

A WRAN'S STORY



Service No.: W85661
Name: Elizabeth Anne SHARPE
(Nee KEARNS)
Nickname: Freckles



Medals and Decorations

Australian Defence Medal

Rank: WRAN (Steward)
Service: RAN (WRAN)
Enlisted: 20 May 1963
Discharged: 11 Apr 1966

Elizabeth (Liz) was born at Hindmarsh, SA, on 28 Aug 45 to Tom Kearns and Betty Kearns (nee Elliott). Her dad was a member of the SA Police Force and served as the Station Officer at both Cummins and Tumby Bay in the 1950's and 60's.

Liz commenced school at Kalangadoo (SA) in 1950 and then moved to Cummins to complete her primary schooling. She then moved to Tumby Bay and completed secondary school.

At the completion of her final year, her family moved to Elizabeth (SA), where Liz gained employment as a Kindergarten Assistant; a position which she held for 17 months, before leaving to join the Women's Royal Australian Navy (WRAN).

After joining the Navy she was posted to HMAS "*Cerberus*" for her recruit training (it was here that she earned her nickname, Freckles) and then to HMAS "*Penguin*" as a Steward. She was then posted to HMAS "*Harman*" as a Steward in both the Wardroom and the Mess Deck: it was during this time that she met Lindsay (Skeeter) Sharpe, and they became engaged.

Skeeter then promptly left for the US, but love prevailed and 1 year later -365 letters later – they were married on 12 Apr 66 at Port Pirie. In those days married women were not allowed to remain in the Service, so Liz was discharged the day before her marriage.

The newly weds moved to Sydney, where Skeeter went to sea on HMAS "*Melbourne*" whilst Liz remained ashore to start a family. In the next 4 years Liz rarely saw Skeeter, but they must have been doing something right, as they have two sons –Wayne 41 and Peter 38.

After 14 years at sea on various ships, Skeeter "paid off", and the family moved to Bunbury (WA) in 1980. Skeeter took civil employ and the family remained stationary

and grew up in the Bunbury area. Liz worked as a Community Helper in the local community until 2000.

After a serious illness Liz wanted to return home to Tumby Bay. Liz and Skeeter did this in 2001, when they built their dream home ***“Linga Longa”***, and settled in Tumby.

Liz has been a very keen sportswoman, having played netball for Tumby and also been a swimming instructor. In later years Liz has played golf and croquet for Tumby, but unfortunately illness has curtailed her physical activity, so she has concentrated more on her quilting and painting. She is also a keen fisherwoman.

Liz and Skeeter intend to continue their “Grey Nomadic” existence, enjoying their caravan to the full, whilst they are still able.



Australian
Defence Medal