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Fred Reitano dies at 93 – kiap, lawyer & lifelong learner

by KEITH JACKSON



FRED REITANO, who has died at the Cazna Garden nursing home in Brisbane at age 93, joined the Australian Army as a private in 1939 and saw active service in Papua New Guinea.

This included experience in Port Moresby which was at the time being bombed by the Japanese.

In 1943, by this time a sergeant and his potential clearly seen by the military, he underwent officer training at Duntroon Military College and was subsequently posted to a civil affairs unit in Borneo, now Kalimantan and part of Indonesia.

Here he met an Army nurse, Mary Fleming. They married after the war in 1946 and remained together for all of their long lives.



Fred signed on and trained as a patrol officer and was initially posted to Mt Hagen. He also served in the Sepik, Manus and East New Britain.

While in Manus he enrolled in a law degree by correspondence, graduating in 1961, after which he joined the Crown Law Office in Port Moresby.

In 1965 he joined a private law firm before rejoining Crown Law just prior to PNG's independence in 1975.

He and Mary, by then a welfare officer, left PNG and, in 1976, Fred was appointed as principal legal officer in the Northern Territory's Attorney-General's Department before retiring two years later on medical grounds.

The couple then moved to Brisbane and Fred decided to pursue his studies eventually graduating with a BA in 1989 and an MA in 1992 at the age of 73.

Fred also worked as a volunteer for a range of organisations focusing on education, culture and health.

One assignment was as a reader for a sight-impaired law student at Queensland University, who subsequently graduated with first class honours.

Fred was also an active member of the United Services Club in Brisbane and the Sunnybank RSL. He remained a Justice of the Peace until six months before he died.

Fred is survived by Mary, sons Paul and Jeffrey, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Source: The Courier-Mail (Brisbane), 22 November 2012