



Vale

George Ralph Weslake

7th May, 1924 - 3rd September, 2024

George Ralph Weslake was born on 7th May, 1924 in New Farm, Brisbane. His father became an Adventist in 1926 and decided sell books. Ralph spent first eight years in Brisbane and would cop a hiding for all the misdemeanours that had happened while his father was away.

In 1932 his father George was called to New Zealand to continue his work for the church selling religious books mainly in the South Island. Dad said these early years in New Zealand were some of the toughest in his life as he went to several different schools in as many years.

It was at one of these schools that he asserted his authority as a protector of mankind. His Brother David came home in tears and reported that he had been beaten up at school by a bully twice his size and in a much higher grade. So Dad lay in wait for this bully and when he ventured from his house Dad grabbed him and gave him a hiding. Well the kid went back inside crying and told his father. Dad was in the nearby park and the kid returned with his Dad who promptly gave orders for them to fight it out. Bash him was the fathers command but every time the boy took a swing Dad dodged and ducked and eventually this kid ended up in tears because he couldn't get a hit in. A little while later, Dad woke up on the ground and no one in sight It turns out this kid's father had walked up and clocked Dad on the back of his neck and he dropped like a stone.

He reckons after that he often saw this man on his bike and would have loved to shove him off.

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Australian Government
Director of National Parks

Approach To Market (ATM)

DNP-NINP-2425-009

Provision of roof over mixing bay – Norfolk Island National Park

Responses to an Approach to Market (ATM) for services to design and install a roof over a mixing bay at the Norfolk Island National Park nursery are invited and will be received until 2:00 pm (Norfolk Island time) on Thursday 19 September 2024.

Responses to the ATM are required to be submitted on the approved response form which is available by contacting the Norfolk Island National Park (NINP) office on 22695 or email norfolkislandnationalpark@dcceew.gov.au

Completed ATMs are to be submitted via the NINP tender box located at the NINP office in an envelope clearly marked "ATM - DNP-NINP-2425-009 - roof over a mixing bay at the Norfolk Island National Park".

Zoe Knapp
Park Manager
4 September 2024.

George Ralph Weslake - continued

After his school years he went to Longburn College in 1942 - a school of higher education run by the SDA Church in Palmerston North New Zealand.

He only lasted a year....we will never know the real reason but he was kicked out. It was only a coincidence that a young lady was also expelled at around the same time. Interestingly the girl was put on a train by the staff at the school....as the train pulled out of the station Dad raced out from behind the rail sheds and jumped on the train and waved to the staff as the train gathered speed.

Most of this stuff is not talked about in our family because he tried to set a higher standard for his kid. But as you can all testify that mostly failed.

January 1st, 1943 Dad decided to join the army. He was under aged and was refused entry. So he went home and forged his father's signature and presented himself again and was accepted.

He was posted to different camps around the North Island and at one of these was taught the art of riding Harley Davidson's, a skill that would later serve him well on Norfolk Island.

It was at this time that the NZ Airforce were looking for new recruits so the officers approached the army for volunteers. No one did so they lined them all up and went along the line and chose at random as many as they needed....Dad was chosen

He had never heard of Norfolk Island but couldn't believe his luck when he landed on this speck in the Pacific. The air crew invited him to the flight deck and pointed Norfolk out. That was June 1944 and when he alighted from the aircraft he thought this will do me. It was a sunny pleasant 23 degrees and they had left Auckland with 9 degrees!

He lasted a year following orders from the officers above his rank. He was in the mess hall serving food to the officers. It was a one of those hot humid days on Norfolk so Dad removed his shirt and continued serving the food. One of the officers objected to the bare chest so Dad slammed his plate on the counter and said "Serve yourself then!" This resulted in a show of force from those ranked above him and a fist fight erupted in the mess hall.

Dad was sent back to New Zealand something he was excited about because he was sent to the very place his old girlfriend was! He spent a month away being retrained to obey orders.

On his return to Norfolk he continued to serve as a medic and ground staff for the incoming and outgoing fighter planes that were going up to Guadalcanal to join the war effort in that area of the Pacific. Dad noted that not all who went came back and also remembers a squadron of planes that were lost south of New Caledonia on their way back to NI. The fog settled in and all the aircraft following the mother plane that had navigation were lost as they ran out of fuel trying to find their way without a guide. Dad found this experience quite sobering and often talked about it as one of the tragedies of war!

During this time Dad had his eye on a young lady working at the tea rooms opposite the airport. He asked

her one day if she would like some apples to which she replied in the affirmative. As she reached out to place the apples in her apron Dad took his opportunity and tried to kiss her. She dropped the apples and ran for her life. He called out after her...."I'm going to marry you" And he did....that's a story in itself!

After the war Dad decided to stay on Norfolk. This was the place to be. He and Enid were married in New Zealand 1st March 1949 and made their home in a cottage on the property now owned by Todd Buffet.

It was owned by the magistrate of the day Mr Paddy Locksmith. His wife ran the farm and Dad helped with the milking which supplied the armed forces residing here on the island.

One day the old lady asked if Dad could go and find her husband. He went to the back of the paddock and found him dead under a tree.

He came back with the sad report and the old lady went into hysterics waving her arms around and asking what am I going to do now? Dad thought she was worried about the farm, but she was worried about how she was going to deal with his death and get him to the morgue

So Dad said leave it to me. He went up the road to Abb Bathie's, where Dissy and Viv live now.

Abb had a freshly broken horse and sled so he came down and they placed the dead man on the sled to be transported to Bishops Court...the site of the hospital in those days.

As Abb gave the command for the horse to proceed it lurched forward with such force that the body slid off the sled so they had to reload it. No fewer than ten times did that body hit the dirt!

Dad said that they laughed so much that their sides hurt and by the time they got to Bishops court they could barely stand for laughing.

I wanted to phone Leonard and ask him for a bit of ply to tow behind the hearse. Take Dad out of the coffin and tow him down a town...just for old times sake.

Ken was born at around this time when Dad and Mum lived in the little cottage and Dad had begun working for Wikstead across the road. He made butter for the army. It was soon after this that the old man decided to sell and Dad was able to purchase the property at Headstone with help from one of the local SDA members. It was a good property with blacked out windows, Lantana, Baker stuff, and elephant grass. Hard work and enough lettle sullen eventually had the property looking like it is today.

Dad was still producing butter during this time and he also had pigs. The pigs were fed on the skim milk from the process of making butter and he reported with pride how fast these pigs could grow from piglet to sale.

A new Adventist pastor came to Norfolk and during a visit to the farm questioned the wisdom of an Adventist farmer raising pigs for sale. As many of you would know we Adventists don't eat pork! So Dad's conscience was smitten and for once in his life towed the line!

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George Ralph Weslake - continued

Also at that time the island began importing more and more butter so Dad changed over to selling fresh milk and delivering it by can to billies left on gate posts and fences.

He travelled to Sydney and purchased the AJS motorcycle you will see today restored by my brother Graham. That bike worked hard from the mid-fifties right into the early seventies

During this time the local Dr of the day believed that there was staphylococcus in the milk. This resulted in him being prevented from selling milk but he could sell the cream.

A supplement to the family income was required so he purchased a Howard Gem rotary hoe and started ploughing land for extra income. He worked hard milking two times a day and working this mechanical rotary hoe most days. But it was far more efficient than two horses pulling a plough!

Once coming down Douglas Drive in his Pontiac truck with the rotary hoe on the back, he rounded the last bend to begin the acceleration through the bottom to make it up the other side. Two vehicles had stopped adjacent to each other to greet and chat. He applied the brakes but the pressure burst the brake lines that were later shown to be rusted out.

He waved and yelled at the two having a friendly chat but they thought he was just vigorously greeting them and neither moved. Well with failed brakes he had only one option and turned into the bank on Douglass drive taking out the under carriage of the truck. As luck would have it Ralph Holloway knew where a new part was and Dad travelled to Sydney and brought it back, fitted it himself and he was back in business.

At this time with two boys away at private school in Sydney, boarding with families and three more to educate the costs were mounting and so the time had come to find more permanent reliable work.

Dad began working at the Norfolk Island Hospital in 1969 and stayed there for the next 15 years. During this time he not only mowed the lawns and did the maintenance but he assisted in operations, became the radiographer by taking tips from his son Graham and became the ambulance driver.

The staff had to be involved in training for a disaster at the airport. This required a mock plane crash. The late Morgy Jowewtt was the matron and received the phone call to advise of such an event. Dad meanwhile, raced to get the ambulance then started yelling at Morgy to hurry up. By the time she got into the ambulance she was not in the best of moods.

Dad would flatten it arriving at the scene in record time...but to add drama to the event he would take off down the runway as fast as that old V8 could go. Morgy would be wide eyed and scared out of her wits. She'd say "Ralph...do you need to go quite so fast?" His reply was "This is an emergency. When we hit 80mph we'll open the doors and see if we can fly!"... .."Ohh Ralph don't be so stupid!"

Dad also obtained the agency for Rover mowers. And the Hospital was the perfect place to display their

capabilities. He imported a self-propelled mower and whenever anyone entered the hospital grounds while he was mowing he would let go of the handles put his hands behind his back, whistle and walk behind the mower. Tony Giuseppe came up one day saw Dad do his trick and was immediately impressed. Dad said "If you want it you can have it....so they struck a deal there and then and he loaded the mower straight into the boot of the car. Dad sold several mowers like that and when he started bringing in ride-ons they sold like hot cakes.

With milking twice a day, working at the hospital and selling mowers he put us all through private school and higher education which in any body's language is quite an achievement!

Toward the end of the last child's overseas education the local government in their wisdom considered the local fresh milk not suitable for consumption without being pasteurised. The island milkmen met and agreed it was too expensive to install equipment to pasteurise the milk and wanted the Government to do it. They wouldn't so Dad said the day you pass legislation to that effect is the day I stop milking and he did!

His public service included many years on the local council, some-time as the chair of the public works committee and many years as head elder for the Seventh Day Adventist Church on Norfolk Island. He always fought hard for the equitable share of ministerial support for Norfolk. This active voice landed him on the executive committee for the Greater Sydney Conference of Seventh Day Adventists, something he was very proud of. He travelled to Sydney every month for two years.

His visits to Sydney continued even after that as he had a heart attack, quad by-pass and pigs valve at 85 - survived that!

In April of 2019 both eyes had cataracts removed - Chat now had competition.

In July of 2019 he fell in the kitchen on a Saturday morning and broke his hip, 4 hours later he was in Prince of Wales hospital - survived that

In late 2021 he had a major cancer removed from his neck that had attached itself to the carotid artery and another on his head in October of 2022 - survived those

And for the last five years has travelled monthly to Sydney to receive treatment for a wet macular condition in his eye - survived that.

Dad, you are a real trooper. You loved and supported your family through thick and thin. You always fought for the underdog and generously supported those in the community who needed a helping hand. You have left a wonderful legacy and set a hard example to follow. We love you and we will meet again. As the old hymn says "What a day glorious day that will be!"

Rest in peace Brud, you deserve it!
