



Vale
Vern Alston

How do you sum up 93 years of a full life lived in just a few minutes? We will give it our best try.....

Dad was born at the family home in Beelbangera, a tiny farming community near Griffith in New South Wales, to Eric Verner (known as Vern) and Marguerita (known as Rita) Alston. Dad was the third child of four, with an older brother (Jack), older sister (Rita), and a younger brother (Keith – who lives in Canberra). Dad was extremely proud that his father was a Quarter Master Sergeant who landed in Gallipoli with the ANZACs, serving at Quinns Post until he was shot in the shoulder a few days after arrival. Fortunately not life threatening, his father was returned home to Australia for medical treatment, where he was subsequently granted a returned soldiers plot of mixed farm land to work in Beelbangera. Dad had a very strong, lifelong interest in the armed forces as a result of his father's service. His brother Jack, also served in the Second World War and Dad was disappointed he wasn't old enough to join up with him.

Dad wasn't allowed to start school until he was able to ride the family horse bareback on his own to and from school – which is where his love of horses came from. He recalled riding home from school one afternoon in the hot summer sun and dozing off, when a willy willy started up and a large bundle of dried grass rolled towards his horse, causing her to shy and he fell off.

He said she was such a quiet horse, she just stood there looking at him. He then had to do his best to climb up her front leg, arms clinging on to her neck so he could swing his legs over and clamber back on board.

He was a cheeky, fun loving boy, playing tricks on his family and cousins. A couple of memorable incidents include him suggesting his cousin try jumping off the tank stand with an umbrella to see if he could fly (thankfully his father caught them and stopped him in time); he and his cousin also snuck into the wine barrel shed of their friends and neighbours

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APPLICATIONS FOR 'OPEN DAYS' AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE

JANUARY 2023– DECEMBER 2023

An invitation is extended to community groups that raise funds for charities and for non-profit organisations to submit an application for an open day at Government House.

Open Days are held each month on a scheduled Wednesday between the hours of 1.00pm and 3.30pm with allocation dates being advised on notification to successful applicants. An entry fee is charged and all proceeds are used to benefit the Norfolk Island community.

Prior to submitting an application, **all interested organisations must obtain an information brochure** on Government House Open Days from the Office of the Administrator (Ph. 22152) and acquaint themselves with the responsibilities that are placed on successful applicants (including social distancing practices and the ability to provide the necessary sitters) during their respective Open Days.

Applications are to be in writing, addressing the organisations ability to meet the requirements set out in the information brochure and should be forwarded to email office.administrator@infrastructure.gov.au by COB Wednesday 23 November 2022.

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who were winemakers, while their fathers were having a beer after work and started “tasting” from the barrels which resulted in them rolling up the path drunk as skunks.

His family moved to Harbord – now Freshwater – near Manly in the 1940s where he finished his schooling at Manly Boys High School. There was a feral rabbit community around the neighbourhood and Dad, by now a young teenager who had spent much of his younger years shooting rabbits and pigeons etc on the family farm, thought nothing of shooting rabbits to take home for his mum to cook for dinner – until the neighbours became alarmed and put an end to it. He also spent weekends travelling on the train to a property near Picton – firearm beside him on the train (which wouldn’t be allowed these days!) – to shoot rabbits with friends to bring home for dinner.

As they were living close to Manly, Dad and his brothers, Keith and Jack became members of the Manly 16ft Skiff Sailing Club where they raced each weekend and there is still a framed photo with he and Keith on the walls of the Club at Manly.

On leaving school, he took up an electrician apprenticeship with the railways. Subsequently with his younger brother Keith, they started their own electrical business and juggled working during the day, with doing a milk run by horse and cart at night.

He did a bit of travelling around Australia, bought a motorbike, and with a friend they rode north to the top of Queensland and back. He loved that motorbike. On another occasion he did a cruise with some friends up the east coast of Australia, and it was on that trip that he met Mum. They met in the March and were engaged and married by the December of that year.

His father had originally trained as a carpenter, so dad, his brother Keith and their father decided to try their hands at building spec homes around the Manly and Mosman areas and later moved into small apartment blocks. Many of the homes and small apartment blocks they built are still around today. He was always hands on, helping move the loads of bricks for the brickies, helping with electrical, painting etc... which is why he could turn his hand to anything – he may not always finish what he started though, which would drive Mum mad!

In the 1960s he and Mum went on a cruise of the Pacific Islands, travelling past Norfolk on the way, which they thought looked beautiful and decided to visit at a later date. They fell in love with the Island on that visit and with Dad missing the quiet country life and wonderful small community he grew up with, they decided to explore the opportunity to leave Sydney

and move to Norfolk. He bought a beautiful piece of land in New Cascade Road where he and his brother and father built firstly Pine Valley Apartments, then the Polynesian Motel. The late Charlie Freshwater was one of his friends who came over to work with them on the building as painter and also decided to move his family full time.

He also bought our beautiful family farm on Mt Pitt Road and put his heart and soul (and ours!) into both our farm and the Motel.

He arranged for someone he knew of in Sydney to find six ponies to suit beginners through to experienced riders and we were blessed to have the six most perfect ponies you could ever dream of arrive in two lots by ship - offloaded in the original tradition by lighter down at Kingston and led up the hill (thanks Shane!) to their new home.

That started our love affair with horses, which we all still have to this day. Dad taught us to ride by telling us you give them a kick to get them to go and pull on the reins and say whoa to get them to stop! (We soon learnt otherwise). He rode with us as often as he could. One of his mischievous tricks was when we would ride down Douglas Drive (which was a soft dirt road in those days) he’d tell us not to race up the other side. As we were desperately holding our excited ponies back to keep them at a walk, all of a sudden a flash of black horse would tear past us – Dad racing us to the top. Those were the days!

He was always a really hard worker, working long days, 7 days a week, wanting to be able to provide each of us with the very best opportunities, and to get a good start in life and for this we are unbelievably grateful. He instilled that hard work ethic in each of us!

We did think he was a bit of a hard taskmaster when we were kids though! If we weren’t out of bed by 7am on the weekends and school holidays, he would stand at our bedroom doors and either ring our old cow bell, or whistle the tune “Care for Kids” until we dragged ourselves out of bed. Then with a “to do list” a mile long in hand, we would start our day of jobs. Calling us his land army girls, would have us doing anything from dragging rolls of wire, and fenceposts one at a time up to the top of our big hill to spend the day fencing with him; hand mixing cement to prepare a concrete slab for a new tank, spreading fertilizer by hand up and down those hills; to becoming expert house maids, kitchen hands and waitresses from a very young age. We loved all the farming jobs, but confess house-maiding at the Motel contributed to all of us finding housework an absolute bore!

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Commonwealth Youth Games 2023

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Scotland 2000 • Australia 2004 • India 2008 • Isle of Man 2011 • Samoa 2015 • Bahamas 2017

Vern Alston - continued

Poor Mum was left at home while we spent all our time with Dad either working at the Motel or down in the paddocks, and in our spare time, riding horses!

As very young teenagers, he also taught us all the essentials of life on a farm: to shoot, ride motorbikes, drive and change tyres (we weren't allowed to sit for our licence before we could change tyres on our own) and then he enjoyed teaching our cousins and his older grandkids these same skills. Michael fondly recalled his Pop teaching him how to drive up and down the hills of the paddocks, crunching the gears loudly in the little ute, as he was being taught the fine art of driving a manual car.

Richard has many lovely memories of his time living with his Nan and Pop. One particular one stands out – he said Pop used to knock on his door each morning to wake him up and by the time he got to the kitchen, Pop would have a bowl of porridge ready in the microwave for him for breakfast. He said it tasted horrible, but he never had the heart to tell him, so ate it anyway!

Dad immersed himself in the local community which he absolutely loved – including many years with the Building Board (including as Chair), Tourism Board, working on the planning and plans of the new Guide Hall and the Pony Club - where he was proud to be made a lifetime member.

Like all on Norfolk, he made sure we were totally self sufficient with our own veggies, fruit, chooks, cattle for both beef and milking, beehives, and like everyone, enjoyed sharing all the excess produce and plants to anyone who was in need. He also leant our lovely quiet ponies to anyone seeking to borrow one for their children or grandchildren to learn to ride on.

He loved travelling and took us as a family on three terrific overseas holidays, then continued to explore various countries with Mum for as long as they could both manage the long haul flights.

He had such a great love of Norfolk and its community. He could never wait to get back home after visiting us in Sydney. He would start to get restless after a week.

His kindness and generosity was returned by so many of you to him and for that we are immensely grateful. He always had friends to chat to on his trips to the supermarket, checking the mail and the weekend farmers' markets; he had daily check in telecalls; and there would always be someone who would drop in to say hallo, or bring him some freshly caught fish or a meal and he in return would again share some of his own produce, or some words of wisdom. Whilst we worried about him living on his own over the past few years, with his rickety knees and dicky heart, he would always say he wasn't on his own, he had the most wonderful community around him and didn't want to be anywhere else.

He was terribly disappointed that travel restrictions due to COVID, and then his health prevented him returning to his beloved Norfolk throughout last year and we are grateful that our entire family are able to be here now to finally bring him home to rest with Mum.

Thank You

To James, Dr. Sam and all the nurses and staff of the NIHRACS Norfolk Island Hospital for your kindness and care during my recent incident.

Thank you too to Louci and to Jaque for stepping into the breach to look after our customers when Monica and I were not available. Thank you all.

Ian Anderson

In Memoriam

Ernie Christian

18th December 1934 - 9th November 1994

In loving memory of Ernie Christian. Still love and miss you.

Marjie and family.

Robert Stanley (Bob) Little

20.01.1935 - 12.11.2021

So many changes have been made & lots of challenges met but throughout it all the happy memories we share support and sustain us....

Love always Narelle, your family and your friends.

Sudoku Number 348 - Medium

	8			6	9			
	7		1			5	6	2
	1		2					
3						7	5	
1								8
	2	7						1
					5		3	
2	3	9			1		7	
			7	2			4	

6	7	9	8	5	4	1	3	2
4	5	3	2	9	1	8	7	6
8	2	1	3	6	7	4	9	5
7	9	6	1	8	2	5	4	3
3	8	4	9	7	5	6	2	1
5	1	2	6	4	3	7	8	9
1	6	8	4	2	9	3	5	7
9	4	5	7	3	6	2	1	8
2	3	7	5	1	8	9	6	4

SUDOKU RULES

Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9. There is no math involved. You solve each puzzle with reasoning and logic. Each puzzle only has one solution.

Last week's solution