
Muriel Horsfall

I, Muriel Adeline Hotchkin was born in Perth on 3rd July 1922. Educated at Nannup State School from age 6½ - 14 years, furthering my studies at the Stanley School of Dresscutting and Design in Perth. After the outbreak of WWII I joined the WAAAF (99957) in June 1942 in Perth, serving until discharge in January 1946. Along with over 60 other W.A. young women did my rookie course at Victor Harbour, S.A. during July 1942. Freezing cold, in unlined, unheated wooden/asbestos huts, sleeping between rough woollen blankets (no sheets), on hessian palliasses filled with straw. Notwithstanding, we figured that was better than being raped by a Japanese soldier.

Early August I was posted back to 6FSHQ (Fighter Sector HQ) in Mt Lawley W.A., where I was stationed until discharge. Number 6FSHQ was a highly secret station despite being in the middle of suburbia. My best memories are of talented, friendly, dedicated young men and women from all Australian states, but mostly from W.A., serving this country with great dedication whilst maintaining the utmost secrecy as demanded. After discharge I worked in Perth as a secretary until marriage in Melbourne on September 13th 1947.

My husband, William James Horsfall (Bill) also a West Australian having served in 77 and 78 Squadrons RAAF (45358) for 4½ years in New Guinea, Milne Bay, Goodenough Island and Trobriand Islands – Feb-Oct 1943, worked for International Harvester Co. who moved us about according to their needs. Happily we were moved back to WA from July 1955 – 1969, where our two sons grew up. Our big extended families on both sides, with whom my ties are loving and caring are still residents of WA. Sadly, Bill died on 7th October 2001 after battling a severely disabling (R) stroke for 28 years. I cared for him at home for 25 years.

All my visits back to WA are timed to participate in the WAAAF Birthday Lunch celebrations and Fighter Sector gatherings, middle of March. At national reunions I stay with and identify strongly with the WAAAF WA Branch where I am still a member. They are my soul-mates. We have kept in touch over the years, keeping alive the loving bonds formed during those dark and fearful days of 1942-43. I was, and still am, immensely proud to have served my country in the RAAF, I'll be 83 in July this year. My two sons and their families are living here in Melbourne, so at my age, I wish to be close by to help and be helped.

Photo 1: VP Day, August 16th 1945, service on the Esplanade, Perth.

Photo 2: VP Day March through Perth, Thursday August 16th 1945
(I'm 7th in the front line)

