 were required to complete the registration form, which were available from post offices.

Harry's elder brothers, Wesley and Ross, had been previously conscripted into the Army and had served in the infantry and artillery corps, respectively. Their father, Eric Anthony Rake had served

with the militia forces and the 2nd AIF during the Second World War (SX30919 Sergeant E.A. Rake, 110th Casualty Clearing Station), serving in Australia and overseas in the Pacific campaign.

Harry undertook his basic training at the 1st Recruit Training Battalion (1RTB), Kapooka, near Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. Previously national servicemen from Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia underwent their basic training at 2RTB, Puckapunyal, Victoria.

Upon arrival at Kapooka on 12 November, Harry and his fellow recruits were given a short medical examination, a number of injections, regulation haircut (no hair) and his uniform and kit.

For almost every army recruit, whether a conscript or volunteer, the initial experience of army discipline was a shock to one's system. For ten weeks recruits were subjected to a set routine that consisted of personal hygiene, cleaning, eating, uniform inspections, physical exercise, military training in knowledge and weapons handling, first aid, marching, drill and field craft.

Throughout their training field craft was one of the essential skills taught to all trainees. Some of the areas they were instructed in included how to use all the military equipment issued to them, how to set up a section and platoon harbour, artillery fire and movement, and camouflage and concealment.

With weapons and marksmanship training, recruits received instruction on all aspects of firearms. This started from the basic principles of shooting, then included the finer points of the application of fire. Recruits were shown the impact and fire power of different weapon systems at close hand on a 25m range. All recruits were required to pass all live fire shoots during the duration of their course. The basic infantry weapon was the Belgian designed-Australian manufactured FN 7.62mm self-loading rifle (SLR).

Physical fitness and training formed an integral part of military training throughout the Recruit Training Battalions with a large number of the instructors coming from the Royal Australian Artillery regiments and were generally renown (infamously) for their perceived ability to inflict pain upon the unfit recruit.

In navigation training classes recruits were taught how to navigate cross-country during day and night using a map, protractor & compass. They were given theory lessons on the aspects of navigation and then they were required to apply the knowledge in practical navigation scenarios.

This routine continued for six days a week and recruits were generally given each Sunday off unless they were rostered for duty. Church parades were compulsory and 1RTB (Recruit Training Battalion) had churches and Padres for each of the major denominations. After the Sunday Service, recruits had time to themselves, and leisure time was spent doing their personal laundry, uniform cleaning and maintenance and letter writing. Weekend leave was non-existent and private vehicles were only allowed to be brought back to the base after the mid-course break.

Half way during their recruit training, each recruit was given a four-day leave pass (which included a Saturday and Sunday) and allowed to travel to their nominated home address. All travel was at the recruit's private expense. At that time, the weekly wage for a recruit soldier was \$36 per week and all soldiers were paid fortnightly.

At the end of the recruit training, each course held a passing out parade and formal platoon portraits were taken. At this time, each recruit was notified which corps they had been posted to and what mustering they were selected for.

On 26 January 1971, Harry completed his basic training, and was posted to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps. He took up his initial Corp training at the Infantry Centre at Ingleburn for specialised training as a rifleman.

What followed was ten weeks of gruelling training, and much of the time was spent in the field. Harry and his fellow soldiers received advanced weapons training on the SLR, SMG, the M60 machine gun and the M79 grenade launcher.

Following this corps training, Harry was posted to the 8th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (8RAR). The Battalion had just completed its second tour in Vietnam on 29 October 1970 and returned to its Enoggera base, near Brisbane.

On 26 March 1972, whilst on leave Harry was charged by the South Australian Police for driving under the influence and exceeding the speed limit. He appeared in the Christies Beach Local Court and fined \$145 with costs of \$3.50 and allowed two months to pay. Even though the offence was a civil offence, Australian Military Regulation 753 ensured that such civil convictions would be recorded in the soldier's service record.

With the subsequent wind down on Australia's military involvement in South Vietnam, the Army decided to shorten the tenure of national servicemen's obligatory two years, and any soldier desiring an early termination were generally granted a discharge.

In early May 1972, Harry was at Central Command Personnel Depot (CCPD) where he underwent pre-discharge formalities, and on May 9th, he officially was discharged from the Army.

Harry was later entitled to the Australian Defence Medal, and the Anniversary of National Service 1951-1972 Medal. He married Beverley Mitchell and there were two children of the marriage. One son Eric, would go onto join the Army Andrew Beaven Rake (S/N 4803792).

# References:

Australian War Memorial. (2010). *National Service Scheme, 1951-1972 | The Australian War Memorial*. Awm.gov.au.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/conscription/vietnam>

Rake. H., 2020., Personal Story as told by Harry and Andrew Rake.

Rake. H., 2020., *Images supplied by Harold Rake*.

Soldier Career Management Agency., 2020., Service file of Harold Robert Rake held at CARO.

*Compiled by Victor Harbor RSL member and retired journalist Graham McInerney, May 2020.*

Updated by T.Young & M.Young 30/04/2026

# Appendix



Image 2© Harold Rake 2020

*Portrait of No 2 Platoon and Staff, 'A' Wing (Training), 1 RTB, Kapooka taken in January 1971, the photographer is unknown but would have been a professional photographer from Wagga Wagga. Harry is in the front row, third from right.*



Image 3© Harold Rake 2020

*Members of Harry's rifle platoon section are shown having a break during the 8RAR exercise. Harry is shown sitting on the tree log, third from right.*



Image 4© Harold Rake 2020  
*Black and white photograph of Harold Robert Rake, taken c. June 1971, whilst he was serving with the 8th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. At the time this photograph was taken, the Battalion was on exercise in the army's training area near Enoggera. Rake is holding his 7.62mm FN SLR; the pouch on his web belt is the SLR magazine pouch and attached to it is the general-purpose toggle rope. He is wearing the standard issue poncho and bush hat. Rake served with 8 RAR from 23 April 1971 to 9 May 1972. From the H.R. Rake family collection.*



Image 5© Harold Rake 2020  
*Harry (right) is shown here in a two-man tent with Private NH Martin, also a national serviceman; they are on exercise with 8RAR in the Enoggera area.*

Register No P119256

**CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE**

Army No 4722091 Rank Private

Previous Army Service: NIL

Name Harold Robert RAKE

Date of Enlistment: 10/11/70 at Adelaide SA

Date of Discharge: 9/5/72 at Adelaide SA

Decorations and Medals: NIL

Reason for Discharge: Having completed the prescribed period of service in the ARAS (INS)

Army Trade or Posting: Rifleman

Service Badge: NIL

Army Trade Qualifications: NIL

General Remarks:

Types of Employment During Service: Recruit and Corps training 6 months. Regimental and Rifleman duties with Infantry unit 1 year

Date 5/5/72

*D. Reid* Major (RL)  
Records Officer  
Central Army Records Office

Total Effective Service: 1 years 182 days

Service Outside Australia: NIL years NIL days

Signature of Soldier *H. R. Rake*

**IMPORTANT**

This certificate is issued without alterations, erasures or blank spaces. You should on no account part with this certificate. If using it as a reference you should NOT mail it but should use a copy certified by a responsible person. This certificate will NOT be replaced unless the original can be produced to Army Records in an identifiable form.

**WARNING**

On leaving Her Majesty's Service you are hereby reminded that the unauthorized communication by you to another person AT ANY TIME of any information you may have acquired which might be useful to an enemy in War renders you liable to prosecution under the Official Secrets Act.

Image 6© Harold Rake 2020

Discharge certificate issued on 5 May 1972 which records Harry's service.