
Linda Clare Robertson

Linda Clare Robertson (nee Lynch)

Born 7.12.1924 at Geraldton WA

TELL US YOUR STORY PROGRAM

All this is a mere paragraph of my life. I was born 7.12.1924, one of nine girls (and one brother. C.B. Lynch Flt/ Lieut D.F.C. killed at "Amberley" R.A.A.F, after going through the Battle of Britain 460 Squadron Lancaster Bombers)

I was educated at "Stella Maris College," Geraldton Western Australia, to the Junior standard Certificate. I left school on my 16th Birthday and worked for Mr Garnet Willock, at top class drapery in town. I loved my work.

At 18 I joined the A.W.A.S. (Australian Women's Army Service). I was a real country girl, raised with strict standards, and at 18 I was the equivalent of a child of 10 today. However, on entering the Army I grew up overnight. The Regiment was strict. I didn't care, as I was used to it, I was taught to obey my elders, and treat them with respect before going into the Army.

I met a boy at a dance one night. He was on embarkation leave. We were penfriends for 5 years, later we married. That is a long story in itself. I believe in fate, as I was discharged in Sydney, and we met again in the strangest way. I was then 23 years old.

Why did I enlist? I could say Patriotism, but I don't know, to be truthful! Several girls I knew "Joined-up," so I did the same, like a sheep really. My parents were dead against it. They had their only son living in 24 hour danger, plus 4 sons-in-law. I won't say I was all fired up with what I could do for my country, that came later with age. I do recall the concentration camp atrocities being told to the world. Hitler changed me from a girl to an adult. When the Japs were nearing our shores it was frightening. We had one big scare in Geraldton. Years later I feel it was when the Japs bombed Broome, and the "Sydney" was sunk close by.

I was in "Ordinance" and worked with 25 pounder issues, spare parts, also searchlights. I was a kid again, my own bike to go around the depots and collect requisites, to take to "Traffic" or Gun Park. I do recall one time having to stencil Battalion addresses on hessian, then stitch them on gun barrels.

Some of the men treated me like a school kid. They were from the Middle East, recuperating, and I think after that they went back to their Battalions to fight another day.

I was in Nungarin W.A. then Bandior N.S.W. I came back to the West when peace was declared. My last days in the East, I went into the Canteen Service, I loved that, each day we met all the blokes just back from the war, in fact, I was the only girl sent a day a week to a camp for Italian Internees somewhere outside Wadonga. Then in W.A. to "Point. Walter," where lots of men who had been in "Changi." I could write a book on this.

I worked hard, never got into trouble, I wonder why I never got beyond Private Lynch? I was very good at all sports, representing the Army at a big meet in Albury, and won everything. A man asked me if he could train me, but I said "I'm in the Army". We ran bare foot. All the girls from Melbourne and Sydney wore spikes and were used to a cinder track.

From W.A. I was sent back to "Middle Park" Victoria, and Canteen Work. I got my discharge at Burwood and a Job in David Jones, but I was homesick for the Army and my parents, so I went back to Willocks in Geraldton, my only job apart from the A.W.A.S. I still keep in touch with several of the girls.

My heart is with the Australian Army. I do praise our Navy and Airforce, but on "Anzac Day" My husband and I still march in Sydney and here, and I get very tearful. I think of my brother.

Did I see a change after the war? Yes I did, some good, some bad. Do you know, even today people think we army girls were "Geisha Girls" but in their ignorance they do not know exactly what a true "Geisha Girl" did. She was not a prostitute.

Australia settled down well. We all worked to have our own home paid for, no Washing Machines, we all had bicycles, and later a little car. Life was simply splendid. Our sadness came to lose our only boy, my brother. My heart aches for my parents, now I realise their pain. There was no counselling, only a telegram in the letterbox, however it did not kill their pride.

We nine girls made good wives, mothers and daughters. There were no drugs, police records, we were just ordinary hard working Australians that loved their sport, A.F.L. the Ashes. My parents loved cricket. When you said "Don Bradman" they blessed themselves like all good R.C.'s do.

In 1948 I went back to Sydney and married the boy I met at the Yacht Club! 100's of boys remember the Yacht Club Dances, and in those days they could dance, not like today. I recall seeing Zulus Dance in S/Africa, and now they do it here at a disco.

My husband and I had a small business in Eastwood N.S.W. Many people came to our shop because of Ray's days in "Papua New Guinea" during the war. He had Malaria for years afterwards. On our honeymoon I thought I'd married a bedwetter, as he had a very bad sweat with a bout of malaria, which soaked the mattress.

He too loves his army mates, there are not many left, but he told me once "They were his brothers. Blooded! not Kin."

We cried over Korea, Vietnam and any conflict we are in, as we are a nation of helpers not aggressive Warriors. The sad bit is, a lot of Hatred comes from Religion, yet we are to believe there is only one God.

How did I find out the War was over? Awfully, all the camp went crazy, a girl gave me a glass of Stout, all beer was gone. I was "Tiddly" not drunk, but next day I was too sick for parade, just kept throwing up. The word stout still makes me feel ill, and also makes me think of "Peace".

All this is a bit of a jumble, but let me say this, I could never have a child, there were four Army girls the same as me, healthy as oxen, but not able to have children. They say we were given Bromide once a week. Many years ago I did bring this to the attention of the D.V.A. but got no response. Three of the girls adopted. I did not. So I got on with my life, and decided I could live without a child, but not my eyesight or a limb. I worked at my dream, saw the world with my "Boy" from that dance, looked after my parents till the day they died, plus helped a few nieces and nephews that needed it.

At 87 and 80 respectively we are very fit, Lawn Bowl, still play tennis, do a bit of travelling, can't speak highly enough of our D.V.A, and hope to see a few more Anzac Days. "Pax"

Linda Clare Robertson.

P.S. MY SISTER DLGA YAKSICH WAS ALSO IN THE
A.W.A.S.