

Harry Hobbs—A14404—Airframe Fitter

50 years

This is my fifty-year period of happy times, sad times and achievements. I do not intend to relate too much on RAAF life as we all have been down that road.

How can anyone forget the first day on arrival at RSTT? Beautiful buildings left over from World War II and the abundance of wildlife. I mean to say, how can fifty million blow flies be wrong? How can we ever forget the plentiful supply of jam slice and cold custard? I think most of us enjoyed the three years experience at RSTT. At this point I must say many thanks to Gus Wells who encouraged me to become an airframe fitter. Some readers may remember Gus. Then came that exciting moment when we graduated from RSTT to further our careers in the real Air Force.

My tour at 3AD Amberley involved carrying out major servicing on the mighty Lincoln bomber. I was fortunate enough to have two flights in the Lincoln: first trip to Williamtown and Richmond and returning to Amberley. I can recommend the mid-upper turret for the best view of the countryside below. Not bad for a day's work. The second trip was local practice for Air Force week. Just a point of interest readers, the Lincoln could fly on two engines.

Williamtown was my next posting and the story was that the Sabre squadrons were going to Malaya. Wow! how exciting. Some good times at Williamtown, especially the Box Beach lemonade parties. Sabre pilots would try to bomb us with flour bombs, most times missing their target. All good fun.

At last we are on our way to Malaya. This being my first trip outside Australia was very exciting to see how the locals lived, learn about their culture and try to learn Malay.

During this period Sabres carried out a goodwill trip to Saigon and Bangkok and return to Butterworth. I was nominated for the Saigon staging party. Saigon was a fascinating city but one had to be very careful walking the streets, watching out for local bicycles.

Tour now over and time to head home to Australia and, would you believe it, back to Williamtown. How lucky can one be. Just like being home again. In 1962 I married Anne and was blessed with two sons, Peter and Derek. After completing No 3 Mirage course it was time to move on from Sabres to the latest high-tech Mirage.

Once again off to Butterworth with the Mirages including Anne and the two boys. A highlight during this tour was to break the sound barrier in a twin Mirage piloted by Dick Waterfield. Wow! What a ride. As a family unit we thoroughly enjoyed our time at Butterworth, then it was time to pack up and head back to Australia. My posting was HQSC Melbourne. Bloody hell, I thought, not that unit.

The next four years at HQSC was in fact a great posting for me. Then came the agonising decision in 1974. I guess common sense prevailed and I took the plunge to civilian status. We stayed in Melbourne initially but the urge to migrate to Brisbane was too great, so in 1976 we said farewell to Melbourne. With cars loaded up, Anne and the boys, including the dog on board, we headed north, arriving two days later.

For the next seventeen years I was employed at the new Wesley Hospital in Brisbane as the workshop supervisor. During this period we experienced some bad times; we lost our parents and my niece passed away at the tender age of thirty from cancer. Then in 2002 another frightening experience when my eldest son Peter was diagnosed with a brain tumour, but lady luck was on his side. After surgery and radiation treatment Peter is recovering well and should be back teaching again in January 2004. Enough of medical problems, let's move on to more pleasant happenings.

I commenced my own business in the medical field, mostly mechanical items for hospitals. Sometimes you would say to yourself, "Bloody hell, how can I make that?"

As the years roll on you suddenly realise its retirement time. In my case retirement came a little earlier. Doors closed and, with the ute, I headed for Cairns to help Peter prepare for

Mango Stories

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regular life again.

So readers, in conclusion, I would say that I am grateful to have an enriched life, full of blessings, still eager to learn and grow. Hope to see you all at the reunion.

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Inspecting a Canberra at Wagga 1955 L to R :?, North, Perry and me.



Hut 107 acting L to R : Bunn, me, King, Don Smith, Tonkin, Fiddes and Carlyon.