

This started off as a story about a little girl called Suzy Bryant, who got an interesting job. But Suzy said "don't just write about me, because my whole family is interesting".

*As a result,
I now find myself:*

INTRODUCING THE BRYANT FAMILY

In the early 1950's, the Bryants lived at Bellwood Mission, Nambucca Heads. The two eldest girls, Josie and Val, had already left home and gone to Sydney and Brisbane. In 1953, Mr Bryant died of a brain haemorrhage, leaving Mrs Bryant with Barbara, Jeff, Ruth, Michael, Robert, and Sue to rear. Jeff, the eldest of these, had just left school, but the five youngest children were all attending primary school on the mission.

Between 1953 and 1959, Mrs Bryant supported her children with an income from bean-picking, washing, ironing, house-cleaning, and a widow's pension. Despite the fact that Jeff helped her whenever he could get work picking beans, peas or bananas, times were tough and worrying for Mrs Bryant.

In 1957, the three eldest of those who were still at home, Jeff, Barbara, and Ruth, came to Sydney and got a house at Rose Street, Darlington. Once they were established, they persuaded their mother to join them there, with the youngest children. Mrs Bryant hadn't been keen to leave the security of friends and relations at Bellwood, but as she told me:

"I only got to third class schooling myself. As I got older and times changed, I saw the advantages which education gave children. I

was determined that my kids would get the best. They had no chance in the country, so we came to Sydney so that the kids could use their education."

So Mrs Bryant decided to make the break and join her family in Sydney. Once she had become used to city life, she never regretted the move. Meanwhile, Jeff was working flat out to educate his younger brothers and sisters. Largely through his efforts it was not necessary for them to leave school and go to work. Both Michael and Robert went to Woodlawn College, Lismore, on scholarship and subsequently Michael went to Wagga Teachers College and graduated as a teacher. Robert also got his Higher School Certificate, joined the air force to learn engineering and is now a qualified air-frame fitter. At present he is in Vietnam servicing helicopters. Jeff himself

Sue Bryant wearing her uniform



Back row (l. to r.) Robert, Jeff, Michael

Front row (l. to r.) Barbara, Val, Mrs Bryant, Josie, Sue (missing is Ruth, who was away when this photo was taken)

