

Arthur Sydney Jarvis was born on the 6th of March 1926 in Taihape New Zealand, his Father Maurice Ride Jarvis and Mother Florence Evelyn Jarvis (nee Reddcliffe). His name is a combination of his Grandparents first names, Arthur from his Father's side and Sidney from his Mother's, although with slightly different spelling.

He was the third child born in New Zealand but had two older brothers who were born in Ireland (Northern Ireland) His father was an Engineer with deep knowledge in the area of Breweries and seemed to follow opportunities to build and manage Breweries as they presented.

The family was originally from Sheffield with Maurice and Florence married in Ecclesall which is a suburb south of Sheffield in 1913. By 1914 they had moved to Belfast and the first two children were born, residing at 4 Haywood Ave Ormeau, Belfast for a number of years, Harland and Wolff would have been building Titanic and Olympic at this time 3 Miles away towards the port centre and probably visible on the skyline, Ireland would have been in the throes of a Civil War.

Ireland at this point would have been becoming more unstable with sectarian violence, the partition of the North into Northern Ireland and a lot of men returning from the war with reduced employment prospects. The exact reasons are unknown for emigrating, but the context is an unstable environment with more opportunities in other colonies of the British Empire.

It's likely Maurice had an offer of employment in New Zealand and he and the family elected to move to New Zealand. They received some assistance for this relocation as third class assisted passengers which is generally a sponsorship and forgivable debt if conditions are met. They left on the 17th of December 1920 from Liverpool on the SS Otarama (also known as the TSS Ajana) arriving 21st of February 1921 at Auckland.

They eventually settled in Taihape with Maurice working as Chief Engineer at Main Trunk Brewery for Mr W J Coutts (and J T Coutts?) which became Cascade Brewery. Arthur Sydney Jarvis (Syd) was born the 6th of March 1926, in May 1933 Maurice and Family moved with Mr Coutts to Otahuhu to build and start production at Waitemata Breweries (sometimes better known as Dominion Breweries on Bairds Road Otahuhu) which is still in operation today.

Few other details are known other than he had passed Form 5 (age 15) and had completed 3.5 years of night school trade training at Otahuhu Technical High School in Steam and Diesel Engineering and was living independent of his family and boarding with Mrs Livingstone (?) at 13 Seddon Terrace Otahuhu (renamed Salesyard Road in 1961) and was an Apprentice with Reid Rubber which was then located between Great South Road and what is now SH1 and called "Central Park", some of the original industrial buildings remain.

Syd applied to join the RNZAF on the 30th of August 1944 where he also needed his father's permission to join (because of age). This seems to have reluctantly been given and this occurred on the 12th of March 1944 (6 days post his 18th Birthday). He expressed an interest in serving as a "Marine Engineer", "Fitter of Armoury" "Flight Rigger", "Flight Mechanic".

It's also noted that he was called up for National Service in June 1944 in the New Zealand Gazette, Wellington, June 28, 1944. So, although he volunteered, he would have been called up anyway had he not put an application in for the RNZAF sometime after his 18th Birthday in March 1944 with probably less choice about direction and service opportunity.

He was mustered as an AC2 (Aircraftman Second Class) which is a training rank which no longer exists and was initially based at Ardmore in October 1944 before being moved Harewood for basic training / screening and then to RNZAF Station Nelson TTS (Technical Training School) in November 1944. On the 8th of June 1945 he completed his final exams as a "Mechanic" and was trade qualified from this point as Mechanic Internal Combustion and promoted from AC2 to AC1 (Aircraftman First Class) which is still a training rank.

By late June 1945 he was assigned to No 5 Squadron RNZAF and was flown to the forward base on the Island of Espiritu Santo which was at that time part of New Hebrides and now Vanuatu. No 5 Sqn operated from a Seaplane Base in the Second Channel just east of Renee River utilising the relatively new Consolidated PBY Catalina (flying boat – it's a beautiful plane) which performed patrols of friendly and hostile shipping, spotting submarine activity and search and rescue operations at this point of the war.

As an AC1 Syd's service was likely to have been apprentice in nature and given this was the closing phase of the war No 5 Sqn was shortly to be withdrawn to Fiji and then home to New Zealand to be demobilised.

Syd had a firsthand account of the US disposal of hardware at "Million Dollar" point which is a few kilometres east of the seaplane base where literally millions of dollars of working and sometimes unused hardware was pushed into the sea rather than being returned to the homeland (USA) and flooding the local market and economy. Some 70 years later it remains as a tourist attraction for divers. The first nuclear bomb was dropped in August 1945 ending the war in the Pacific and the Second World War generally.

He was noted to have been of Very Good Character, a good Swimmer and a very good Shot on the rifle range. He was transferred home in December 1945 having completed 396 days of service with 126 of these in the Pacific. In reviewing his records, it looks like there was some speed to complete his training and qualifications and moving him through an overseas forward base experience before demobilisation, Syd once commented that he received a great education and trip up to the islands riding loose on top of cargo in a DC3.

He was placed on Reserve C and demobilised on 28th of December 1945 ending his Airforce Career. He received The War Medal 1939 – 1945 and the NZ War Service Medal however he was not eligible for the 1939 – 1945 Star or the Pacific Star because he was not in an active war zone and did not have sufficient time overseas before the conflict ended.

Post war Syd married Caroline Isabella McCombe in 1947 and they would go on to have six Children, many Grandchildren and a long marriage living in Panmure on Pilkington Road and then Kings Road before moving to Whangaparaoa post-retirement.

Syd worked for Balm (Dulux) Paints in Mt Wellington from approximately 1946 until retirement in 1986. He passed away in July 2011 after a long illness surrounded by his family, he was cremated, and his ashes were scattered on Mount Eden in the same place as his wife who pre-deceased him.

References

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luganville_Seaplane_Base#

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<https://southpacificwwiimuseum.com/>

<https://southpacificwwiimuseum.com/mdp/>

<https://southpacificwwiimuseum.com/map/>

RNZAF No 5 Squadron

Number 5 Flying Boat Squadron Camp was situated beside the sea at 50 to 100 feet altitude. The camp itself was in the middle of a coconut plantation and consisted, for the most part, of Quonset huts. The administration was American so the food to a large extent consisted of American dishes. These were enjoyed by the New Zealand personnel as a novelty but were not really palatable. They enjoyed the facilities for swimming, basketball, volleyball and table tennis as well as a good library and outdoor cinema.

At the Base depot there was a well established camp, which according to one officer, was "very clean, with well-constructed buildings, good roads and all possible conveniences such as electric iron and hot and cold showers. This camp compares very favourably with those on Air Force Stations in New Zealand."

The men worked from 0730 to 1130 and from 1330 to 1615, leaving them two spare hours in the middle of the day for reading, relaxing in the shade of a palm or swimming. Gardening and boat building were other forms of recreation, but fresh milk is one of the things they missed most.

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/15%C2%B032'59.2%22S+167%C2%B008'44.0%22E/@-15.5505591,167.1468108,1101m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d-15.5497655!4d167.1455472?entry=ttu>