

Captain Ernest Alfred Flint MBE OAM ED

January 11, 1927 – July 3, 2015

Roll No. 107



Captain Ernest (Ernie) Flint Rtd. was born in Sydney on 11th January 1927. Aged 16, he joined the US Army Small Ships as an AB in October 1943.

The US Army Small Ships were formed in 1942 to run supplies to forces fighting in the Philippines using tugs, fishing vessels, sailing vessels etc, requisitioned or purchased in Australia and New Zealand and manned by Australians too young or old or infirm to join the Australian Armed Services.

At the time the Small Ships was established the Philippines had fallen to the Japanese and the focus had switched to supplying Allied Forces in New Guinea and later on to the Philippines and occupied Japan.

Ernie saw service in New Guinea, Philippines and then Okinawa and Japan. He was discharged on the 7th November 1946 and returned home to Surry Hills, Sydney. His father also Ernest, a veteran of the Boer War and WWI in Royal Navy and also in the Small Ships returned shortly after.

Ernie married Kathleen Jones in 1948 and they had three sons and a daughter. After service in CMF Ernie joined the Royal Australian Ordnance Corps rising to Captain and being awarded an MBE.

In the 1980's Ernie sort recognition for his service in the Small Ships which was denied by the Australian Department of Defence, thus started Ernie's long fight for recognition for himself and his fellow Small Ships' veterans. In 2003 he founded the US Army Small Ships Association to bring the veterans together and promote their cause.

He was finally successful when a special review set up under the Rudd Government to adjudicate on the Small Ships, Long Tan and other cases, granted them recognition on 29th August 2009.

Ernie remained President of US Army Small Ships until 2015 continuing his fight for these veterans. Ernie was awarded OAM on 30th April 2015 for his work for Small Ships veterans. He passed away on the 3rd July 2015.

Upon learning that Ernie had crossed the bar, retired U.S. Army Chief of Transportation, Brigadier General Brian Layer wrote, "I'm so sorry to hear about the loss of a legend. Ern was a man who really left his footprints in the sand, his contribution to our mutual freedom as a young man and his efforts to cement the legacy of those with whom he served have made an enduring difference in our world broadly and to their legacy specifically."