

Since we have been sharing “nicknames” today, I’ll share with you that my Uncle Trevor’s nickname within our family was “GUT” – he had a few great nieces and nephews, and “Great Uncle Trevor” was too much of a mouthful for young people to say, so we shortened it to “GUT”. I won’t refer to him as GUT today though!

A few years ago I asked Uncle Trevor to start writing his story, I’ve been asked to share a bit of that story with you today.

He wrote:

“When I first arrived – HMAS Leeuwin, I thought they were trying to kill me (honestly). You have to remember I was not yet 16.

Everything started from Day 1. You had to run everywhere, 2hrs of PT every morning except Sunday – because on Sunday you had to go to Church.

When we left at the end of the year I reckon we would’ve been the fittest 16 year olds around.

The day started at 6 & ended at 6, then you had to do things like homework from lessons, washing & ironing & studying and find time to have tea. Bit of a shock for a 16 year old.

I got the best advice about the Navy that I ever had & it turned out to be absolutely true: ‘Don’t judge the Navy by only this first year, because what they are trying to do is weed out the people they don’t want, they would rather you throw in the towel here – not after, when you could be on a ship in action somewhere. Better now than then’ How true that was.

Also – don’t start judging until after your branch course – then you will be posted to a ship as a full member of the crew – Now start judging.

Truer words could not have been said.

The branch I wanted was Sonar & having completed the course at Watson’s Bay I was posted to HMAS Vampire. I was on her for 2 years, Oct 65 – Oct 67 & it was by far

the best ship, best Captain, and best crew – that I served on in 12 years. None of the other crews were like the Vampire”.

When I asked Uncle Trevor about his proudest moment in the Navy – he said “I suppose it would be receiving the 2 certificates, signed by the P.M. for service in Vietnam and the Indonesian Confrontation & finally getting all the medals I was due. No matter how old you get, you seem to stand up straighter in an ANZAC Day march with your Medals on. You can’t feel the rain on your face, but you can hear the crowd clapping”.

Uncle Trevor was an avid reader, loved a good documentary and always posted us interesting articles and photos from the newspaper. But the best conversations that I enjoyed with him were not about current news items or general knowledge topics, it was about his story, his life and his experiences.

It is said that Death is merely a transition in life, like getting orders for a new assignment. We who remain are left with sorrow & grief but we find comfort in knowing he has been called to a more important assignment than what we had for him here.