

## Noel (Doc) Bayfield—A14422—Electrical Fitter

### 1954 – 2004 How my life changed

When I was at high school, all I wanted to be was an electrical fitter for the local electricity board. Then I discovered that I could complete an electrical apprenticeship in the RAAF and get paid at the same time. At the time I was in the Air Training Corps so I was fairly sure that I would like life in the Air Force.

After our first year of basic training, I was lucky enough to get my first preference of electrical fitter training.

One day an officer came into our classroom and asked if anyone was interested in undertaking a diploma course. I wasn't really interested because I already had what I wanted. Just as the officer was leaving the room, Red Garrett suggested that he and I try for the course. After the appropriate tests, I was accepted but unfortunately Red missed out. Thanks Red for talking me into it.

After two years on the No 2 Diploma Course in Melbourne, many of us failed several subjects. I think the Melbourne night life had a very devastating effect on our studying. I then spent several years catching up my failed subjects and was eventually put back on the course for the final year. After graduation, I was commissioned and posted to 482 Maintenance Squadron at Amberley as the electrical/instrument officer.

In 1968 I was selected for the aerosystems course (formerly the guided weapons course) with the Royal Air Force at RAF Cranwell in the UK. This was a sixteen-month postgraduate course which enabled me to visit United States and NATO establishments in England and Europe. My family and I were also able to travel around the UK and Europe.

After the course, the return trip to Australia was on the Italian ship *Angelina Lauro*. The six-weeks trip stretched out to over seven weeks because the ship had to go into dry dock in Genoa for emergency repairs. Ten days in a five-star hotel in Genoa at the shipping line's expense was not hard to take. It enabled us to see more of Italy.

In 1976 I received a posting to Canberra but was not told where in Canberra. I tried to find out my exact posting details but was told to stop asking questions. Eventually, I was told I was going to the Joint Intelligence Organisation. When my new boss met me, he asked if I watched *Get Smart* on the television. I said that I did occasionally, and he replied, "It is compulsory viewing for people in our job." One of my friends later said, "You might be a good spy but you're not as good as James Bond so I'm going to call you 0061/2." My family stayed in Melbourne while I was in Canberra. This turned out to be a big mistake as my wife and I separated after the Canberra posting.

As a result of my marriage break-up, I joined a lone parent organisation called Parents Without Partners. This was the start of many rewarding years of involvement with this great organisation.

After a couple of years I married a lady I met in Parents Without Partners and then decided to retire from the RAAF. I felt that twenty-seven and a half years service was enough and it was time to move onto another career.

I joined the Commonwealth Public Service (in the Defence Department) as a technical officer. One day during a meeting, a defence standardisation engineer suggested I should apply for an engineer's job in his section. I got the job and became an engineer grade-2. Basically, my job was to hold engineering meetings and write technical specifications. At one stage my boss was seconded to the Commonwealth Fire Board for eighteen months. This was another turning point in my career. I became the section head for the entire eighteen months. I didn't realise at the time that my eventual pension was going to benefit greatly as a result of this period of higher duty.

During this period I was able to go to the USA for one month to complete a course about specification management with the United States Army. This was a great opportunity for me

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to liaise with the specification people in the USA. I was also able to visit the Pentagon and other defence establishments. During my stay there, I made sure that I visited the Civil War battlefields in Virginia.

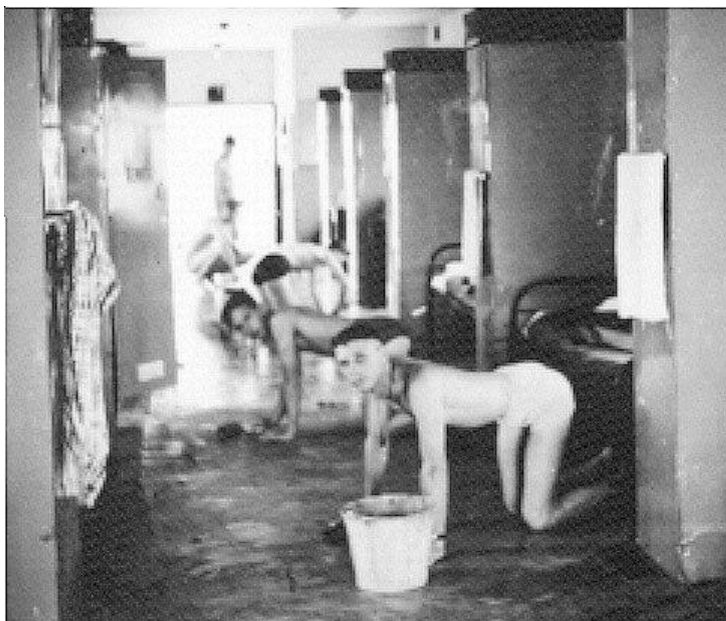
At this stage my second marriage failed. Once again I turned to the organisation that had helped me so much before - Parents Without Partners. Within several years I became branch president, then state president (in Victoria) and finally vice-president of Parents Without Partners, Australia. In the latter role I visited Canada and the USA for the Parents Without Partners international conventions. In 1999 I retired from the public service and spent a lot of my time helping Parents Without Partners.

In 1997 I met another lovely lady (called Pam) in Parents Without Partners but I was with her for five and a half years before I proposed to her. I guess I was a bit gun-shy after two failed marriages. Those of you at our fiftieth reunion will meet her because she is now my wife. I don't intend letting this lovely lady get away from me (i.e. I won't be making any long trips away without her).

When I look back over the last fifty years, I can't help thinking that my life has changed directions many times. I had good experiences and bad experiences but I feel that they were all experiences I had to have to get where I am today.

Have a happy reunion everyone and thank you for the three memorable years at Wagga.

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Hooks Malone doing his backwards bicycle riding trick.

"Panic" night floor polishing