



YOU CAN'T PUT A SQUARE PEG IN A ROUND HOLE, BUT

ALBERT PEGG

IS A GREAT FIT EVERYWHERE

Albert was born at Curdies River in 1921 with twin brother Ernie arriving ten minutes later. His parents Charles Pegg and Nell (Campbell) had five daughters and four sons.

He had to walk across the railway trestle bridge to Curdies River State School where he began his education. "We often walked along the railway line to get to Timboon," he recalled.

His father, Charles, worked at Curdie Lime Works until Albert was eight when the family moved to a dairy farm at Pomborneit North. "There, we had to walk across paddocks for about three miles to reach school - that was after helping to milk the cows by hand, something we did after school as well," he said.

"On weekends we made our own fun - rabbiting and shooting. Ernie and I used to see who could catch the most snakes for the year.

"We would get about 100 each, we'd dig them out or grab them by the tail and pull them out of the stone fences - browns, tigers, blacks, copperheads . . .

"We'd get put in gaol for doing that now," he laughed.

Albert's schooling concluded when he was 13 due to an epidemic of infantile paralysis (poliomyelitis) in 1934. His young nephew was infected so Albert was not allowed to attend school for some weeks in case he was contagious. He never went back, and continued on the farm.

World War 2 arrived and his national service papers arrived before Ernie's so Albert joined the army and Ernie stayed home on the farm.

LIFE GOES ON . . . AND HOW!

It was during army leave that some significant things happened - running off ten metres, Albert beat the favourite in the 120m Pomborneit Cup at a Boxing Day sports carnival on the Pombo recreation reserve and, even more importantly, he

met Beryl Shinglea in Melbourne and married her at the Salvation Army hall in Camberwell.

Beryl's family (the Dysons) and the Peggs were friends for many years. On returning from the war, Albert and his new wife lived in Richmond while he worked at Repco Motor Replacement Parts in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. First daughter Beverley was born in East Melbourne.

After twelve months, the couple decided to return to Pomborneit North to work on Weatherly's cattle station for the next thirteen years - for 3 pounds 18 shillings a week. Albert and Beryl's three other children, Albert, Pamela and Norm, were all born in Camperdown, during this time.

Soon after, a stroke of good fortune! "Financially, things were tight so all we could afford for Beryl's mother's birthday was a ticket in the George Adams' Melbourne Cup sweep. Lo and behold, they drew the winner of the 1959 cup, Macdougall, and Beryl's parents were 60,000 pounds richer," Albert recalls.

"We were given 10,000 pounds. Oh boy, did we need a car badly! So we bought a new Holden for about 1200 pounds and we put the rest into a deposit on a little farm at Elingamite North.

"While the money was a windfall, paying for the farm and buying cows was a rope around our necks for a few years but, once we got on top of things, we were able to call the farm ours." Little wonder the Pegg farm is named 'Macdougall Park'.

Albert has always been prepared to accept responsibility. While on the farm, he was president of the Cobden Angling Club at Lake Elingamite for seven years - the boat was never far away from the dairy - and, after moving into Cobden when son Norm married, he readily took on the presidency of Cobden Football Club for five years. He is a proud life member of those two organisations.

Like many members of the Pegg family during their lifetimes, 92 year-old Albert has been known to everybody as "Peggy". A less well-known nickname used for Albert during his army days was "Deena". At the time, clothes pegs cost a shilling a dozen. For those not around before decimal currency was introduced, a shilling was known as a 'deena'.

Albert . . . pegs . . . shilling . . . deena . . . obvious really!



Albert surrounded by many great memories in his living room in Walker Street - as a young man in his army days, his family, sporting achievements . . . and this is only part of the collection of photos and memorabilia.

As the footy club president, he recalls being part of the plans to entice Brownlow medallist Alistair Lord and Bert Peperkamp to the club as coaches and he mentions Neville Couch, Michael and Bernie Foster and the late Barry Kelly as being influential players of the time. He preferred not to nominate his favourite players for fear of leaving somebody out!

Fundraising to keep the club running was important back then too. "I was the first one to call bingo for the club at the Cobden Hotel," he said. Richmond is his AFL team although, "some years, I wished it hadn't been."

It was Albert and his good mate, the late Claude Smith, who purchased an army shed at Simpson to use as the angling club's rooms at Lake Elingamite. He yearns to see the lake full of water again, and believes it could be achieved if local drains brought water to the lake rather than away from it.

The lake always supplied Albert and his freezer with plenty of redfin. He loved his redfin. He remembers one particular day at Lake Colac when he was catching one redfin after the other using nothing but small hooks shining in the sun. He simply didn't have time to bait up the lines, so keen were they to jump in his boat.

After wife Beryl died in 1994, Albert took up indoor bowls at senior citizens before becoming an outdoor bowler as well. At last count, he has been involved in three premierships on the outside green and one on the inside carpet. He loves his bowls!

Albert only just relinquished the treasurer's position at the senior citizens' club after twelve years.

He also loved his cards - he recalls playing bridge with sergeant-majors, lieutenants and staff sergeants in the army and he has especially enjoyed crib, five hundred and even patience . . . but definitely not euchre, a game he says that does not allow you to use your skill.

As much as he enjoys cards, Albert has always preferred active pastimes. Apart from winning foot-running sprints, he and his brother Ernie also raced bikes and it was the Smith family who got him playing tennis in his 40s at Cobrico for a couple of seasons - until he broke his elbow in a car accident at Dennington.

"Cricket was never my game - I didn't like the hard ball," he laughed.

Family is clearly important to Albert. He sits among many photos in his lounge-room as he remembers his special relationship with his twin brother who died 21 years ago. "You know, we used to share girlfriends - they didn't know," he said.

At 92, Albert is one of two surviving members of his family. His younger sister Elsie McKenzie, 90, lives in Camperdown. He is fortunate to be enjoying pretty good health - a specialist who carries out his regular check-ups describes him as a "legend" - and he is receiving wonderful support from his own children.

Daughters Bev Smith (Elingamite North), Pamela Smith (Geelong) and son Norm (Cobrico) are regular visitors to his Walker Street residence, and he is extremely proud of his eight grandchildren and one great grandchild.

One significant loss was the death of his older son, Albert, who was killed in a motorcycle accident in Neylon Street, Cobden, about 40 years ago.

Albert follows horse-racing but he is not a big punter although he does admit to having a long-time interest in the "game". He ran a big punters club for 30 years - some members may still owe him some weekly contributions - and he is still involved with a small group. "I also ran a Tattslotto syndicate for a long time back in the 70s, 80s and 90s - until Gauts sold their garage," he said.

His bowling pursuits, his membership of the Probus Club - yes, he has also been president of Probus - his family and his active interest in the community . . . what else can Albert Pegg fit in?

"Along with looking after my vegetable and flower gardens, a few orchids and fruit trees, I am enjoying life to the fullest . . . the best way I know how!"

Albert is a bit sketchy on the details but his family remembers him umpiring netball matches for a local team that played matches in Cobden and around the district. The team comprised his daughters Bev and Pam, Rhonda and Helen Cole and . . . can anyone help with other names? Son Norm thought he might have been the team's coach but Albert is adamant he was only the umpire!



Heading in the right direction - the family farm, Macdougall Park, is located down Peggs Road, Elingamite. Albert now lives in Cobden, much closer to the bowling club, senior citizens and Probus.

SERVING HIS COUNTRY

"My rookie days were spent in Camp 15 near Seymour - in the Royal Australian Engineers. We marched from there to Camp Hume near Albury - about 200 miles - where I completed a driver maintenance course in the transport section," he said.

"That was where I celebrated my 21st birthday - at a skating rink in Albury. Of course, I couldn't skate to save myself.

"We gradually moved further north camping at

Lismore (northern NSW), Caboolture and finally Maroochydore before I drove a transport to the Atherton Tablelands near Cairns where our unit, the 15th Australian Field Company, helped to build the 2.2 Australian General Hospital.

"After my final home leave, we left for Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea) from Sydney. From there, a DC2 troop plane took us to Wau airfield in the highlands. On foot, we finally came out at Salamau Isthmus after weeks of heart-breaking trekking through the Black Cat Track and the Finisterre Range. At the time, we reckoned it was harder going than the Kokoda Trail. "That's where I first came down with malaria.

"Later, we were flown into the Ramu Valley where we assisted the infantry in the Shaggy Ridge campaign. After some leave at home, we returned to action for about ten months (my third campaign) on the Solomon and Bougainville islands.

"On January 16th, 1946, I was discharged from the army. It was a challenging part of my life that taught me much about the sacrifices of life, the hardships and struggles . . .

Albert noted about 65 national servicemen from the Camperdown area all went to the same Seymour camp back in 1941 and, as far as he is aware, he is the only one remaining.

He is a great fan of the annual Anzac and Remembrance day observances. On his return from the army, Albert joined the Returned Servicemen's Association and, then, the Returned and Services League (RSL). He was a member of the Cobden branch until it closed down due to lack of numbers and is now a Camperdown member.

Albert takes comfort from the fact that the Cobden memorial services are well-attended, and getting bigger every year. He enjoys the support of his family on these occasions.



Australia's proud past and its hopeful future - Albert is pictured on the steps of Cobden's war memorial at this year's Anzac Day service with his great grandson Kai Clay (2). Albert's medals include a 1939-45 Pacific Star, an Australian Service Medal and a PNG Australian Service Medal.

COBDEN CALENDAR

- September 16th** 7.30pm CopRice festival meeting in Heytesbury Room. All welcome.
- September 29th** 1.30pm Country Music Afternoon, Senior Citizens' Hall. \$5 includes afternoon tea.
- October 7th** 7.30pm Progressing Cobden Special General Meeting to adopt new rules of association, followed by monthly meeting. Heytesbury Room.