**Ralph Kenneth Bottroff**

Ralph was the fourth child of Mr and Mrs Louis William Bottroff and Loveday Myrtle Francis who had seven children Basil, Stan, Garth, Ralph, Fay,Thelma and John.

His Paternal Grandfather was Joseph Bottroff who was born at sea just 3 days prior to disembarking at Port Adelaide in 1854 where the family fled to overcome persecusion of Lutherans in Germany. His Maternal Grandparents were out of Kent in England.

The German influence saw Ralph’s family seek out other lutheran settlements in the Adelaide hills through to the riverlands and South East South Australia, predominantly as farmers.

Ralph was born in Mannum on February 17th 1916 and attended Mannum school.

The family moved to a farm in Meadows and then into Adelaide and had a family home at Belair, Cheltenham, and Findon. Ralph continued to work on the farm with relatives at Mannum. He also, with his brothers, ran a wood cutting and carting business from Meadows where Basil, his oldest brother, now managed the farm.

At the outbreak of war, while a member of the AIF, Ralph married Winnifred Brooks in August 1941. His compatriots from the RAAF formed an honour guard with two also acting as his best man and groomsman. Sadly, while Ralph was serving his country, he lost his much-loved father, Louis in September 1945. It was a hard blow for the family, especially with the uncertainty of war and with 4 of the 5 sons enlisted in the services. However the family continued to remember him over the following years. It was a double blow for Ralph to return and find that Winnifred struggled; resulting in that marriage finally ended in divorce in 1949. Ralph had 1 son, Alan born in October 1942. Due to the social climate at the time Ralph had to make the decision to leave his son in the stable environment of his mother and stepfather and was to lose contact with him for many years.

Ralph was fortunate to meet a war widow, Irene Simper, whose husband, a member of the 2/48th Battalion had been killed in June of 1945. The two were married on the 24th of December 1949 in the Blackwood Methodist Church, making for a special Christmas celebration. With two children of her own, Ralph was an exceptional father to Eleanor and Doug, then welcomed his and Irene’s children Kathryn in October 1950 and Kenneth in July 1952.

With the help of Rene’s father and brother, Ralph built a family home in Blackwood where the family of 6 lived. As Ralph had served as a mechanic in the airforce he was helped by his father-in-law to get a job with the Adelaide City Council as a mechanic servicing both the buses and taxis that were at that time owned by the city. As this slowly became privatised the council retrained him as a watch mechanic to service the parking meters which were slowly but surely being installed throughout the city center.

The family enjoyed the almost country like life style at Blackwood and Ralph enjoyed continuing in his sports life with tennis and later lawn bowls. He was a member of the local Acacia lodge and he and Rene would be found at a local dance almost every Saturday night. They were both members of the local RSL club for their entire lives.

Like most fathers, Ralph was readily supporting four children in their various pursuits of music, sport, calisthenics, guides and scouts.

He was finally reunited with his son Alan in 1980 when his wife made contact. A very special relationship ensued for the next 5 years

Ralph remained in his home with wife Rene, until he lost his life with heart failure on 14th October 1985 at the age of just 69.