

AN AUSTRALIAN HELLENIC VETERAN TRIBUTE TO JOHN DEIGHTON (JPA) FROM AND AUSTRALIANS OF GREEK HERITAGE

Abalinx Peter Adamis 17 October 2015



JOHN DEIGHTON (JPA - to his close comrades). There are far better and greater men and women who could speak and write far better, more eloquently and with more knowledge, skill and passion of John Deighton. I cannot and will not write or comment about his military experiences as others better qualified and have that right. Mine is only to write about his personal influence and that of the Australian Hellenic veteran community.

As such I seek forgiveness from those who knew him better. I can only speak from the time I met the great man in Victoria whilst he was working close with old friends the like of [Bruce Ruxton](#), John Anagnostou, Keith Rossis and Michael Lidis.

All of the above were thick as thieves during their pinnacle at the RSL and much good work was done under their tutelage. John Anagnostou and Michael Lidis always in competition with each other would go onto to do good work for the Australian Hellenic Victorian veteran community.

My time with John was during the nineties whilst still serving as a Warrant Officer with the Australian Regular Army. John along with Bruce Ruxton and that indomitable old man Keith Rossis made my transition into the RSL and to the world of civil life much easier. To them I am and always will be eternally grateful as I was still struggling to raise four Aussie sons on my own. (I guess in hindsight I was worth the bloody trouble).

John was a man's man, standing head and shoulders above his peers. He was born on the Island of Corcyra (now Greece) and like Bruce Ruxton passionate about his love of the Hellenic (Greek) people. I remember many a time during ANZAC days meeting him for an ANZAC breakfast down in South Melbourne at Bruce Ruxton's office amidst of the many others who congregated there.



John Deighton along with Bruce Ruxton, and members of the Hellenic RSL Branch, John Anagnostou and Michael Lidis were instrumental in negotiating with local authorities to long lease the Hellenic RSL Branch in South Melbourne. As far as the Australian Hellenic veterans were concerned, [John Pericles Arthur Deighton](#) and Bruce Ruxton were honorary Australian Greeks.

John was also instrumental along with others for his support to the Australian Hellenic War Memorial in the Domain Gardens of Melbourne. A strong supporter of ex servicemen and women, a tireless worker within the Victorian RSL Branch, loved and admired by Australians of Greek heritage and not a man to be crossed if it meant going against Australian values.

From my solitary point of view, during the times I spent interviewing him on his life, John appeared to have a positive outlook on life that reached out and touched many across the generations. He had seen young men and women come and go and with each he would ensure that no one went away empty handed. Like Bruce Ruxton, he was never afraid of the truth or of confronting issues

that were found to be challenging by others. In truth, John will be sadly missed but having passed on in the knowledge that whilst he was amongst us, his legacy still lives on.



Vietnam veteran Brigadier John Deighton is seen during the ANZAC Day parade on April 25, 2013 in Melbourne, Australia. Getty images.

We often too readily forget those men and women who have influenced our lives and later regret that we did not have the bloody balls and courage to express it publicly. All that I can say at this point in time is that if, I at the age of 65; an Australian of Greek heritage who has embraced Australian values can write about men like John Deighton and express my heartfelt thanks; then the spirit of the "Digger", "mateship" and "ANZAC" is not dead.

To John and to those who made this country of ours safe and free from the evils of this world, we who have worn the uniform of this nation we call home, Australia, salute you. JPA may you rest in peace in the embrace of your mates.

[Absent at Roll Call by George Mansford](#)

*There was no answer when his name was called at roll today
A comrade who was with us in thick and thin has faded away
Now there's a gap in our ranks where he used to be
Oh how he will be missed by the likes of you and me*

*Never reluctant to speak his mind, no matter where
Yet was always there when time for warriors to dare
If the chips were down and the day looked grim
He stood fast, shoulder to shoulder with him and him*

*Who could forget the familiar grin and "giddy mate" to all
Love of country and Duty First whenever the bugle did call
His special comforting cloak of mate ship no longer to be found
How will it ever be the same without such a comrade around?*

*Soldier, patriot and a true blue cobbler to you and me
His spirit is with us and always will be
Such fond and proud memories of him forever so strong
As we that are left march forward with song*



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