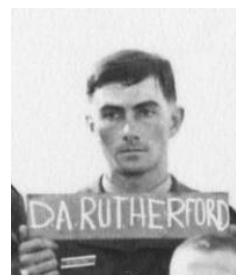


VALE:

Dennis Andrew Rutherford was born in Sydney on 1 May 1945. He lived with his parents in Revesby and completed his education at East Hills Boys High School. On leaving school, he joined the Otis Elevator company where he studied Accountancy. His birth date was drawn out in the “lottery” in 1965, but he managed to get a six-month deferment to complete his Accountancy Course, and as a consequence he began Recruit Training at 1RTB, Kapooka, on 20 April 1966.



He applied for entry to OTU and after the usual array of testing was notified of his acceptance, and then on 6 May 1966 began the “most interesting” six months of his life with the rest of the 2/66 OTU intake.

On graduating from OTU he was posted to the Service Corps at Puckapunyal on 17 October 1966 for eight-week Corps Training, which was mostly learning about Supply and Transport Management. On completion of this course on 28 November 1966, he was posted as a Training Officer to the RAASC Centre, Bonegilla Detachment, Army Driver Training Wing, Bonegilla being located East of Albury/Wodonga on the edge of the Hume Weir (see article in this issue for a story of the Driver Training Wing).

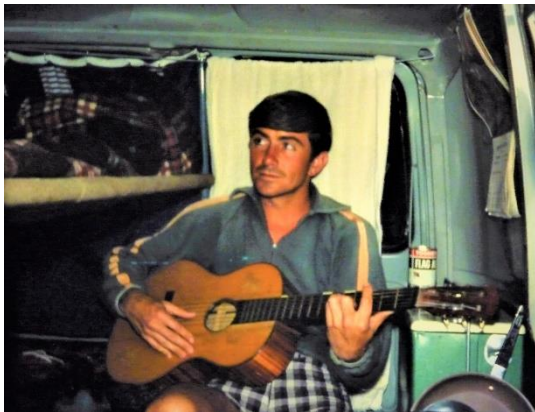
Dennis’s pride and joy during this time was his car. He owned a very distinctive jet black 1960 Bel Air Chevrolet with huge “wings” on the back. It had two enormous bench seats which could legally hold 5 passengers plus the driver, but at times held more. You could also fit at least four people in the boot with room to spare. The only real drawback in having such a standout car was that anywhere he went, everyone else knew he was there. However, he always said that was balanced out by the “attraction” of having such a vehicle.



Left: Dennis’ ‘Chevie’ was used during 2/65’s Barry Smith’s wedding at Bonegilla in January 1968, just prior to Barry heading north on his next posting.

Dennis’s two-year National Service stint ended in April 1968. He returned to his job with Otis but found it difficult returning to civilian life (as did many National Servicemen) and had seriously discussed “doing a lap” of Australia with Chris Shepherd (4/66) with whom he became good mates with during his time at Bonegilla. Chris was due to finish his National Service obligations six months after Dennis.

Employers were required to keep National Servicemen's jobs available to them on completion of their Army Service. However, the huge change in lifestyle that the Army life provided compared to civilian life meant that many (particularly those trained as officers) found it difficult to easily slot back into their previous occupations. This was the case with both Chris and Dennis, and a decision was made to purchase an old delivery van and convert it into a mobile home for a trip around Australia. They set off from Sydney and headed North, with the intention of working their way around Australia over a period of about 12 months.



All was going to plan, with many interesting adventures along the way, when Dennis received news of a sudden illness in his immediate family. They were in Cairns at the time and had to return to Sydney post haste. As a result, the trip was eventually called off, and "normal" life resumed.

Dennis went back to Otis, but was still unsettled, and worked at various other jobs over the next few years. During this time, Dennis met his future wife, Natascha, at the Motor Club in Sydney. They married a couple of years later and their first child, Natalie was born in 1972. There followed three other daughters, Nichole, Nadene and Noelene. You will notice the fact that all four daughters had their Christian names beginning with "N", like their mother.

Dennis and Natascha moved around Sydney, at various times living at Mt Pritchard and Bondi. Dennis then teamed up with a friend Barry Guest, who was a builder, and they started a building business, Purlin Projects.



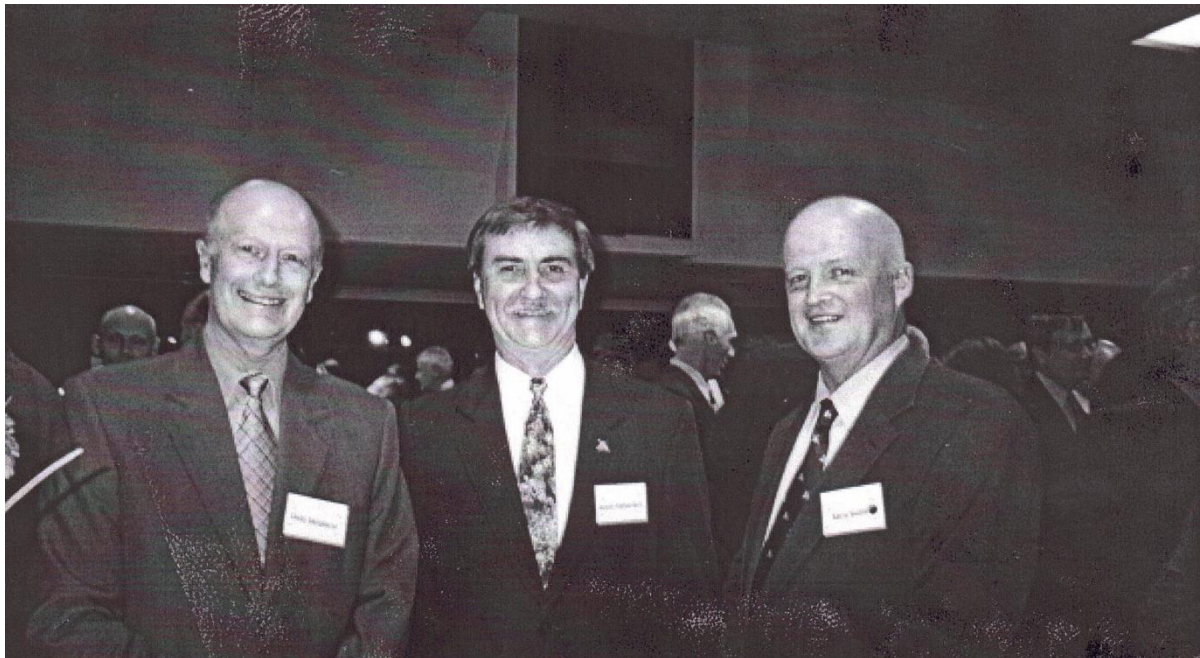
During this time, Dennis purchased a block of land at Pleasure Point, a beautiful spot right next to and overlooking the Georges River. He and Natascha not long after built a house on this block and it became their home for several years.

In 1978 Dennis was appointed as Accountant at the New South Wales Credit Union Association based at Burwood. In 1982 he became the Chief Accountant and in 1985 was promoted to the position of Financial Controller, a position he held until 1991, when he and Natascha moved to the North Coast of NSW.

In 1991 they purchased a small farm of about 100 acres (40 Hectares) at Warrell Creek just South of Macksville on the North Coast of NSW. Dennis had always wanted to live life on a farm, and it seemed that the small farm with its avocado and banana trees would keep him busy. This it certainly did, but unfavorable weather conditions depleted their cash reserves, so after three years they decided to lease the farm and return to Pleasure Point.

Dennis returned to the Credit Union industry as the Manager of the TAB Staff and Agents Credit Union in 1995, a position he held until it merged with the Flying Horse Credit Union in 2005. He then supplied consulting services to several credit unions in and around Sydney, acting as a fill-in General Manager on several occasions. He retired from full-time work in 2009 and he and Natascha returned to the farm at Warrell Creek. After a few more years on the farm, they purchased a house and moved to the Sunshine Coast in Queensland at Mudjimba. After three years of "beach life", Dennis became bored, and they decided to move back to Warrell Creek once again.

During Dennis's working life, Natascha had become very proficient at making dolls. She used to go to markets and fairs and had no trouble in selling them at very good prices. Once back at Warrell Creek Dennis decided that the physical work was getting a bit too much for him, and he and Natascha decided to sell the farm and purchase a couple of shops at Beerburrum in the Sunshine Coast hinterland. This would give Natascha an outlet for her doll business, and Dennis would busy himself doing up the shops.



Above: Former DTW Staff Chris Shepherd (4/66), Dennis Rutherford (2/66) and Barry Smith (2/65) at the 2013 OTU Reunion

They had only been in Beerburrum a couple of months when Dennis, Natascha and some of their family gathered together at their daughter Nadene's place not far from them to celebrate Dennis's 76th birthday with a BBQ. During the day, Dennis complained of not feeling at all well and despite calls from all and sundry to seek medical assistance, he said he just needed a bit of a lie down, and so he drove himself home. This was the beginning of a stroke that developed quickly at home, and by the time an ambulance was called, it was too late.

Dennis' funeral was held at Albany Creek Memorial Park on 12 May 2021 and afterwards a wake took place at the Apsley Hornets Football Club in Carseldine. Dennis is survived by his wife Natascha and his four daughters, Natalie, Nichole, Nadene and Noelene.

