

Barry Anderson (2/68 & 3/68)

Barry was born in London on 9 June 1946. He completed his secondary education at Fairfield Boys High School in Sydney. Before commencing his NS on 1 May 1968, Barry was employed as an Assistant Engineer Australian Iron & Steel in Port Kembla. He graduated into RAEME with Class 3/68 and was posted to 301 Field Workshops at Bulimba in Brisbane. In late February Barry was diagnosed with Acute Leukemia and passed away on 6 March 2017 in Canberra.

At a Memorial Service for Barry at Broulee on 24 March his wife Mandy gave the following Tribute



Barry Anderson and I should never have met. After Harold Holt decided, from the security of his parliamentary office, that Australia would go “all the way with LBJ”, Barry received his call-up papers to report to Wollongong Railway Station on 7th February 1968. The way he told the story - and remember that all of Barry’s stories needed to be taken with a fair dash of salt – his mother came into his bedroom and said “Aren’t you supposed to be going into the Army today?” He

responded that he didn’t feel like going into the Army that day, rolled over and went back to sleep. Consequently, wherever his Army orders took him for the next few months, he was greeted with the words, “Anderson, where have you been? You’re 3 months late!”

The significance of this story is that just a couple of weeks after that appointed date in February, Barry and I met at a party on 1st March. Clearly disappointed by Barry’s non-appearance, the Army sent him a second invitation, with an added personal touch, the hand-written words “Or Else” at the bottom of the page. So he decided that it was time to take the plunge (I didn’t want to use the metaphor “bite the bullet”) and he marched in on the 1st of May. After a short time at Kapooka, he was selected for officer training at OTU Scheyville, and by December of that year, I found myself in love with a handsome young lieutenant with a red sports car and I was in heaven.

March 1st became a very significant date for us, and it was this date rather than our wedding anniversary that we always celebrated. We bought our brand new red Peugeot 504 on 1st March 1974. (It is still in Barry’s shed awaiting restoration). We signed up for our 7 acre patch of bush at Wilton on 1st March 1976. There we built our house over a period of many years, finally completing it so that it could be sold in 2003.

As you know, Barry and I have not lived together for the some years. I am not going into any gory details, but suffice to say that we separated in December 1998. I was absolutely shattered, but never ever considered myself blameless and lived with a lot of guilt. Just over three years later, he phoned me to say that he was moving in with his father in Woonona, and he invited me out to dinner. It was 1st March 2002. And thus began our second relationship.

On the 1st March this year, Barry was in the ICU at Canberra hospital. The nursing staff had got him out of bed that day and he had sat up and eaten his first meal since his chemo treatment consisting of actual food, not just fluid. It was just three different coloured piles of mash, but he said that he actually enjoyed it. He was talking, without needing very much breathing support, and planning his life once he got back to Bodalla, realising that it would be different, but it was

still a life that he could relish. This was sadly also to be his final meal, because his breathing deteriorated once again – he had to be put into a comatose state, and he never recovered.

Barry and I have enjoyed wonderful times together. We have always loved our holidays, always enjoyed eating nice meals. We have spent time with our family and have worked together on each other's homes. Anyone who has seen the spectacular landscaping job that Barry did for me at Mystery Bay has been in awe of his skill.

Barry was an engineer when we first met, moving into teaching in the 1980's. There was almost nothing that he couldn't do. Barry always fixed everything for me. He would discuss a project with me, explaining what he planned to create or repair. I'd ask him just how he planned to do it and he would say "I haven't figured that out yet", and he would get out his paper, pens and drawing equipment, solve the problem and complete the project.

Just a couple of weeks ago, he phoned me from the hospital and asked me to bring him a pair of thick woolly socks. He had been shocked by how weak his leg muscles were when the nursing staff had stood him up. So he was going to cut the heels out of the socks, put the feet part over his feet, and hang bottles of water from the ankle section so that he could raise and lower the weight of the water to re-invigorate his muscles. He had done a similar thing years earlier when recovering from knee surgery, except that on those occasions he had used lead weights.

Since his retirement, which tragically lasted only 3 ½ years, we have enjoyed some wonderful holidays, in particular the European River cruise with Fran and brother Derek in 2015, travelling from Budapest to Amsterdam. This trip took us through 66 locks. Barry was fascinated by the technology involved in the construction and operation of the locks and he spent plenty of time explaining to me how they worked. (Being a claustrophobic, I found the lock experience quite confronting at first, but settled down a little after the first 20 or so.)

Also in 2015, we took the glorious Mark IV Jaguar to Tasmania for the Jaguar National Rally and post-rally tour. In fact today, we were meant to be at the 2017 National Rally in Port Stevens. One of the Jag club members commented in a recent email that many of them on the Tasmania tour pitied us for the discomfort that we must have been in, compared with their modern models. But Barry was never happier than when he was at the wheel of that car except perhaps when he was at the controls of a Cessna or CT4.

Last year we enjoyed a wonderful road-trip to Lightning Ridge. We loved exploring the more remote parts of the country. I always had my binoculars with me, and Barry, although not as dedicated as I am to bird-watching, was an excellent spotter. We had another road trip planned for this year up to White Cliffs where he had visited a property named Reola a couple of times. This was while he was working as an aircraft maintenance engineer at Camden airport during the 1980's. The boys used to fly out to Reola to service the pastoralist's two aircraft, the Cessna in which he would fly his sons back and forth to the Kings School, and the Robinson helicopter which was used for mustering. (Coincidentally, my Dad had visited Reola in the 1950's when he renovated the homestead kitchen.)

Although I never shared Barry's enthusiasm for flying (unless it was in a 747 heading for London or Auckland), I was nevertheless a very enthusiastic groupie. I loved attending air shows with him, or watching our friends in their small planes doing circuits and bumps, or listening to "tall tales and true" at the end of the day's flying, commonly known in more recent times as "the flight of the old fellers." I listened attentively as Barry pointed out that

this aircraft had a 4-blade propeller, that one had 5 blades, another had two counter-rotating sets of propellers, and I learnt why the tail rotor was important on a helicopter. He must have assumed that I didn't retain any of this information, because he would tell me the same stuff all over again at the next air show. If there had been a test at the end, I would have passed.

And it was the same with classic cars. I knew that the SS100 stood for Swallow Sidecar company, that the SS label was dropped after the war because of its association with the Gestapo. The company changed its name to Jaguar and produced a model called the Mk IV, even though there had never been any Mk 1's, 2's or 3's at that stage. You should know that the Mk 2 came into production in 1959, about 10 years after the Mk IV, and that there was no such thing as a Mk 1 really. It only came to be called that because it immediately preceded the Mk 2. You also need to know that Jaguar has never produced a model called the Mk 3. I think William Lyons had a very contrary streak about him.

During his time living with his father, Barry became his father's carer as Ted's health steadily deteriorated. And a more attentive and thoughtful carer you could not imagine. I know they had numerous rows, both being head-strong and having their fixed ideas about how everything should be done – but Barry dutifully pushed Ted in his wheel-chair up to the club on weekends so that Ted could donate his pension to the Woonona-Bulli RSL club's poker machines. I always felt that I would have had a wonderful carer in my dotage (whatever that means) because I never imagined that he would go first. In fact we had a deal, which he reminded me of in hospital – I had promised that I would go first because I could never cope with emptying his shed. Well guess what I have to look forward to.

If Barry hadn't hated Frank Sinatra so much, I would have played that song "My Way" today. Because he liked everything done his way. This included many of the things that I did, and this was the source of a good proportion of our arguments. From how to cook frozen peas, to how I should drive my car – especially how I should drive my car. But by not living together, we managed to avoid a great many conflicts, and it meant that we were always really happy to see each other.

Barry loved his little patch of bush at Bodalla. We so often sat on his deck eating a meal that he had prepared for us – he was becoming quite a chef, very happy in his kitchen which he was filling with more and more specialised gadgets – and we would admire the birds and get excited seeing a wallaby or a python. He even put his hand to doing a bit of gardening, something he never showed interest in before.

He had so many plans – all those cars – five in all – a kayak, a catamaran, a telescope for which he planned to build a special deck, all sorts of things to be restored. I used to tell him that he would need three lives to do all of the things that he planned to do.

I will miss listening to his plans. I will miss his hugs and his smile, and our very happy times together, his infinite generosity and his great capacity for love. I can't believe that he is gone. He was taken from us so suddenly, so unexpectedly and way too soon!