

Albert Dawson 1928 - 13/03/2005 Vindi 1944



Sad to have to report the recent passing of another of our Vindi Boys; Albert Dawson of Kerang in NW Victoria who passed away on the 13th March 2005.

He was born in 1928 in the Lancashire village of Bamber Bridge which still has a Village Green and lovely old 'English' pubs but is now besieged on all sides by motorways, the M6, M65 and the A6 the village lies between Blackburn & Preston.

I knew Albert quite well and never picked him as a Lancashire Lad like me, his "EEH By Gum" was masked by an Isle of Man accent where his family moved to fairly early in his life.

He joined the Vindi in 1944, like all our Vindi Boys of that era he couldn't wait until he was 18 to join the armed forces he wanted to 'go' now!

His first ship was the "Condesa" - in 1946 on the "Asturias" he made his first visit to Melbourne where the fickle finger of fate laid down the path of his future life.

It was Easter Sunday Albert was stuck onboard as Gangway watchman his day suddenly brightened up when he spied three young ladies 'promenading' along the wharf!

Wilma and her two girl friends all down from the country around Kerang for the Easter Show had decided to have a daring change and go and see the ships.

Albert sped down the gangway with his best chat up line ready.

Result? Two dates before the ship sailed then a couple of visits with different ships, many letters till finally he could migrate as a ten pound Pom to Victoria, sponsored by Wilma's father in the December of 1951.

Then he made the startling overnight change from Seaman to Wheat Farmer!

Wilma & Albert married in 1952 - building their family with a son and twin daughters and eight Grandchildren the eldest now being 24, to fill the family ranks.

Their wheat farm was 14 miles out of Kerang in the Mallee, dry country where the yearly average of about one week's rain grows the annual crop.

Talking to Wilma today she told me they had a thunderstorm fairly recently, their first in 14 years!

Maureen & I first met Wilma & Albert at the first national Vindi get-together we organised in 1996 at Canberra - it was part of the larger Red Ensign annual National MN Memorial weekend.

You would never have taken Albert as a Pom he looked as though he was a son of that hard country like a big native hardwood tree.

Once when we went to visit them in Kerang he took us on a drive around the property it was scary! I never knew a Holden Commodore sedan could do 100 mph over ploughed fields, leap from hillock to hillock and over small creeks and bounce so much without becoming airborne.

At the farm that by now the son was running, they had diversified with a large Fish Farm in the sheds, thousands of Trout in about 20 tanks.

And outside the sheds a giant combined harvester about as big as a WWII destroyer that they travelled the country in at 15mph, doing contract harvesting from QLD to SA.

Albert was a lovely man with a wonderful story of a wonderful life to tell.

Everyone he touched will sadly miss him, our deepest sympathies to all his family and friends.