



Jerry Bateman pictured with his DFC of 1943 (*The Architect*, 2011 Annual, p.13)

**William Edward Maxwell (Jerry) Bateman** (1922-2011) was born 4 August 1922 in Broome. He was the last of thirteen children (which included three sets of twins) to architect and civil engineer Edgar John Bateman 1879-1961 and wife Edith Gertrude (Fryer) 1880-1959. The couple had married at White Waltham, Berkshire, England in 1898. Edgar (27) and Edith (26) arrived at Fremantle on the *SS Ormuz* in 1906 with four children Madge (8), Dorothy (6), Norman (5), and Kathleen (4). Nine further offspring were born in Western Australia: Edgar Charles (d.1928) and John R in 1908, Harry R in 1912 (d.1920), Arthur Leslie in 1914, Joan Hazel and Jean W in 1917, Keith Mervyn and Kenneth Peter in 1921, with the final child 'Jerry' born in 1922.

The Batemans first tried farming in the Harvey District from 1906 to 1909, after which Edgar took up construction work throughout the north-west of WA including at Derby, Broome, Roebourne, Dorre and Bernier Islands, and Beadon Point. In 1916 Edgar was appointed Assistant to the Engineer North-West of the WA State Government's Public Works Department (PWD). By 1918 he had become Shipping Master, Wharfinger, Pearling Superintendent, Agent State Shipping Service and Public Works Supervisor at Roebourne and Port Samson. Shortly after the death of 8 year old son Harry at Roebourne, in July 1920 the family moved to Broome - where Edgar acted as Deputy Harbor Master, Wharfinger, Shipping Master, Public Works Supervisor and Lloyds Supervisor.

Jerry Bateman was born in August, 1922, nearly two years after Broome's race riots. Shortly before Christmas of 1920, fighting broke out in Broome between Japanese and 'Malay' pearl divers, leading to fatalities. A navy sloop, *HMAS Geranium*, was sent to help restore order and, according to family lore, an abbreviation of the ship's name became the enduring nickname for the infant Bateman. After twenty years in the Tropics, in July 1928 Edgar and his family moved south again, to the Main Roads Department (MRD) at Narrogin; and in September 1928 he was appointed as MRD Engineer for the Albany District.

In the mid-1930s, the Batemans resettled to Perth, and eventually purchased a house at 11 Queens Crescent in Mt Lawley. Jerry attended Mt Lawley Primary, then Hale School in West Perth, where he obtained his junior certificate. In May 1939, he took up a drafting cadetship with the PWD, then located in a complex around the Old Pensioner Barracks building, the remnant arch of which now stands at the top of St Georges Terrace in Perth.

Following the commencement of the Second World War (1939-1945), Jerry and five siblings joined the services. It took Jerry some time to negotiate release from his reserved occupation, and in August 1941 he joined the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) at just 19 years of age. He had loved reading about fighter aces of the First World War (1914-1918) and thus was attracted to the RAAF reserves. He trained on Tiger Moths in Cunderdin and Avro Ansons at Geraldton. By the time he finished his training in WA, *HMAS Sydney* had been sunk, Pearl Harbor had been attacked and Singapore had fallen to Japan.

Jerry sailed to Britain for further training on Oxfords, Wellingtons, Halifaxes and Lancasters. By July 1943, a month before turning 21, he was a pilot officer in No 460 Squadron RAAF in Binbrook, Lincolnshire. The squadron flew the most bombing raids, carried the biggest tonnages and suffered the highest casualties of any Australian unit in Bomber Command. Jerry flew 30 operations. On his 15<sup>th</sup> sortie, on the night of 29 September 1943, Jerry flew his Lancaster into flak over Bochum in Germany. "Caught in large cone of searchlights - many flak holes in aircraft," he wrote. In fact, his aircraft was illuminated for four minutes, while he turned violent corkscrew spirals to evade a direct hit. He kept his nerve, allowing his crew to bomb the target and took them home safely. For this action Jerry was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC).

Later, Jerry became a flying instructor for the Lancasters. He returned to Australia to continue warplane instruction, sailing via New York. The war in the Pacific ended before Jerry saw further action, and he left the RAAF as a flight-lieutenant. He initially sought work with Qantas, but when faced with so many competing out-of-work servicemen, he returned to the architectural division of the PWD to complete his four year drafting cadetship.

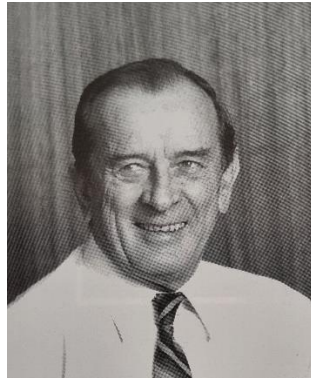


1948 wedding (*The West Australian*, 30 Nov 2011, p.54)

Back in Perth, Gerry Bateman married Yvonne Randell in 1948, when she was 17 years old. They had five sons, Norman, Ken, Gary, Ian and Paul, and lived in South Terrace, Como. Jerry completed his PWD cadetship as a draftsman and encouraged by seniors, was registered with the Architects Board of WA (no. 315) by special examination on 13 May 1958. At the PWD, his technical expertise and understanding of staff management had already been recognized. He served as architect responsible for building contracts, gradually assuming responsibility for a staff that included 900 builders, WA's biggest number of apprentices and ancillary staff comprising engineers, surveyors, architects, designers and draftsmen, totaling 700.

He proved to be a tactful administrator, and by 1969, Jerry was Assistant Principal Architect at the PWD, effectively running the agency day to day. In his time, the agency dealt with the implementation of metric conversion, new information technologies, and the ongoing division of the architectural department into schools, hospitals and general works.

In 1980 Stan Cann retired after nearly twelve years as Principal Architect of the PWD. After some governmental consideration of reorganization of the PWD, in 1981, the genial Jerry Bateman was made Principal Architect, an extraordinary achievement for someone who began as a cadet draftsman.



Jerry Bateman in the 1980s (*The Architect*, 2011 Annual, p.12)

No other architectural job in the State was as big. His staff numbered about 2000, including builders, tradesmen and professionals, and he was responsible for maintaining and constructing all government buildings, which included Parliament House, the law courts, Government House, public schools and hospitals, police stations and prisons, laboratories and offices

After the election of a Labor Government in 1983, it was soon clear that a pre-election promise to establish a statewide water authority would result in a split-up of the PWD. Thus Jerry had to contend with government review systems. Try as he might to reduce numbers in the Architectural Division by natural attrition, and putting forward a proposal to reduce staff over two to three years, he saw the writing on the wall and went on leave in 1984, destined not to return. It was ironic that Jerry Bateman's last battle, when fighting a government drive to cull the number of public servants, should end in capitulation. He was WA's last principal architect, a role he had fulfilled with great skill.

In January 1985 a large staff contingent finished their employment with the Department, and the PWD that had its origins in 1829 came to the end of its official life on 30 June 1985. A new organization named the Building Management Authority began operating under a much reduced staff. In a lengthy retirement, Jerry maintained PWD and RAAF contacts and was proud of having built a new home in Winthrop in the 1990s.

Jerry and Yvonne Bateman moved to St Ives in Murdoch in 2011, where he celebrated his 89th birthday. Revered by colleagues at the PWD for his administrative talents and even, genial manner, Jerry Bateman FRAIA died from cancer on 12 October 2011 at St John of God Hospital, Murdoch. He was survived by Yvonne, four sons, seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren. His other son, Ken, was killed in a road crash in 1972.

Previous WA Government Principal Architects included:

1891 – 1897 George Temple-Poole

1897 – 1905 John Harry Grainger

1905 – 1917 Hillson Beasley

1917 – 1927 William Burden Hardwick

1927 – 1930 John Melvin James Tait

1930 – 1960 Albert Ernest (Paddy) Clare

1960 – 1967 Walter Green

1967 – 1968 Leonard Walters

1968 – 1980 Stanley Cann

References:

'Warship for Broome', *Western Mail*, 30 December 1920, p.21 (HMAS Geranium).

NAA Series A9300, item 5380994, BATEMAN WILLIAM EDWARD MAXWELL : Service Number - 415232 : Date of birth - 04 Aug 1922 : Place of birth - BROOME WA : Place of enlistment - PERTH WA : Next of Kin - BATEMAN EDGAR

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