

AN AIRMAN'S STORY



Service No.: 122072
Name: Phillip Joseph SCHMITT
Nickname: Schmitty



Medals and Decorations

1939 - 45 Star
Pacific Star
Defence Medal
War Medal 1939 - 45
Australian Service Medal 1939 - 45

Rank: Leading Aircraftman (LAC)
Service: RAAF
Enlisted: 13 Jan 1943
Discharged: 19 Mar 1946

Phil was born at Cummins on 21 Dec 1923, an early Christmas present for Francis Frederick Lincoln (Linc) Schmitt and Sybil Elsie Schmitt (nee Goodes). His father was a ganger on the railways. There were 5 children in the family, all boys.

He went to school at Ungarra, leaving at the completion of Grade 7 in 1937 to commence work for Hoppings in the 4 Square Store at Ungarra. He received the princely sum of 10/- (\$1) a week. When his father was promoted on the railways, and left the town, Phil had to board at Ungarra – something he could not afford on his wage, so to retain his services his employer doubled his wage to \$2 a week. Phil remained in this employ until he went to Adelaide to join the RAAF.

After enlisting in the RAAF he was sent Tocumwal (Vic) to undertake initial (recruit) training, then back to Edinburgh (SA) to 24 Squadron Transport (DC3) to complete his fitters course; he qualified as a fitter 2A, which specializes in fuselage and undercarriage repair and maintenance. After this he was sent to Shepparton (Vic) for further training, then to Dalby (Qld) before being posted to Darwin in late 1943. After a short stay he was posted to Moratai with 21 – 23 Squadron (Liberator Bombers) in early 1944, where he remained until the end of the war. He returned to Australia by way of Darwin before taking his discharge in Adelaide in Mar 1946.

After discharge he returned to Ungarra and recommenced work at the 4 Square Store. The wages must have been much better then because Phil was able to marry a local girl, Margaret Pearce in 1949. They had 2 children, a boy and a girl. He continued to work at the store until 1960, before taking employ as the manager of Curtis's garage at Ungarra,

where he remained until his retirement in 1984.

On retirement the family moved to Tumby Bay where Phil, with the help of his brother Murray, built a home a Doepke Street. Unfortunately his wife, Margaret, died in 1988.

In 1992 Phil remarried to Dorothy Shakes from England: Dorothy's former husband had been a teacher at Ungarra School before the family returned to England. Phil and Dorothy had been friends for many years and were reacquainted at a "back to Ungarra School" celebration. Unfortunately Dorothy passed away on 5 Jun 2006.

As a "lad" Phil was an excellent sportsman. He played football for Ungarra and won the "Mail Medal" in 1949 for the best and fairest in the Eastern Eyre Football Association. He also won numerous trophies in tennis and golf. In fact he and 3 others from the area would have played golf with Greg Norman in 1988 in Adelaide had it not been for a family tragedy, requiring him to return home.

In later years he has enjoyed lawn bowls, initially at Ungarra, where he won 3 singles and 3 pairs championships and was made a life member of that club in 1990, and later at Tumby Bay.

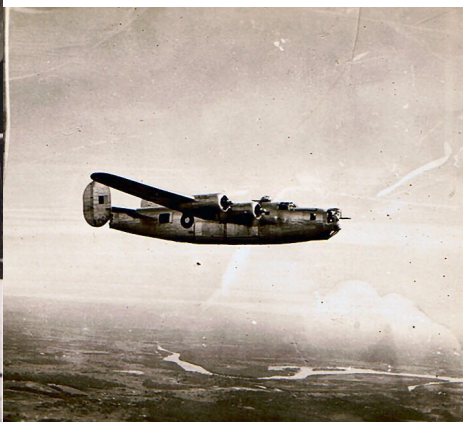
Phil has been a stalwart member of the Tumby Bay Sub Branch of the RSL and was recently presented with his 50 year membership badge.



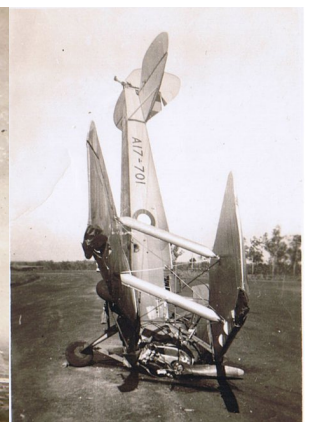
Phil and Margaret Schmitt



Schmitt and mate
at Morotai, 1944



B-24 Liberator Bomber
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"Oops!"