

This is a website full of stories.

I was raised by a great storyteller. My late father, Squadron Leader D W Barnard (better known as Barney or Barny), served in both the South African Air Force and the Royal Air Force, and after 25 years as a military pilot changed gears, went into computers, developed a passion for IBM mainframes, and ended his working life as Systems Support manager at Safmarine Computer Services, which was recently bought by IBM.

He was a real raconteur, with a knack for telling a good tale, getting the details right, building the tension and generally leaving his audience rolling on the floor. And he also led an interesting and varied life, doing most of his flying in the glory years of propeller transports, taking part in some of the greatest military operations of our era, and then moving into the equally exciting, if less dramatic, world of the burgeoning information technology industry. In both instances, his timing was perfect.

So this is largely a collection of Dad's stories, which deserve a retelling. I tend to forget at times that I am the daughter of someone whose idea of a tranquil Sunday afternoon involved hanging around upside down in a little cloth aeroplane without a roof (fun, you understand, involved chucking a Meteor jet bomber around at 30 000ft or "borrowing" a couple of Spitfires for some high-speed dog-fights) . It frequently escapes my notice that he led a life which in terms of most people's experience was extraordinarily exciting and dangerous. And Dad himself could never imagine why anyone might want to read all his tales, as much as his friends and colleagues clearly loved hearing them. So it is largely the response of other people to hearing some of the tales that has made me realise that they need to be preserved (and the person who really kickstarted the process for me was my late friend [John Deegan](#))

But collating the stories is an interesting process in itself, which has made me wonder what it is that inspires family traditions, and just what bits and pieces we inherit. Both Dad and his younger brother, my Uncle Philip, were RAF pilots, so flying seems to be in the blood, and I find military history in general, and aviation history in particular, very interesting. I earn my living in IT. And I've had Dobermanns for 32 years, thanks ultimately to a Battle of Britain Hurricane ace called Billy Drake. But I also love opera, oratorio and lieder, graphic design and the visual arts in general, psychology and philosophy, politics (in which I have a distinct list to port) and feminist thought, all of which baffled Dad (when they didn't actually outrage him, that is).

And he liked beer - revolting stuff - and loved rugby, both of which are lost on me. (Rugby's the one with oval balls and no bat, isn't it?)

See what I mean?

So who knows what else will end up here? There are many more stories to come, and I might even have one or two of my own.....

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