

Mango Stories

Merv Lewis—A216390—Instrument Fitter

Many will remember the organised melee that took place at Wagga railway station when I and many others arrived there in January 1954. Soon, some order was established and we were duly marched onto The Snake. The Snake was an articulated personnel transport with wooden, bench-style seating for twenty or thirty (from memory) running lengthwise.

The arrival of The Snake in front of the mess next to the parade ground is another story.

I can clearly remember when our service numbers were “handed out”. Corporal Jimmy Lee was one of the DIs who read out the numbers, and he threatened punishment worse than hell (as it seemed to my naive self), if you got it wrong! The occasion was rather informal with people scrabbling around for pen and paper, and checking with others nearby to make sure that you did “get it right”.

Later, I notice that the registration number of The Snake was the same as my service number - 216390. I’ll leave it to the statisticians to work out the odds of that happening, but I do know that it was an auspicious coincidence as in retrospect my three years at RSTT were the most exciting, terrifying, confusing time of my early life.

PS. As time went by, it became clear that Jimmy Lee wasn’t really as bad as his bark. I respected him, and most of the other DIs, for his discipline, fairness and devotion to duty in moulding a group of unruly, undisciplined adolescents into responsible young adults.

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MANGO SCRAPBOOK IMAGES



Who are the trolley boys ?