

Francis (Frank) Bernard Sanderson



Francis (Frank) Bernard Sanderson, the eldest of seven children, was born in Unley South Australia on the 25th of January 1926. The date of his birth was significant as it was nine months from Anzac day 1925. His life from this point was to be influenced significantly by military events.

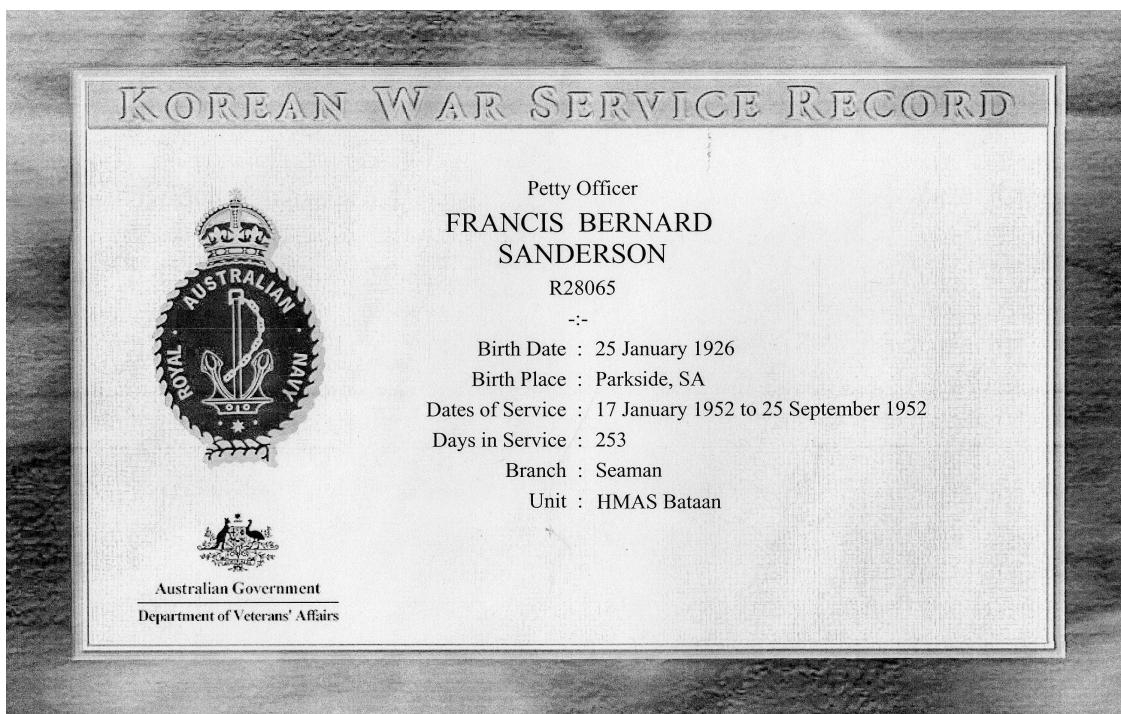
He spent his early years on his parent's property near Pt Augusta South Australia. He did all the things that were expected of a youngster, during those early learning years. A memorable event during this period was dosing his sister Shirley with Kerosene during a game of "Doctors & Nurses". This necessitated a very fast horse & sulky ride to Pt Augusta for further medical attention. What was vivid in his mind was the sulky trip. His father had to whip the horse to maintain speed. There

were two whips for the horse and one for him cowering in the rear of the sulky. You will be pleased to know that Shirley survived.

The depression & drought were disastrous for the family, which was forced to give up the property and move to Pt Augusta. The family lived for four years at the "Stanpipe" an old hotel owned by his fathers sister Ella. Frank commenced his schooling during this period and would have to hike three kilometres over sand hill and saltbush country to get there. In 1935 the family moved to their own home in Marryatt St Pt Augusta. He remained here for the remainder of his formative years. Frank did not enjoy school but did achieve 2nd year high before leaving in 1935.

He got a job with the Commonwealth Railways in Pt Augusta and was able to supplement the family's income. His duties included number snatching, train telegraphist and goods shed manifesting. Outside work he loved scouting and cycling.

The Second World War was in full swing and Frank tried to join the Royal Australian Navy. He was not accepted as the Commonwealth Railways was under very strict manpower control. He did however join the Naval Auxiliary Patrol, "Dad's Navy". This force spent its weekends searching Spencers Gulf for Japanese submarines in old wooden fishing boats. Fortunately for them no enemy submarines dared enter the Gulf.



In October 1945 he was accepted into the Navy and served for 12 years reaching the rank of Petty Officer. During this time he served on the war ships HMAS Watson, HMAS Arunta, HMAS Australia, HMAS Bataan & the HMAS Warramunga. He also spent time at the naval base HMAS Cerberus and RAAF base Uranquinty. The

destroyers Frank served on were initially involved with the Japanese Occupation Forces and the Far East Station. In 1951 he went on to serve in Korea.

In 1950 while serving on HMAS Australia he met a farm girl Nancy Eileen Belford from Texas Queensland that was working as a dressmaker in Brisbane. He married Nancy and went to war. Nine months from Christmas leave 1952 their first son Michael was born. Nine months from midyear leave 1954 their second son Wayne was born. Their third son Bradley was born 2 months premature in 1963 after he had left the Navy. In 1959 Frank & Nancy also endured the loss of twins Tanya & Stephen who were born prematurely and sadly did not survive.



Frank was also very proud of his other two children, twins Margaret & Donald who he met for the first time late in 2002. He had fathered the twins prior to marrying Nancy. Their mother had died letting them no little or no information of his existence. They managed to track him down in Hervey Bay. Suddenly Frank's family expanded in the nicest possible way. He was proud of their existence, displaying the photos of his new great grandchildren with his other great grandchildren.



On leaving the Navy Frank invested his deferred pay, some 800-pound in a grocery complex with two friends. After a period of time he decided to go out on his own and operated a corner store. Working as a family they were able to operate the store without employing staff. This all went to custard when Nancy became pregnant with Bradley and made worse by the premature birth. Rather than go bankrupt they sold everything and Frank took a position managing and operating the Commonwealth Railways store at Cook in the middle of the Nullarbor Plains. He enjoyed his time at Cook and was required to be from time to time School Committee President, Undertaker, Scout Leader, Amateur Actor & Golfer to name a few. After 18 months the debts from Pt Augusta were clear and Michael's high school was looming.

Frank & his family move to Nhill in Victoria as a travelling representative for the Adelaide firm Harris Scarfe. He told of some bright spark saying as the family boarded the train, "Well Frank you moving from nothing to Nhill". At Nhill he was instrumental in reviving the local pipe band and filled the position as drum major. To supplement the income the local policeman boarded with the family. From time to time he and the policeman would dig graves for the local undertaker as a further supplement.

After approximately 18 months at Nhill he swapped his position with the Harris Scarfe representative in Alice Springs. The cold damp weather was not good

for Bradley the youngest. Frank & his family lived in Alice Springs until 1973. During this time took on a number of positions that included hardware, landscape Gardening, managing a sports store and storeman for a large contracting firm. He was involved with the local Naval Association, RSL Club, Bowling Club and Free Masonry to name a few.

In 1973 Frank & Family move to the Warrego mining town not far from Tennant Creek some 500 km north of Alice Springs. Michael & Wayne were both independent by now and living away from the family home. Frank & Nancy operated the store at Warrego for a gentleman by the name of Alf Chittock for approximately 2 years. Just like the other places he had been Frank weaved his way into the fabric of the Warrego community.

From Warrego Frank, Nancy & Bradley their youngest son moved to the nearby town of Tennant Creek. Frank bought a truck and started carting freight to and from Alice Springs. He enjoyed this life as he was always on the move. He started offering hardware on consignment from an Alice Springs hardware firm. The hardware business flourished and before long Frank & Nancy where buying stock in their own right. Later they would join the Homestead Hardware Group.

Seven years ago after selling the business and their house Frank and Nancy moved to Hervey Bay to retire at Fraser Shores Village. Frank had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, which was later found to be PSP (Progressive Supranuclear Palsy). PSP had no cure or treatment. Franks body was to close down progressively over the remainder of his life. After it became impossible for Nancy to look after him he move to the new Torbay high care unit as one of its inaugural residents where he was to spend the last three years of his life.

Frank once described himself as "a bit of flotsam, drifting aimlessly and lucky fall on his feet on a golden sandy shore"

Frank Sanderson was not perfect, but none of us are. He was a Gentleman in the true sense of the word. He liked a beer with his mate's. He was a bloke's bloke skilled in the art of yarning. He could in this environment spread bull as thick as the best of them. He loved the time he spent in the Navy. The memories would sustain a passion that would last the rest of his life. He was more than an ordinary member of the traditional RSL and the mateship that it stood for. He gave his time to do things to further the ideals this organisation. So much so the local Tennant Creek club flew him and Nancy back to Tennant Creek for the dedication of a new memorial that Frank had played a large part in. The disappointment he felt when his disease no longer made it possible for him to attend the Anzac day activities weighed heavily. He gave his time willingly, not only to the RSL but to the Masonic Lodge, Scouts, Bowls, Golf, Pipe Bands, to mention a few.

Frank had one other passion and that was the family name and its Scottish heritage. Anything that had anything to do with the Sanderson name was elevated and amplified. Vat69 whisky produced by Sanderson's, the McDonald of Glengarry

tartan was the Sanderson tartan, the family coat of arms and not least Grandsons that would carry on the family name. He was worried man for a while as the first four grandchildren where all girls. His preoccupation with the name blinded him to just how "Sanderson" his granddaughters where and are.

