

EULOGY FOR TED RANSLEY
12/8/1924 – 9/2/2020
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My father Edward Henry Ransley, affectionately known as Ted, was born on the 12th August 1924. A twin with his sister Mabs named after their parents Edward and Mabel. Ted and Mabs came into the world at Little River property in Woodburn. Growing up with their sisters and brothers on the farm. They had cows, chickens, a vegetable garden and an abundance of crabs and fish from the Evans River. Dad's first memory was holding his father's hand with Mabs holding the other and walking down to the river. Sadly his father died due to complications from a tree felling accident at Billinudgel when he was three and Auntie Betty was a baby. Dad remembers him at home and in pain and then the ambulance taking him away, probably to the hospital at Coraki. Though he said they never really saw a doctor if they were sick or injured, the local chemist tended to them. Dad was around 4 or 5 when a fire swept through the property and he was later found under the water tank. He was 8 when the axe slipped and went through his foot, that scar he carried for life. Mornings were up to chop the wood to light the woodfired stove for breakfast. School was a short distance away where they would catch a pony and ride. Pocket money was made with collecting grass seed from the paddocks after school and bartering with fish and crabs for meat and dripping or chopping a cord of wood to sell.

When Ted was 14 he let Mabs continue with her schooling and went to work on a local dairy farm. He would plough the field with Clydesdales. One day the plough went through his foot – the other foot and he had to unhook the reins and climb up onto the horse to take him back to the farm. The boss still expected the work to be done and would carry Ted out to the horses each day where he continued to work even though he couldn't walk. Another day the farmer moved the horses up near Ballina to a new property and they got out in the night and went home to Woodburn. Dad was instructed to go and get them.

Sunday was always Dad's favourite day where he said all the cousins would come to the place and bring food and they would play games or net the river so everyone went home with fish. They had two hound dogs, Whiskey & Soda and Roger the cattle dog who kept the snakes away from the house and protected the chickens from foxes. Dad would always shake his head at the food, worming tablets and treats that were bought for my animals over the years. He would say they never fed their animals; they were working animals who looked after themselves. Whiskey & Soda would go bush for a few days but you could hear them howling in the distance where they would catch and eat a wallaby. Dad was forever a practical man. He sewed buttons, mended what he could and made do. When my son Lang bought me a water feature for my garden wall, which was a decorative tap that ran through pump, dad looked at it and scratched his head and said "what for"? I said to look good and he said "why"?

When war broke out Dad said he was tired of being up at 2am and in bed by 10pm so he joined up to get a good night's sleep. I guess he never realised what it was all about. Auntie Mabs once told me I didn't really know my Dad. He was a happy-go-lucky bloke full of fun and laughs and always joking. When he came back from war that all changed, he was quiet and never spoke

much. It was only later in his life that he revealed to Troy and Don some of the horrific stories of war.

Dad trained at Dubbo, and volunteered to Silkwood near Ingham to cut cane working again with 7 Clydesdales on the truck. He trained at Qld border Mt Tamborine and Atherton for jungle training school before leaving overseas. He has an AWL on his records for sneaking out of camp with a mate to go home to see their mums. They boarded a train where the schoolkids hid them with their school blazers from the probation officers. After a few days his mother said you better get back now. He walked up to the first Provo and said I'm AWL. Punishment was not being allowed to sit or walk, he had to run everywhere for 3 weeks. At night they would be woken to gear up and run to the top of Mt Tamborine to put out a light. At Dubbo he met some of his city friends. A lot of these mates didn't make it – dad said he would warn them to stay down, stay camouflaged, showing them how he stuck twigs and leaves in his shirt and hat. There is a lot to gain from being a bush kid, shooting parrots so your mum could make parrot pie and the skills to stay alive. Dad was fast and was made a forward scout, he had to get out in front to find Japanese camps and get the co-ordinates back for the bombing raids. A clearing was not a large area just a bit of bush cleared by the native people for gardens. Dad had two close calls that I know of, a bullet through his backpack and one skimming off his helmet. He was part of the battalion that was on the Numa Numa trail on Bougainville and climbed Artillery hill under the fire of Japanese to capture them. When the war ended he had the chance to go to Japan for the peace corps but he preferred to go home to see his mum.

On returning to Australia he joined the NSW railway and put in the line from Sydney to the border loop, camping along the tracks. When he was near Patterson he would call in to see his sisters and nearer to Grafton catch up for a home meal with his mum.

Dad loved his mother and sisters and brothers. He was a family man devoted, hardworking and never said a bad word about anyone. If I ever complained about my mum he would just respond “your mother's a good woman” and that was the end of it. Even last year if I got home late from work he would say “it's dark your too late.” when I signed up with my son Coen to do the Kokoda trail he collected every newspaper clipping of people who had died doing the trail, glued it to a couple of scrapbook pages and handed it to me. He didn't want me to go.

Dad was one of the first Nambucca RSL members with a single digit membership number; he came to Nambucca when his mother was brought down from Woodburn. He helped lay the first bricks to the new RSL building and would jump over the bar to help at Christmas time during the busy tourist season. Sadly one by one Dad's friends departed and he found himself the only one of his group left. Dad was also a member of the Nambucca Heads Fire Brigade.

Dad met mum with my brother Don in Nambucca Heads, when he was working at the RSL and Mum next door at the motel. He asked her out for lunch and then a lifelong friendship happened. When they moved to Cronulla the year I was born was when the Sharks first started their football team. It was this team we listened to the games on the wireless every weekend. Sunday was roast dinner day, Dad said he was instructed by Mum to take me to the park while she cooked. Catching me to take me back was the hard part. Dad said I refused and would run around until he caught me. Other Sundays we would go for picnics to the beach or catch the ferry to Manly and

have hot chip sandwiches on the beach. He loved to talk to me about the weather and taught me how to ride a bike by holding me at the top of the hill and letting go. He said one day Don pulled their VW to bits all over the front lawn and he thought it would never go again but Don was able to put it all back together. Dad would work all day at Brownbuilt's factory and head to the pub for a beer after work. Mum always said "He's gone to see a man about a dog" when he was at the pub and I remember always looking for a puppy when he came home.

Dad continued to follow the Sharks team and was a happy man in 2016 when they won the grand final. Dad was true blue through and through, his comments were QLD thinks there the only state in Australia. He did miss NSW and the Sydney news. What is there not to miss about Nambucca Heads? I had someone on my side during state of origin. Troy could never get Dad to be a Queenslander though he did enjoy a Bundy Rum. Dad lived with us for 7 years, Lang gave up his bedroom to make Pop comfortable. He turned from a holiday pop to part of the family pop. I think he enjoyed the busy family comings and goings. Always asking if the kids were coming home for the weekend. Lang once asked Dad what he did for his 21st birthday and Dad replied he was in the trenches and got a dry pair of socks for a present.

Dad would sit and read his beloved Westerns or walk down town to the IGA to get fruit and vegetables. He developed a relationship with my old dog Benny who would sit and stare as he ate. Benny was always with him laying under his bed or TV stand. Dad was fit and loved walking. He loved pushing himself and when he got the wheelie walker he almost jogged with it. He loved sitting outside in the garden to get some sun and never had a sunspot on him after all those years working outside on the railway and cutting cane—he said if you wore a hat when you threw the cane over your shoulder it would knock the hat off. If you wore a shirt then it would itch from sweat and bits of cane. Cutting cane with a cane knife by hand in just a pair of shorts. Dad had his old faithful shirt and shorts. The shirt was pretty ragged like his tea towel with a huge hole in the centre. I said I had plenty of teatowels and he said why if it still works. Once a visiting occupational therapist said you could buy your dad a new shirt couldn't you? I showed her his cupboard, told her he won't wear them. If you saw Dad's wallet it was so old it was grey. He had so many new wallets in the drawer, obviously presents from family and when anyone asked he said this was Moe's wallet. His brother always close.

Dad loved our paddock which we affectionately call Woodburn and would come down with me to see the horses. If I asked him how to stop the horse from being naughty, pigrooting or not standing still he would say horses were never naughty in my day, they were too tired from working all day. This was also his answer to the shenanigans of present day footballers. Dad would say in my day they had a job, they worked all week and played the game for the club because they loved it on the weekend. Dad loved sport, one day he said to me as I got home from work "the Firebirds beat the Swifts" and I said who are the Firebirds and he said Qld netball beat NSW. Always checking out that state of origin rivalry.

The only sport that Dad could not handle was the T20. It just wasn't cricket and was ruining the test. He did not like the colours they wore or the whole idea of just going out to hit as quickly as possible. Dad and I watched the football and went for any Sydney team that played a Qld team, cricket and tennis, if he wasn't reading he was following sporting teams. Every week he methodically wrote down the scores and who was 1st or 2nd.

I don't know how to put together all the words of this man's life but I do know he loved family first, he thought the world of all his brothers and sisters and all his grandchildren, Nathan, Lisa, Nicole, Coen, Clare and Lang. He loved hearing about what they were up to. He was a loyal and hard worker who loved good food as well as a beer—fifty-fifty old and new. Dad never complained about pain, actually he never complained at all. Dad drifted off to sleep after a hearty breakfast and chat with me on February 9th quietly at home. It was his wishes not to be in hospital and it was also his wishes to return to his beloved Nambucca Heads.

Dad, mum has waited 10 years for you so I imagine you have some explaining to do if you can get a word in. We will miss you every day and never forget that you fought for our lifestyle and the freedom we are so privileged to have today.