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## Allan Ellam

I was born in Victoria in 1925, my father a butcher from a wealthy family died and my mother Betsey Emily Ellam, nee George had the job of bringing us 3 children up – Depression and all. I was farmed out with relatives to ease the burden at home, then was “called up” when 18 years of age.

Six months army training and six months to go till I was 19 and could be sent overseas. Three areas were offered to us 18½ year olds, cane cutting, rice farming or on the wharves. I selected cane cutting and saved £127, which I gave to mother. She was overcome.

I sailed for New Guinea then Bougainville. We fought with the 7<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion being an infantry unit across the middle of Bougainville.

I carried ammunition forward and was in time to see a young lad splutter blood and froth as he passed away crying for his mother. This episode has always been with me and my late wife and I met the mother in Melbourne. Dorothy I rang many times and she spoke of the most intimate things to me – till one day I realised she was in fact speaking to her only son. Enough to say I received her wedding ring cut from her finger possibly at death.

In my huge display, I correct myself, our display (Raye, wife spent 9 years on it) shows everything, photos, letters etc to honour their memory.

Myself spent a long time at the Metropolitan Markets even supplying G.J. Coles for years. Mr Harold Veale, an officer in the 7<sup>th</sup> was an officer machine gunner and my partner in business. The army and fruit and vegetables interest blossomed when I found a book on “Pink Top” the favourite of the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion and at the top of the Pyramid of Cheops photo.

I released it to the “West” in 1992 and what a furore.

At the very time of writing the “Sunday Times” are doing a project on David Simcock (Red Hair) Pink Top. Even a small film of David exists at the Battye.

An artist friend Stuart Cowrie had lost his money to Alan Bond and as he had travelled all over Gallipoli I paid and took him again. I visited David’s grave and placed artificial fruit on it.

Although “our” collection covers some 5 rooms, extensive records and hundreds of photos I am under enormous press to continue. I would point out that Mrs Ellam, a Kiwi lass died of breast cancer 4 years ago.

She did a day at family research and followed up in both areas – army and family.

How nice to receive the tag from trees, roses planted in overseas countries.

I am to continue with the Ellam-Innes Collection as long as I can, now called the Ellam Collection due to problems, which is the surname, which is the Christian name? People confused.