

Stanley Brill's Story

My name is Stanley Curtis Brill¹ - a Westlake Boy from 1923 until 1938. My father was Leslie William Brill who was an original ANZAC. His regiment number was 40. He enlisted from Tasmania in the 12th Battalion. He won the Military Medal at Gallipoli and was mentioned in dispatches twice. After ANZAC and being wounded he was repatriated to England for surgery. He met my mother, Gladys Tappsell and on his return from action in Flanders they were married.

After the end of World War I my sister Marjorie was born in England. She was our only girl. When my mother arrived from England as a War Bride she travelled to Bombala where she and my sister were picked up by my father and then travelled to Delegate NSW by buggy and pair. My mother thought she was on the other side of the world going thirty miles from Delegate to Craigie where the family had a saw mill - a change from London!

My elder brother, Jim, was born in Delegate in 1920 and my birth certificate shows that Delegate was my first look around in 1922. The next born was Edward followed by Richard who were both born in Queanbeyan. I'm not sure what date we shifted to Westlake but it could be 1924 as Dad was employed on the construction of Parliament House. The reason for the move from Delegate to Canberra was my mother's wish that we should be educated.

My father was a carpenter and joiner and he told me he worked on the original Speaker's Chair. We lived in 22 Westlake and we were all educated at Telopea Park School. My mother was the first Postmistress in Westlake. In 1938 we shifted to a new house in Barralier Street Griffith and I was one of the first indentured apprentices at the Bus Depot at Kingston. Percy Huntingford and I started work as apprentices to fitting and machining in January 1938. We both owned Velocette motorbikes. My bike had a number plate - FCT 666 (later changed to ACT 8) and Percy's new plate put on when he picked up the bike in Eddy Avenue Sydney was ACT 1. As he put on the plate a policeman stopped him and said, *What's the joke here - act one?*

When the Second World War broke out my brother Jim and I enlisted. Jim was in the 3rd Anti Tank Regiment and I enlisted in the airforce as an Engine Fitter and later trained in the Empire Air Training Scheme as a pilot. Jim was taken prisoner in North Africa and was a POW in Germany in Stalag VIIIA for three years and returned after the war to work in the Public Service at the War Memorial. He died in 1970. My five years in the airforce were spent in the New Guinea campaign. Ted was also a soldier in the same area as myself but we never met up until after the war. Ted now lives in Foster. Richard, our youngest brother who now resides in Isaacs was not old enough to enlist for war and lived with our Mum and Dad at Yarralumla. Dad was the caretaker for Government House during the reign of Lord Gowrie, Duke of Gloucester and Sir William McKell.

¹ Stan died on 15th March 2009 on my mother's birthday and the anniversary of the Westlake Plaques laid in 1998. Don Bell, Ngunawal elder and friend, died a few hours later in the early hours of the 16th.

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My wife Beryl and I lived with our Mum and Dad at Yarralumla until we shifted to Turner in 1946 and we are still living in the same house having reared our family of two girls and three boys, who live in Canberra except John and Gary who live in Sydney and Milton NSW.

Mum was an educated woman and a great pianist. Whilst living at Yarralumla she was regularly called upon by the Westridge Social Club to play at balls and other events such as benefits for men in the armed forces.

The aerial photograph of the Hotel Canberra was taken from a Gannet A14-3 when I was a member of Aerial Survey Flight in 1940. Unfortunately we had a camera malfunction as I was going to take a run over Westlake where we lived. Anyway, what you can see is what we got. At the left rear of the photo you can still see the old track to the Howie cottages from Parliament House. The small photograph is me on my first motor bike in Westlake in 1937. This was taken from our gateway as 22 Westlake. My brother Jim is *holding the front fence up*. In the rear near Jim's face is No 4 Westlake, McKissock's house. The one with the window shades is Carnalls and next is Mrs Reynolds then Spencer McDonalds. The motor bike I think was a 1914 ABC which to my knowledge was the only one in Australia. Would love to have it now!