

A Gentleman and a Rascal



Autobiography
by
Brian Buzzard

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CHAPTER 8

Turkey with the WAAFs

Front Cover: I wish to thank artist Laura Cole for her kind permission to use the second painting from the triptych **Kimberley Grasses**.

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to contact the people mentioned in this book, we apologise if any omissions have been made.

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CHAPTER 8

Turkey with the WAAFs

It was the custom at Rathmines to have a "dining in" night once a month. All officers were expected to attend, including those who lived off the base at Toronto and in the other small villages of mostly holiday homes around Lake MacQuarie. One night, after we had filled ourselves to capacity with food and imbibed large quantities of the amber fluid, there was still a lot of food left. The leftovers included a large turkey which had hardly been touched. In my alcoholic state of bravado I thought that it would be a good idea to "pinch" it and take it down to the meteorology section which also housed the wireless and code room WAAFs. I wanted to impress Don Dymock and her friends.

Another officer and myself thinking ourselves unobserved, grabbed a kitbag, stuffed the turkey into it, and made our way down to the Meteorology and Wireless Room where Don was on duty. When we gave them our contraband, they thanked us sincerely and devoured the turkey completely. Scotty Allen was the officer in charge of the seaplane training at Rathmines at that time. He had flown the Southern Cross with Charles Kingsford Smith. He called me in the next day and asked me if the WAAFs had enjoyed the turkey. I answered truthfully that they had. He said, "You may be a gentleman Brian, but you are a rascal with it." He fined me twenty pounds for the turkey and banned me from drinking in the Officer's Mess for one month. Some bugger who saw me pinch the turkey had dobbed me in. The ban on drinking in the mess did not worry me much because my mates used to bring me bottles to our sleeping quarters. They took pity on me and I think I ended up drinking more than I would have had I been in the mess bar. None of the girls contributed any money towards payment for the turkey, even though they said it was so much appreciated.

I developed a serious relationship with Don and we were married on 24th February, 1944. Because the airforce did not employ married women in

those days, she was discharged as soon as we were married. She lived in Newcastle, which was only fifteen miles away from Rathmines and I was able to get back to Newcastle most nights because there was not a great deal to do on the station when instructing. By that time, all the chaps who had done a tour in action for nine to twelve months were sent back to the job of instructing. There were nearly as many instructors as there were pupils.