



**Tom Spencer 1933-June 6 -2000**  
**Vindi 1950**

It again becomes my sad duty to record that another Vindi lad, Tom Spencer passed away after putting up a sterling fight against cancer , succumbing to the disease on June 6th 2000, aged 67.

Tom only spent a short spell at sea . Too short a time, it would seem, for, still a teenager, he was found himself being called up for national service and being sent to Korea as a young soldier, I had the pleasure of meeting him only once, although we had several long conversations on the phone. He struck me as being a man with strong loyalties and not to shy to speak of his wife Mary, in endearing terms, that I thought more of us men who have enjoyed long, happy marriages should try doing.

He and his wife emigrated to Australia in 1953. He spent all his working life associated with the shipping industry and leaves behind his wife, Mary and three children, Robert, Teena, and Sonia.

As secretary I have expressed condolences on behalf of all us all. *JM August 2000.*

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I first met Tom in the 1980 through my work as Pilot Boat skipper at Port Botany, Tom worked for Caltex at their Kurnell refinery, he was a 'wharf operator' (in charge, on his shift of cargo transfers to and from oil tankers berthed at the Kurnell wharf or at the No. 3 sub berth out in the bay where the tankers moored to bouys and connected to a sea bed pipeline for cargo transfers. Often if a ship was delayed leaving I would tie up alongside to go and speak to Tom about the delay, usually along the lines of "bloody hell Tom how long are you going to keep us waiting, it's our bedtime" or something similar.

Later when being a 'dangerous goods inspector' was added to my job I spent many hours with Tom on the deck or in the office of many oil tankers either just waiting for operations to end or begin or going through the mountain paper work that the government wanted signing before pumping could begin.

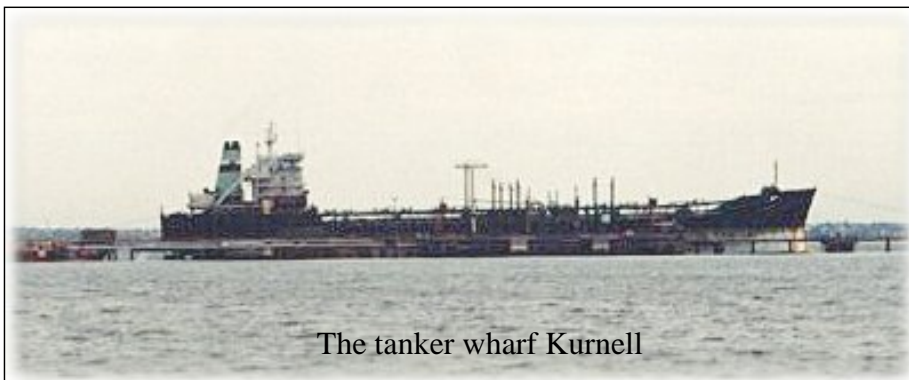
During these times we yarned a lot, his first trip after the Vindi was out to Australia on P&O liner, on arrival in Sydney he was met and taken home by an uncle, who talked Tom into staying here, so with job and a home to live in in Tom stayed.

Four or five years later Tom's Mum back in London got sick and by then all his siblings had flown the coop and had families of their own, some of them having migrated as well, so Tom took it upon himself to return to London to look after Mum. He sailed back on another P&O boat and on arrival in Southampton he was detained by immigration and sent direct to an army camp.

Making the most of a bad job Tom signed up for an extra year of service (more pay) and after basic training was sent to Korea spending about eighteen months there. I can't recall which regiment he was in now, I remember he was very impressed with the way the American army did things, the jeep he was driving needed repairs and new tyres that couldn't be got at his regimental depot so he went to an American camp who promptly just gave him a new jeep. So from then on anything he wanted he went back to the friendly Americans. He said he was glad afterwards that he had experienced that time fighting in the Korean war, it was a hard time but with a lot of good memories.

I didn't know he was ill until he just wasn't there anymore and his workmates told me about him. I went to his funeral and his wake at the Cronulla Leagues Club, where there was a cast of hundreds.

*TH 2010*



The tanker wharf Kurnell