

All Change - 1945 - 1949

Having been unceremoniously discharged at the end of the war, I was given 10 pounds for tools and a suit of clothes, and was directed to N.C. Register Co. in Collins Street for a job repairing cash registers.

It lasted 6 months or so and then I went back and finished my apprenticeship with Angliss'. I did get to manage a two-man shop in High Street, Northcote, but resigned in 1948. It was just not my cup of tea.

Our daughter Marilyn was born in 1946 and we were living with 'Pop' in Larnoo Avenue. It wasn't easy for Norma who was still only 21 and had no experience looking after a grandpa, husband and a baby.

After a few months we moved into 9 Whitby Street... taking over her Mum's lounge! T'was a little crowded when the boys arrived in 1949 but we managed until we were granted a Housing Commission house in Maidstone in 1950.

In February 1949, having had a couple of years back at butchering, I still hadn't shaken the Air Force out of my system, particularly as the three of us were sharing the one small bedroom at Norma's parents place. One day Norma said, "You are like a bull with a sore head, why don't you go back into the Air Force."

Taking her at her word I did just that! It was a bit of a blow having to go back as an airman and a butcher, but that's just what I did.

With the option of getting out at a months notice, I was posted to East Sale as an Airman Butcher. I worked as assistant to an old civilian who had been filling in for a couple of years, but it wasn't very satisfactory.

Not having a car I had to cadge a ride to Melbourne or, if nothing turned up, hitch hike on milk trucks or whatever, sometimes being dropped at the other side of the town and taking 3 to 4 hours for the trip.

To return to base, one had to be at the Flinders Street extension at 7pm Sunday night for a 5 hour trip back to Sale on the back of a semi trailer fitted with rows of old theatre seats, about five abreast and under a canvass canopy. It wasn't fun especially when the vehicle broke down on a couple of occasions and we were rescued by open trucks that go us back to Sale in the wee small hours of Monday morning.



At this stage, the fickle finger of fate stepped in. Norma was pregnant and expecting the baby in the latter part of March – so you can imagine my surprise when on the afternoon of Tuesday the 5th of April I received a telegram at Sale telling me that I was the proud father of twin boys!

I finished my work then proceeded to see the executive officer one Flt. Lt. Berdeu, about some compassionate leave to visit Norma and see what I could do to help. After all, Mally wasn't quite three and we were living in Norma's parents lounge room in Brunswick! Imagine my surprise when he replied, "There's nothing you could do. Request denied"

Little did he know, I packed a bag and hitchhiked to Melbourne. Very few people had a car in those days. As usual, it took several hours to get home to become acquainted with my new tax deductions and find that despite Mr. Berdeu's opinion, there was a lot I could do.

For the only time in my 29 years in the Service I went AWOL, returning on the following Monday full of fear and trepidation. However, not a word was said – I guess common sense prevailed. Besides which, one could get a discharge on a months notice at that time.