

### **Arvona Jane David**

My name is Arvona Jane David, I was born on 22-12-1923 in South Wales, United Kingdom. I left school at 14 and stayed at home helping my mother who was not always well. At 19 in the United Kingdom, you had to join something to help the war effort, so on my 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, the 22-12-1942, I went to Swansea to enrol for the W.A.A.F.S. On January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1943, I was on my way to Gloucester.

We were fitted for our uniforms, had our inoculations and a few classes while there. I then went to Morecombe for the usual daily classes and marching (square bashing) on the promenade. I was then posted to Fradley Air Force Station in Lichfield, Staffordshire and became a Batwoman at the officer's mess. I had to clean their rooms, make beds, clean shoes and if they were British, clean their uniform buttons.

While there I met an Australian Airman named Hedley David, we married a year later on November 8<sup>th</sup> 1944. I was demobbed in February 1945, by this time I was expecting our first child, (a girl Noeleen) who was born in October 1945.

When the end of the war was announced on the radio, there was great enjoyment, with dancing in the streets to celebrate the occasion, a wonderful time. Hedley left the United Kingdom in December 1945 to return home to Western Australia when Noeleen was six weeks old. We followed him aboard the 'Larges Bay', which departed Tilbury on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 1946, arriving at Fremantle, Western Australia on 25<sup>th</sup> of August 1946, Noeleen was 10 months old.

On arriving in Fremantle as a War Bride we went to live with my in-laws for three months until we could rent a house in Leighton.

After a few years Hedley bought a brick making machine and cement and started making bricks one at a time. When we had a few thousand stacked in the back yard we bought a block of land in Applecross, carted the bricks out then started to build every Saturday and Sunday. Hedley caught 2 buses each way, with a sack on his back, I would follow later with the three children Noeleen, Beverley and Brian, taking our lunch, then home again when it got dark. Hedley would be so tired; he would have a bath and eat soup.

There were restriction as to the size of house you could build when he started, all the outside walls were built when they eased the restrictions so he decided to build a back veranda, toilet and wash house, in which we lived while Hedley built the rest of the house, room by room, starting with the kitchen, then bedrooms, lounge and dining room, we moved in gradually. Hedley was an Auditor with the West Australian Government then, not a builder.

We lived there for twenty-eight years, and then moved to Ferndale where I am still living twenty-four years later. Hedley died in January 1999. There are seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren of which I am very proud.

I belong to the Air Force Association in Bull Creek and meet with the "British W.A.A.F.S." for lunch one a month and the "War Brides" once very two months at the club.