

Part Career.

My two former brothers in law often indulge in friendly argument on the pros and cons of service life versus civilian, in particular farming. These main objections seem to be the "planned service life" and the continuous working under orders. They can't, or don't, see how in peace time, any person can be a serviceman and like it, when they are free to do as they please. At least that is how they express it. For my part, I like the life, my family does, and after all, that is all that matters. However, let us start at the beginning - Dunedin, Anzac Day, 1923 - thirty five years ago today.

I am the second child of a young New Zealand couple recently returned from Government service in India. With various transfers in Departments and addresses, we settled for an eight year period at Paeroa, on the Hauraki Plains. My sisters and I attended the District High School. It was during my years at Paeroa that I developed a liking for tramping and climbing on the hills behind Paeroa, on Karangahake Trig., and Te Toke Mountain. This I must say in preference to practising the piano as my parents hoped I would. My musical appreciation was to lie dormant for a few years yet.

In January 1936, Dad was transferred to Whangarei and so we progressed further North. I left the High School at the end of the fourth term in Christmas 1938 and was apprenticed to a local engineering firm, in the refrigeration and Fitting and Turning Trade. Refrigeration was in its infancy in the North and it was not until after the War started that people began to realize that a refrigerator at

2 home was not a luxury but an essential piece of kitchen equipment. For a time my firm was the only one engaged in the Trade in the North. In those days the majority of the work was installing and servicing of meat storage rooms, vacuum cabinets and in the winter season, doing alterations to Dairy Factory plants. In all the work was interesting and meant considerable travelling with much time spent away from home. This factor may have helped me in my easy adjustment to life away from home. It was about this time that I developed a liking for music - in particular, the flute. I found a good teacher and was soon playing second flute in the Whangarei Orchestra.

With the outbreak of War I joined the Territorial Army in the Second Battalion, 1st North Auckland Regiment. Because of my engineering training I was detailed as a ~~artificer~~ and after about a year I was promoted to Corporal. Until Christmas 1941 I was a regular attendee at parades and weeked camps, but because of my age and no prospect of seeing active service in this branch for quite some time, I transferred to the R.N.Z.A.F. early in 1942. And so 421427 AC.2. James H.D. was full time member of the Air Force.

After the initial training at Harewood - "Hotel Harewood" as we used to call it - and a period at Wigram, I joined the 19th Flight Mechanics Course at Rongotai. Schooling over I was transferred to the newly formed 14th Fighter Squadron at Masterton. At last I felt I was in a position to do my "little bit" to finish the war. Service life agreed with me and I like working on the planes. The Squadron was transferred to Whenuapai and on to the Islands early in 1943 - New Caledonia, New Hebrides and Guadalcanal. Looking back, I, fortunately

can remember many happy events on the "Caral" — even though we had our full share of raids & shelling. My mind recalls far easier, the Comradship of the Squadron, the Fellowship of the Masonic Square & Compass club formed by the American 49th C.B.'s, and the numerous tramps and hunting trips inland into the hills, rather than the numerous nights in wet muddy fox holes with the odd grass snake or land crab for company. The tour completed my unit was transferred to Ardmore, and I went on 38th Ditcher Course at Nelson. After a period at Whenuapai I joined the newly reformed 14 Fighter Squadron and sailed on the Royal Navy Carrier "Globy" to Japan, to join the British Commonwealth Occupation Force at Iwa Kuni. In more ways than one Japan was a big event in my life — I travelled fairly extensively in my 2 years stay, and during one trip to Tokyo I met an American Red Cross girl who became my wife. Ours was the first inter-racial marriage in Japan, and even though my wife was a Canadian citizen we had to write many letters, see my many Officers up the steps of seniority until we finally received permission from British H.O. — American H.O. and the New Zealand Government. We had rather a unique series of wedding ceremonies too. On October 9th 1947 we were married at the American Consulate at Yokohama followed by a Japanese civil service at the Prefecture office, Yokohama, and the British Church wedding — the 49th General Hospital chapel — Tokyo on October 10th. We tell ourselves that we are really and truly married and that's the way we stay.

After 2 years in Japan I returned to Whenuapai and my wife came on to New Zealand

4 via the United States. My ~~and~~ civilian apprenticeship was still in obedience and as soon as possible I asked for my discharge and rejoined my old firm. We had plenty of work to do, the firm had expanded considerably through munition manufacturing and I should have been happy there, but I was not. I missed the service wife, the planes. Even in the Whangarei Orchestra it was different. Where before there was three were two flutes, now there were five and there was not enough music to go around. It was my move again so I bought an Oboe and learned that, and during the last ten years I've not played in an orchestra that has another oboe player. It didn't take me long to realize that civilian life was not for me and in 1950 I rejoined the R.N.Z.A.F. and was eventually posted to Woodbourne. Here is where my main disappointment in the R.N.Z.A.F. started and I dare say will continue for many years to come.

On my interview prior to rejoining I was assured by the Officer that married quarters are or were available on stations and that postings would be from quarters to quarters. That I know ^{now} for a fact is far from the truth. In the last eight years I've been in this house having a grand total of 1 year. It took me $4\frac{1}{2}$ years at Woodbourne to get married Quarters and at one stage I dropped from 2nd place to thirteenth over night, when T.T.S. moved down from Hobeonville.

It wasn't long before I was asked to join the Teaching Staff of the Boy & Girls' School as the Engines and electrical Instructor and taking Photography for Hobbies, and I spent 3 happy years at the School. At the B.E.S. Camps in the Kaimanawa Valley we had ample opportunities for climbing and hunting, and I

5 became a foundation member of the Woodbourne Search and Rescue Team. At that time the only Service team in N.Z. Once again on the musical side I joined the Bledheim Orchestra and kept up my musical interests. I felt that, as during the war, I was doing something useful to the Air Force and Community in general. Promotion to Sergeant came in Jan 1953 and my second surprise so early in the year was my selection for the Coronation Contingent — and what a wonderful time we had in Britain. After the Coronation we had time to tour and take training courses. Mine took me to De Havillands for Goblin and Ghost jet courses and the Gipsy Queen course, and then on to Dowty Construction at Cheltenham Spa for a Fuel System course. — also spent a very memorable day at Darnborough. Two of the courses were taken during my leave period and at my own expense. I felt that I could not miss the opportunity of extra training when so near at hand.

From Woodbourne I applied for, and was posted to Fiji and once again had a very pleasant 3 years. The work of No. 5 Squadron there seems to be quite a vital part of the life of the Island Group, in fact the whole of the South Pacific area. The flying boats have brought rapid medical aid to remote islands, rescues from hurricanes, searches for lost boats etc., and discounting the Squadron's prime role of defence, it has a fine record of mercy flights etc., which the general public tends to take for granted and forget too easily. My family and I really enjoyed our trip to Fiji and hope for another one should the opportunity arise.

We returned from Fiji this time to the very cool weather of Ohaekea — the main problem to date

6

has been to keep warm.

To sum up my career - it has been a very satisfying one. I'm happy with my work, the service is helping to satisfy my desire for travel and new places. That I like my career is quite evident - my young brother was convinced that it would suit him too and so we are both here at Dhaka, he in his frames and me in engines.

W.

75449. SGT. FARRELL. H. D.

R. N. Z. A. F.

25. 4. 58.

OFFICER COMMANDING,
N.C.O. SCHOOL.

H. D. FARRELL