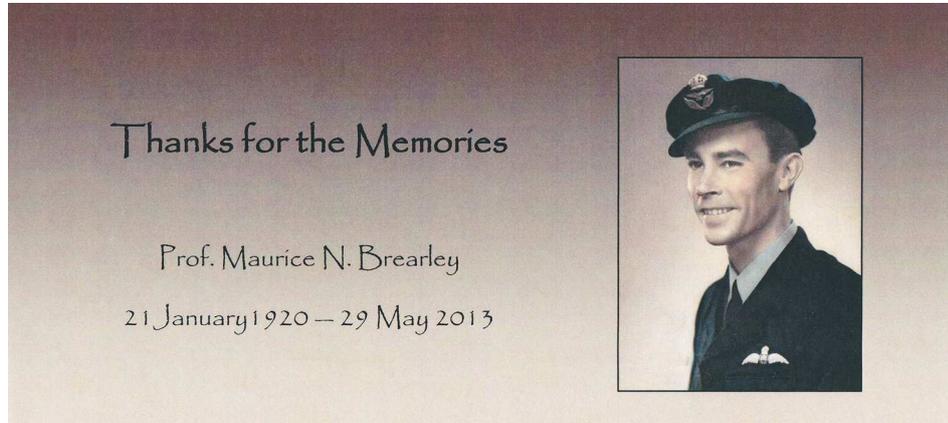


Maurice Norman Brearley

21 January 1920 – 29 May 2013



Maurie Brearley died in Geelong on 29 May from kidney failure after a long and eventful life. Maurie was born on 21 January, 1920 in Perth, Western Australia. He attended the Hale School and then the University of Western Australia where he obtained his engineering degree in 1941. In 1942 he started at the de Havilland Aircraft Co. in Sydney as a research engineer. This was a 'reserved occupation', meaning that he was not permitted to enlist in the armed forces because his ability was needed in industry. But Maurie had a driving desire to see combat and fly an aeroplane, so in 1943 he secretly enlisted in the RAAF under a false name.

His father, Sir Norman Brearley, had been a pilot in France in World War 1, and in 1921 initiated the first regular airline in Australia flying as Western Australian Airways, one year before QANTAS began its regular service. The company was sold to Australian National Airways in 1936, and when World War 2 broke out his father was given a senior commission in the RAAF. When Maurie was to receive his wings after flying solo in 1944, it was his father who pinned the wings on Maurie's uniform. Maurie later wrote that this moment was one of the great highlights of his life. Maurie flew his Kittyhawk, 'Omar Khayyam', with Number 77 squadron in the South-West Pacific islands until the end of the war.

After the war, Maurie worked for eighteen months as a vibration engineer for de Havilland's in England. Then, in the middle of 1947, he suddenly decided to become a mathematician. He returned immediately to Australia and gained a Teaching Fellow position in the Mathematics Department at Sydney University. By 1951 he had obtained a first class honours and the University Medal in maths. Then followed a BA in Cambridge University completing the Mathematical Tripos as a wrangler in 1955. From 1955 to 1965 he was a lecturer and senior lecturer in applied mathematics at Adelaide University, completing his PhD in 1958. In 1966 he was appointed Professor of Mathematics at Point Cook RAAF Academy (University of Melbourne). He retired at the end of 1985 and was made an Emeritus Professor in

1986. In 1990 he was appointed an adjunct professor at Bond University, working with me on a number of research problems until 2011.

Maurie's research interests in applied mathematics included wave motion, vibrations, aeroplane and parachute flight in winds, the design of mechanical aids for disabled people, and a hearing aid to reduce background noise. In the area of sports dynamics, Maurie published papers on the long jump, the high jump, lawn bowls, cricket, golf and rowing. Seven of these papers were published after his retirement. His engineering background produced working models of wave motion, football passes, a bat on a ball in cricket, the rocking rigid pendulum, a lawn-bowl release mechanism, a stair-climbing wheelchair, an oscillating wave mattress for the iron lung, and a patient-propelled variable-inclination prone stander. From this the reader will realise that Maurie was not merely a mathematician, but an inventor as well.

Maurie was a foundation member of the Society. He attended and gave talks at a number of ANZIAM and AustMS annual conferences, and was a regular attendee and speaker at eight of the eleven Mathsport's Conferences that have been held biennially since 1992. He was a stimulating lecturer with a dry sense of humour. He often used hands-on props in his lectures to students to illustrate mathematical and physical concepts.

Yet Maurie's interests ranged far and wide beyond science and engineering. He loved the work of the romantic poets, especially Keats and Browning. Further still, one of his main hobbies was music composition and piano playing.

He wrote beautiful letters with his expert command of the English language. He also wrote many stories and essays about his experiences and dealings with others as a child, a student, an engineer, a pilot, a mathematician, and an inventor. In particular, some of his humorous war-time experiences have been published in the RAAF Fighter Squadron's Newsletters. One is re-told on page 133 of Graeme Cohen's 'Counting Australia In'.

Maurie married Patricia (nee Gluyas) in 1948. He is survived by their three children Ann, Ray and Laura, plus five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. The marriage was dissolved in 1977. In that year he married Trish (Patricia Gilshenan), who has been his 'rock' ever since.

He was a wonderful friend and an exceptional human being. It was a privilege to work together with him in the last twenty years of his life.

*An erudite fellow called Maurie,
Would attack a mathematical quarry,
With the use of his brains,
He could also fly 'planes,
But to see him no more makes us sorry.*

Neville de Mestre
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