

## **LAC Armament Fitter Stan Turner**

### ***My Journey after leaving one of the best jobs in the world to go back into “Civvy Street”, did I do the right thing?***

*After leaving 3 SQN and RAAF Base Butterworth in mid 1971, my posting was to RAAF Base Pearce. My six years was up in October '72, however even though I enjoyed the camaraderie at RAAF Base Pearce and beautiful Western Australia, I did elect to discharge at the end of my term.*

### ***Second thoughts...***

*When arriving in Townsville I noticed a vacancy for an Armament fitter, so I applied for it. They said I could have that position, but only for one year then I would be posted to another Base. I declined that short term offer as we had been away from our families for a long time, so I became a civilian.*

### ***Welcome to the Real World...***

*Using the skills I gained from the RAAF, eventually I worked as a maintenance fitter in the local Nickel Refinery and other places and life and work became more competitive. In this heavy industry everyone had to be in the union, a completely new experience for me. The job was very different but I enjoyed the work, and the different skills needed to survive outside in the real world.*

### ***Midlife Crisis Unfortunately, Happens to Many of us...***

*Approximately four years after my discharge, my marriage went to pieces and I went off on my sailing yacht “Sequoia”, a 36ft Piver trimaran to get my head together, and to regroup. A time in my life that I will treasure as it put me on a completely new path. Meeting and talking to many different people from all walks of life gave me the confidence to start something different. I went on to be an aluminium boat builder. Eventually building vessels in my various shops from 5metres to 18metres, including a charter boat for myself. Contracting in Western Australia to the Luxury Aluminium Boat Builder, Oceanfast and the Commercial Ferry Builder, Wavemaster. That was in the mid '80's to 1991 (six years) then I came back to Townsville and built our own house on our acre block.*

### ***Everyone Deserves a Second Chance...***

*I met my second wife Frances during that time, not long after I started my aluminium boat building business. I found out that Frances served in the Navy deciphering morse code and she was in a higher pay grade than I was. That's ok I guess she needed some of those skills to keep me in line. It must have worked because Frances is still my mate even after 41 years.*

### ***My Aluminium Boat Building Continues...***

*Having built many, many aluminium boats over the thirty years or so to my own designs, we sold our industrial block to retire after finishing four aluminium power catamarans in four years. My body has taken a toll over the many years of welding and building these vessels, mostly on my own. My last paying job finished in 2006 when I was 58 years old.*

*I had a big shed built on my block so I could potter and build my 8.5m centre console and my 10m diesel sports power boat, so I could have some fun.*

### **Sometimes “Shit Really Happens”...**

*I was on my 10metre boat in the shed, waiting for smoko to have a cup of tea. I grabbed the top hand rail to swing into the boat, but forgot it wasn't welded. I fell backwards onto the cement floor below. I thought I was dead as everything happened in slow motion and when I hit the floor I couldn't move. Luckily for me, my wife Frances heard aluminium falling and me calling out. I didn't think that she could hear me as I couldn't say much. I was very lucky just broken bones and a dinged head, probably improved my brains. Eventually when I left hospital I had a plastic barrel strapped in two halves around my chest. Healing takes awhile and confidence working on top of boats is no longer there. It will take many years to regain that confidence, in a clapped out body. Although I am still a handsome old bloke (in my opinion), I feel that my expectations these days outweigh my abilities.*

### **Becoming a Share Trader...**

*Doing bugger-all isn't my style, so I had to reinvent myself. Even though we have had shares for many years, I have never actively bought and sold them via Commsec, I didn't know what to do. Everyone has those “crap” mining shares in their portfolio hoping to one day hit the big time, but you couldn't make big trades with those very risky shares. We decided to trade the Banks, because if we didn't sell at our price we could still get the dividends and the franking credits. Our trading got to be fun, just using our own money, mostly buying and selling, within one and a half hours of the opening. Over the years we did very well for ourselves, and I wished I had the foresight to do share trading years before.*

### **Don't They say All Good Things Must Come to an End...**

*We all think that we are invincible, mid 2014 I woke up one morning and found my speech was unintelligible, just couldn't get any words out that anyone could understand. Now some people who know me may say that's great because I talk too much. However in reality it's very scary. I was carted off to hospital again by ambulance for the second time in my life. I had a stroke, a complete shock when you can't talk or write. That magnet on the Fridge “FAST”.. Face..Arms.. Speech.. Time.. really works, get to hospital quickly.*

**IMPORTANT...** FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED ANYONE WHO HAS HAD A STROKE, IN MY CASE I KNEW EXACTLY WHAT WAS GOING ON, BUT I WAS UNABLE TO CONVEY THAT TO MY MATE.

*I am ok now but am very aware that we all have limitations and sometimes things happen in our lives that we least expect, after all we are only human.*

### **3SQN had great leadership...**

*Moving from Williamtown to Butterworth was a huge undertaking in those days, and I doubt it could be done today even with all of their hi-tech gear and personnel. As a young armament fitter turning 21 in 1969, we were very fortunate to have really great mates, great NCO's and Leadership. For me those days will never be forgotten.*

***My life has been changed forever...***

*After leaving the RAAF I did survive and thrive, (took a while) I worked as a Maintenance Fitter, a Boilermaker, an Aluminium Boat Builder, Built my own home, became a very profitable Share Trader (after I fell off my boat) and I am very lucky to have a great mate, my wife Frances. What else can you ask for.... Stan Turner*



*Photo...I designed and built this, Turncraft Marine.. 21foot Flared Bow Aluminium Boat (sterndrive)*



*Photo...(centre) I designed and built this 50ft Power Catamaran (25 knts plus) with two 300 HP Yanmar diesels  
Photo below... I designed and built this 60ft Power Catamaran ( 27 knts plus) with two 450 HP Cummins diesels... tunnel hulls aft (props and rudder)*

