

*Dad's own account of his life, which we read out at the funeral. Juliana*

JOHN De NOOY'S STORY

John was born in The Netherlands on 31st May, 1924, number five of 11 children, one of whom died when a baby. He was named Zwerus, a family name which he disliked, so he later called himself John. He grew up in a very happy Christian family, with a loving Father & Mother, who were also good on discipline, a necessity in such a large family. His father was a blacksmith, and water-boring contractor, and John had many happy memories of those days, until the day in May 1940 when the Germans invaded The Netherlands, and life changed immediately. His father was killed on the first day of the invasion when a stray bullet from an air fight between a Dutch and a German plane hit him when he was on his way from home to the school, less than 100 metres away, where a number of people had found shelter in its large underground cellars. His father was Chairman of the school committee and had opened up the school. So his Mother was left with 10 children to rear during those next very difficult five years.

During the 5 years occupation of his country by the Germans, an active resistance movement grew up among the Dutch people, many of whom found hiding places for persecuted Jewish families and food for them. Another important task for the Resistance Movement was also to find Allied Air Force personnel who had crashed their planes on their return from bombing of German factories and to get them back to England.

When the British paratroopers landed in Arnhem in 1944 to try to liberate the Dutch people, John attached himself to the Unit and helped them in many ways, including assisting the paratroopers to return to England, with complete disregard for his own personal safety. For his services during that time, he was awarded "The British Medal for Courage in the Cause of Freedom", and "The American Medal of Freedom with Bronze Palm". After listening to the stories he could tell, and reading the books about these times, in which he featured many times, we wonder how he ever survived, such were the risks that he took. John's whole family was involved in active resistance during the occupation. Two of his uncles were imprisoned by the Germans and one of his brothers, who was active in the armed resistance movement, was caught by the Gestapo while participating in recovering arms and munitions dropped by the Allied planes for the Dutch resistance. He was imprisoned and tortured, and on the eve of the Liberation, when the Gestapo voted to kill some of the prisoners or free them, luckily they decided to set them free. John was also eventually caught by the Gestapo and imprisoned in a concentration camp in the Netherlands, but they could not keep him for long. After 3 months there, he jumped off a moving train transporting the prisoners to a camp in Germany, and escaped.

After the Liberation, he immediately joined the Dutch Army as the Japanese were still fighting. He was selected for Officer Training and sent to England where he got his training in the English army as a soldier and as an Officer. He returned to The Netherlands where he was sworn in as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Dutch Army, and started training his own platoon, and in May 1947 departed with his platoon of the Jagers Bataillon to Indonesia, where he distinguished himself in many diverse operations and became the Company Commander. Before he returned to The Netherlands he received a special commendation (mentioned in dispatches) from the Commander of The Netherlands Army in Indonesia stating that "The way, you, immediately after your action as commander of the nearly surrounded post of Sawahan, South of Ngandjoek, with undaunted, tactful and continuous patrolling, not only restored the shaken morale of the

troop, but also pacified this once so terrorised district, that the Indonesian Government officials again could be installed and the general economic situation improved quickly, is highly appreciated by me." He spent 2 and a half years there before returning to civilian life in The Netherlands

John found that he could not settle down again in his home country. He studied and became a Time & Motion Study Engineer, but was not happy, so he decided to migrate to Australia to begin a new life. He arrived in 1954 with little money in his pocket and a bag of tools, prepared to do anything. He arrived in Brisbane on a Friday, and on Saturday, he studied the Positions Vacant in the "Courier Mail". He wasn't aware that these advertisements were in alphabetical order and saw that a large number were for Accountants. At an Army Test on demobilisation, Accountancy was one of the recommendations, so he decided to study to be an Accountant. So on the Monday morning he went to the Commercial College down George Street, and applied to do an Accountancy course. He studied very hard at night and weekends, while working during the day, firstly as a storeman/packer, then a clerk, then, when qualified, after 3 years' study, he got the job as the Accountant at Carrier Air Conditioning. In 1958, he met his wife-to-be, Beryl Finlay, and they were married in 1959 and began their very happy life together at Tarragindi. Before his marriage he applied for Australian citizenship and he was accepted at a ceremony soon after his marriage. John & Beryl had 2 children, Juliana and Allan, and as the children grew, John got involved in Kindergarten and School committees, and the Tarragindi RSL, using his abilities as an accountant to assist these associations. He also became a Justice of the Peace. His children will testify that he was a strict disciplinarian, but was always very proud of their achievements.

After some years, when Carrier Air Conditioning transferred their offices to Sydney, John became a Director and Accountant at D.G. Brims and Sons, where he spent many happy years until his retirement when he was 69. Since then he has enjoyed a quiet life, but still keeping up his interests in the RSL, and also financial associations where he met many people with the same interests. He also loved looking after his beautiful rose garden, until that became too much for him, and it was a sad day when he had to part with his garden. In his later years he was also very proud and happy to see his family expand here in Australia, as he welcomed 5 grandchildren, twins Caroline & Francois, from Juliana & Guy, and 3 more, Isobel Angus and Evie, from Allan & Sarah.