
Marie Farrell

15th September 1910

Born: Bendigo Victoria, Australia

Date of Enlistment: 22 May 1941

Date of Discharge: 2 September 1946

Sergeant Marie Farrell 99661

Moved to Western Australia by ship the S. S. Katoomba with my mother Thore, father Michael and older sister Doreen in 1910, all our possessions including my father's team of Clydesdales and their wagon. We then travelled to Nungarin where we settled. I was given the name Jimmy as our home had dirt floors and my mother made me long trousers to protect my knees so people thought I was a boy, to this day I am known as Auntie Jim to generations of Nungarin people.

My first school was held in the Congregational Church (1913) until the first school was built in 1918. After primary school I went to the Presentation Convent in Goomalling. At the age of 17, I did my first days work at a drapery, fancy goods and dressmaking store. I started my own tearooms under the Nungarin Hotel in the late 1930's.

World War II brought a lot of sadness and altered so many of our lives. The boys were all joining up and leaving for the Navy and Army camps to do their training. I got the feeling I wanted to help too, so closed up shop and decided as the men in our family where Navy and Army to balance things out I would apply to recruit for the RAAF and I was accepted in 1942. It was a sad time leaving family, friends and my home town.

W.A. girls were taken to Victor Harbour in South Australia to do our "Rookies", after pass out it was to Mallala Pilot Training School then on to Melbourne to live in St Georges Road, Toorak, in the first Government House residence.

My duties included Equipment Assistant in Stores, keeping log books for the planes and my posting at discharge was RAAF HQ D Org and Staff Duties.

War was over with exciting celebrations and much to do to go back to a normal life. Arrived home to Nungarin, many changes, Nungarin had been turned into an Army Stores and Vehicle Depot (5BOD), which remained for many years to the benefit of the small town. The Army constructing many amenities and a large amount of personnel to help the town recover.

I was to once again go behind the counter working for my brother-in-law and sister, Colin (Bluey) and Thora Cairns (he had been a P.O.W. on the Burma Railway with the Japanese) in the General Store. A few years later I moved to my own business, back under the hotel, which I retired at the age of ninety years.

At age 95 I still recall very fond memories and wonderful friendships that were formed in the years of the war and how everyone pulled together to help each other in the difficult years to follow.