



My Story.

Carolyn Wilson (Nee Forday)

Carolyn grew up in Rockhampton, Queensland and remembers touching on the subject of the Defence Forces in her Citizenship class in high school. At the time she thought it sounded exciting and adventurous always knowing she wanted to experience life outside a country town.

After she left school, she worked in a number of jobs, for a while with a Wholesale Merchant, then in a Solicitors' Office and finally she joined the Queensland Public Service, starting in the Police Department then with the Department of Works. While at the Solicitors' Office, she had been encouraged to join the Qld Police by some of the Police Officers with whom she had worked.



While she was with the Police Department she worked in their Communications Centre, which she loved and that got her thinking. She remembered the lectures on the ADF from her school days and it was then that she decided she would love to join the RAAF doing something similar to what she was doing with Qld Police. She talked it over with some of her work mates, who encouraged her to apply, however, she was a little worried about passing the height requirement. She submitted her application and finally the day came, she had been accepted. Not being a morning person, she says she can still remember her mum saying, "you'll get into trouble, you'll never get up in the morning!"



She enlisted in the WRAAF on the 28th February 1977, as a TRINOP/C and underwent WRAAF training at WTU RAAF Base Laverton on rookies [course 245](#). She found rookies was quite a learning curve and an eye opener and being on such a large recruit course (approx 92 girls) she is sure they stretched the WRADNCO's. Course 245 was featured in the Queen's Silver Jubilee edition of the RAAF News in April 1977 as the largest rookies course since World War II. She thinks there were only a handful of WRAAF rookies courses after hers before the disbandment of the WRAAF that year.

After graduating rookies she was posted to Radschool for her TRINOP/C course which became [1 COMMSOP](#) course due to the amalgamation of the WRAAF into the RAAF.

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1 COMMSOP course was a very happy go lucky/disruptive course at Radschool and she is sure the Radschool WOD at the time even enjoyed a few laughs at their expense. As she was a typist before she joined, she found it very frustrating watching all the other members of her course struggling with the keys. During one of their typing tests she didn't realize she had been set up by the practical jokers off the course. They had put a tube under her KTR (Keyboard Typing Reperforator) and were blowing smoke into the tube. As she was always trying to better her words per minute she didn't notice that everyone had stopped typing and were rolling around on the floor laughing. Everyone ended up being on the end of some sort of joke at some stage during the course. She says it was all in good fun!

Another incident she remembers, that stands out while at Radschool was when they had to march down to the cinema on base. The girls marched down as a combined COMMSOP/RADTECH/T flight but having short legs, Carolyn found it very difficult to keep up with the rest of the flight. By the time they reached the cinema she was so exhausted by the pace she was on the verge of collapse.



When the time came to return to the class-room, the WOD pulled her aside and told her to walk back under her own steam. As she casually walked back all the trainee flights passed her! She can still remember having a quiet chuckle to herself! Her lack of height also had her being taken off an AOC's parade in Wagga. The SADMINO at the time took her off for being too short! She had volunteered to do it as the LAC she worked with had been nominated for all the ceremony parades up to that point and she felt it should have been her turn.



After graduating from Radschool, she was fortunate to experience wonderful postings to Townsville, Darwin, Wagga, Butterworth, Richmond, Laverton, Victoria Barracks and Glenbrook and was lucky to be attached to 2CRU, Base Sqn Point Cook and Base Sqn Fairbairn also.

She still considers her most memorable postings were to Townsville and Butterworth.

She says, after graduating from Radschool it was her privilege to be one of the first of two females to be posted to Base Sqn Townsville COMMCEN since World War II. Being previously an all male environment she learnt a little while later that all the girly posters in the COMMCEN and tech workshops were removed and swearing was to be curbed! She was also one of the first females to be trained in Air Operational Communications Centre Townsville (AOCCTVL).

While posted to Townsville she enjoyed such activities as:

- Flying over to Magnetic Island in an Iroquois helicopter with 35SQN for a squadron picnic then cruised back on the RAAF crash launch VKRV.
- 13 hour surveillance mission on an Orion (P3) – she says “they had the best rations on board”.
- A jolly in a Chinook.
- RAAF/Army (female) bivouac which was pretty well a holiday camp!

While on posting to Base Sqn Wagga, Department of Air (DEFAIR) changed their policy to allow single/married female non-commissioned ranks to be posted to Butterworth. (See [HERE](#)) She immediately changed her posting preferences and was fortunate to be one of six females to be posted to Base Sqn Butterworth in December 1984. She had the privilege again of being the first female in the Butterworth COMMCEN. Some of the other female musterings to be posted to Butterworth at the same time were RAAF Police, Dental Assistants, Clerk



Medical and Airframe Fitters. The single female accommodation was located on base next to the RAAF primary school.



Carolyn says Butterworth was a wonderful two year experience. It was the best opportunity to serve in another country and experience the local culture. Being of Asian descent it brought home the fact I was lucky to be born in Australia. Travel, different cultures, food and shopping enriched my life experiences.

Whilst posted to Butterworth she met her future husband Mark.

She was posted back to Australia before Mark and they spent

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some time apart before they were co-located in Melbourne. Mark was accepted on a SYSTECH course at RMIT which meant he would be in the Melbourne area for at least 18 months and Carolyn had been posted to Richmond from Butterworth. She will always be grateful to FSGT Merv Vivienne for making that call to Canberra to help her co-locate with Mark.

In 1988 she and Mark bought their first house in Werribee and spent a total of 8 years in the Melbourne area. She was posted to various positions within St Kilda Road and Laverton (which became RAAF Williams). In February 1991, she and Mark were married and had their first daughter Nicole in Feb 1993.

During her absence on Maternity leave the amalgamation of the COMMSOP and EDPOP mustering to CISCON occurred and when she returned to work, she was posted as a CISCON to the Data Reporting Section at Headquarters Logistic Command Unit (HQLCU). This in itself was a very big learning curve. She had some very challenging times as a CISCON in Melbourne not only professionally but personally.

Mark was posted unaccompanied to Air Transport Telecommunications Unit (ATTU) now 1 Combat Communications Squadron (1CCS) and she was not co-located until 12 months later. Not long after they were co-located in Sydney, Carolyn went on Maternity leave again and their second daughter Vanessa was born in September 1996.



She finally discharged from the RAAF in July 1997 after serving 20 years and 5 months.

When putting this story together, Carolyn dragged out the old RTE (Record of Training and Employment) book she had religiously kept up to date while serving. She says it helped her enormously. She says back then it was a requirement and although it was not all that valuable to anyone after their discharge, it is a nice reflection of one's career....

Looking back, she says she thoroughly enjoyed her time in the RAAF and has many fond memories of people she worked with and met during her many postings.



Another aspect of the RAAF which she misses is the many different social functions she was lucky to enjoy. CPL/SGT's, SGT's/Officer's Xmas drinks, SGT's Mess Children's Xmas treat, Balls and Dining-in nights (SGT's mess), Base Sqn Butterworth Ball, 3SQN Ball, 1AD closure Ball and many many more.... [Nancy Wake](#) (The white mouse) was guest speaker at a dining-in night she and Mark attended at Laverton one night some years ago and she is sure that all who attended that night will no doubt have wonderful memories of Nancy Wake.



She and Mark have attended the last three Djinnang Reunions in Brisbane and experienced catching up with old friends. Finally putting faces to names. She says the reunions have gone from strength to strength, with so many happy memories for most and maybe not so good memories for some! A lot of people have been out longer than they were in now!

She adds, "I have to say that with the amalgamation of the COMMSOP and EDPOP mustering, I felt I wasn't suited to be a CISCON and I am sure many who experienced both areas of the CISCON mustering will agree or maybe not agree with me. Not everyone who became a CISCON had the aptitude. The days of the KTR and tape were fun but technology moves on....."

I have been a full time mum since discharging in July 97. Life on the Gold Coast is good and looking forward to the day my husband retires so we can go travelling!"



The opening of Radschool. 03 December 1974



Fred Griffiths sent us this. This is the program that was produced on the opening of the new Radschool building at Laverton on the 03 December, 1974.

You can get a copy of it [HERE](#)

RAAF Vocabulary of Stores.

Most blokes and blokettes that served in the RAAF were familiar with L-Group – it was one of the first places you went to when you joined up and it was also always on the clearance in/out sheets when you were posted from one unit to the next, but why was it called that and what does L-Group mean anyway? Everyone knows that L-Group is where you got your clothing and bedding issue/replacements but apart from the equipos, no-one gave it a second thought. L-Group was in a big shed somewhere and most people probably thought the shed was called L-Group but no, we've since discovered that that is wrong.



Another RAAF peculiarity to which no-one gave a second thought was the numbering system on all the RAAF's aeroplanes. Now numbering aeroplanes is a logical and sensible thing to do, like, if you're at Willytown and there was a bunch of Mirages on the line and you were told to go and fix one, how would you know which one to tackle unless it had a number on it, they all looked the same. So, to help out the poor old mechanic person, the RAAF put numbers on them but it also put the letter A in front of all those numbers and it didn't matter if the aeroplane was a Winjeel or a Herc or a Mirage, they all had that letter A as the first part of the number – why??

Well, we've lost hours of sleep at night wondering about this so we decided to ask an old equipo mate if he knew and after he'd called us a dopey radtech and a few other nasty things, he told us.

It seems everything the RAAF had (except for its people) was classified into 26 different groups and each group was given a letter of the alphabet to distinguish it from another group. For instance, "A" group contained all the RAAF's aircraft. "B" group contained all the RAAF's aircraft engines and so on – it was called the "Vocabulary of Stores" and it was one of those secrets that was talked about in the equipo's smoko room – but never outside amongst ordinary people. So, if you wanted to order half a dozen Hercs, you just looked up the Appendix 20 for



the part number, which would have been A97, and bunged in your order – next day, 6 Hercs would have been delivered. Simple!!

We asked our mate for some more examples and he gave us the full list, you can see it [HERE](#).

Devilishly clever people those equipos.

2 Squadron and Vietnam Vets Day

18 Aug 2015

The Bribie Island (north of Brisbane) chapter of the Vietnam Vets Association recently invited the 2 Squadron Association (Queensland) to participate in their Vietnam Vets Day march and ceremony, to be held in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park (VVMP), in front of the Bribie Island RSL on the 18th August, 2015. The 2 Sqn Assoc were only too happy to accept and they invited us along.

The 18th August was a Tuesday and everyone was asked to assemble at 3.30pm outside the Bribie Island Sports Club for a 4.00pm march down to the VVMP, about 300 metres away.



As distinct from an ANZAC Day march, people were not grouped in either their Service or Unit, instead they formed one large group as Vietnam Veterans led by three flag bearers, one for each service.

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The RAAF Flag was carried by Trevor Reed. Trevor, who turned 86 early in Sept, was a WOE and spent a lot of time in Butterworth with 1 Sqn as well as a short stint in Vietnam in 1971 at RAAF HQ in Saigon. He's worked on numerous types of aircraft, including Lincolns, Wirraways, Mustangs, Mirages, Canberras and way back, the Tiger Moth.



Music for the march was supplied by the great little marching band from Banksia Beach State Primary School.



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After the march, everyone congregated in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park to commemorate the 49th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan as part of Vietnam Veterans Day and to remember those that gave their lives in that terrible conflict.



MC for the afternoon was Paul Cooke. Paul, originally from Glen Innes in NSW, was a framer with 2Sqn at Phan Rang from April 1967 to March 1968. As well as 2 Sqn he has spent time with 34 Sqn, 9 Sqn and 2 FTS.



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L-R: "Jock" Young, Graham Seymour, "Tiny" Jones.

Jock Young is the Secretary of the Bribie Island Vietnam Vets Association and was heavily involved in organising the afternoon. He started life as a Framie and became a loadmaster on the Caribou. He did two tours of Vietnam where he earned a MID, the first from October 1965 to July 1966, then again from July 1969 to April 1970. After the RAAF he joined uncle Reg and the blue eyed girls and had many years flying as an engineer on Ansett's B727.



The Catafalque Party was performed by the TS Koopa Navy Cadets.

(A catafalque is a raised box, or similar platform, often movable, that is used to support the casket, coffin, or body of the deceased during a funeral or memorial service. The term originates from the Italian catafalco, which means scaffolding.)

The most notable Italian catafalque was the one designed for Michelangelo by his fellow artists in 1564.)

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At the conclusion of the ceremony, the last post was played by these young people from the Banksia Beach Primary School. They did a wonderful job of it too – congratulations to their music teacher..



L-R: Sophie Hyland, Callum Heard, Jack Thompson and Jy Raleigh,

K



2 Sqn Committee.



L-R: Gary Olsen (Treasurer), David Potter (President) Arthur Rennick (Secretary).

After the Ceremony, everyone was invited across the road to the RSL Club for some refreshment.



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**Back L-R: Evan "Grassy" Hopper, Rod "Curly" Pearce.
Front L-R: Dianne and Noel Hendrix.**



Carol Close, Kerry Millard, John Bushell.

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Carol and Des Pryde.



L-R: Lorraine Rutland, Lee Grieves, Suzie Corby.

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L-R: Caren Tucker, Karen Foks, Gwenda Pearce, Dianne Kirby.



L-R: John Rutland, Tom Grieves, "Bazza" Battle, Harry Foks.

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L-R: John Bushell, Gary Olsen, John Ward, Tom Grieves.



Thelma and Arthur Rennick.