

MY Dad As told by Phillip Symonds Earls Oldest Son

The 2nd world war was on in full blaze through out Europe. Hitler pushed into Poland than into Russia. Germany was pushing on two fronts, east into Poland and west into France. Australia was drawn in through there relationship with England. Dad was drawn into the war through the army. He spent six years of his life in the Australian army serving in the engineering division. Dad said the authorities acquired equipment to enhance the war machine. Some how war takes the things you work with. Takes your man power to farm the land and leave you with food rations. Coming with that worry, stress and disruption to family living. Dad said "the war took six years of my life".

Prior to the war years dad worked on his fathers farm of 926 acres also worked at saw mills and share farmed on other properties around the district. Dad was the second eldest Aunty Merle was the oldest Vera the youngest then Keith and Roy were slotted in between Dad and Vera. His dad Philip Henry Symonds pioneered the land in the Goobang valley with his brothers. They purchased property each and helped the other brothers in clearing land and farming. I remembered grandpa's farm had chaff cutter, three stand shearing stand, a saw mill plus and the usual farm equipment. He had Clydesdale horses for farming, and large wagons for carrying wheat, wool to the market twelve mile away.

Other men from the western area were placed in the same unit. Most were farmers and from industrial businesses which made up the army unit. Dad had a family friend named George Mc Pherson who served with him. Whiled in the army Dad meet up with Joseph Doust who asked Dad would he write to his sister? Grace was the youngest of twelve children. Her father died when she was born and her mother died soon after she was born. Graces sisters raised her. A tough start in life I do say. Mum and Dad wrote for many years and met only a few times before they married. Mum and Dad married brother and sister. Uncle Norman mums older brother and dads older sister. They were very close as families often meeting up several times a week. Aunty Merle would bring food items from the garden, eggs and what ever to help us out.

Dad worked with a caterpillar company doing field service and mechanical work for several years before branching out on his own with Blacksmith Farm Machine Repairs. Starting out small in a 12 by 12 foot shed and he expanded to a large workshop of 50 by 36 feet doing a large range of repair and manufacturing for area farmers. Dad would work long hours starting at 6:00 am work till about 8:00 have breakfast then go back to work. In the evening after the evening meal dad would be in the work shop until 11; 00 PM at night. Often at night after we are in bed we would see flashing lights from the welder or the sound of ringing steel on the blacksmith anvil. Dad was a very hard worker. We would only see him at meal times or traveling some where in the car. Mum ran the family laying out chores for us before school and after. Dad would say, "I've got hungry mouths to feed, or Got to keep the wolf from the door" Sometimes Dad said " If your hungry there's bread and butter to eat". The meal had to stretch for ten or eleven people. You know not once did we starve all the years we lived under the roof.

Dad was also in the masons the lodge star of the west and also the blue lodge. In the early years of the marriage dad would go to the meetings and worked his way up to an high position. As children came along he dropped the masons because of work load and starting a new business.

To portray a character of a man you need to know the man behind the scene. I'll try to do my best to bring justice this story. I remembered dad using his hands to help people and organization out. One was the Parkes Town Band. He move and old building from the RSL premises to a new sight and organized and old plumber called Mc Avain [sp] to provide the brains and the band members provided the grunt. They built a kitchen, music library, a stage and toilets. I remembered digging a trench hook up the sewage While working on the trench a drunk guy came across and asked, "what are you guys doing?" He had one bottle with metho 100 pc alcohols and a bottle of water. The man would swallow a mouth full of metho and a swallow of water than he would shake his head, then said, " what are you doing." " We are digging a hole to bury you in. " said one of the band guys. Well the guy took off like a bullet scampering through a netting fence. We burst out laughing. The pour guys eye were blood shot and his skin was all dark blue. He was not in good shape. Dad met Mr. Tinker through the committee. He was a coal gas manager. His family was really struggling with 4 young children and trying to make ends meet. I remembered Dad purchasing a washing machine and there was something else, repaired them and gave it to them. Most of the band instruments were in bad shape. Dad would take them home straighten the bells repair the valves put them in working shape. The band music stands were all broken. Taking pieces and riveted many parts together. Another person which had a great influence on dad was the White family. They helped dad get away for a holidays each year, and a great support to mum and dad socially.

Over the years many people would come to the workshop to get repairs done. Not only repairs but come for advice. One of the Westcott boys came to dad because the police were harassing

Him. Dad advised him to pack up and start a new life somewhere else. He took dad's advice and left Parkes and start a new life. Various farmers would talk for hours problem solving and general yarning like two old farmers talking over the back fence. I

know dad would work back at night to catch up on his work. I remembered Dale Cowell had an old Ford Zephyr brown in color. The car was in rough shape so dad advised him what to do. He finally sold the car and up grade it for a newer car. I completed my trade in dads business and saw how dad ran his business and helped people with needs.

I was a young apprentice at the time, working on a farmer's equipment, when this big farmer started bossing me around, saying "hey boy get over here and do this or that" Well dad heard what was going on from inside the shop. He came out with a hammer in his hand and said, to the farmer, "You're not a sergeant in the army now, back off" Dad was ready to stand his ground. I was really proud of dad that day. I remembered many times that dad would not back off a challenge. People would come Him from up to one hundred miles away to get something repaired or made. There was a farmer who had a large Minneapolis Tractor which needed dual wheel on the back. He made it. There was another person had a D4 caterpillar tractor which needed a hydraulic ripper designed for the back. He made it. Farmer would asked Dad for the impossible and he would deliver.

The entrance to the town from the north was a lot of land. It had an old house which dad revamped the house for our growing family. Dad built his business there and moved four houses to the land as rentals. Dad was known for hard work and working long hours. He'll be up early in the morning before breakfast and after working all day in the shop he then started renovating the rental house. Dad would have us kid's clean used bricks. We would clean the old mortar of using a tomahawk and also hammer out nails out of old tongue and groove pine boards. We would stack the bricks in a pile and the lumber in another. Dad would use the material on houses he was repairing.

Dad was building into us character in working basic jobs and chores around the house the work shop and the rentals. We worked doing mundane repetition jobs after school and at weekends. This certainly built character and stamina. Dad certainty had a reputation for hard work and this was instilled by his father and now he's teaching us work ethics. His character was amplified through his dealing with people around him.

A man is what he is, not what men say he, His character is what no man can touch. His character is what he before His God and his Judge; and only he himself can damage that. His reputation is what men say he is. That can be damaged; but reputation is for time, character is for eternity.

John B. Gough.

A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you, and were helped by you, will remember you when forget-me-nots are withered. Carve your name on hearts, and not on marble. Charles H. Spurgeon.

Dad instilled in us to don't quit, stick it through, if you fail it's not final.

Another thing he made us [the guys] to learn a trade first then you can do another type of job later. Several of his six sons did change and sort other employment after doing a trade. Dad also gave us a jump start in purchasing a house. The rental homes became our homes to live in. A beginning for a young family which we really appreciated. Those who didn't get a house dad made up in some other way.

How would I sum up my dad?

1. Tough, would not back down if he believes his right
2. Not persuaded by what others think.
3. Success is not what appears on the outside but what you are inside.
4. Character is what rings true on the anvil.
5. Care for his wife Grace and his family through thick and thin.

I would like to close this short glimpse in to dads life. There's much more to dig out of the old brain and put on paper. That takes time and this little glimpse is only my view. That's only one 8th of the family's perspective.

Phillip symonds