

CHARLES ALEXANDER RUSSELL (Alec) was the son of Sarah Jane MCALLISTER & Alexander RUSSELL and was born on the 8th of March 1903 in Alberton, Pt Adelaide.

His mother; Sarah Jane, was the daughter of Charles Francis MCALLISTER & Elizabeth Ann ELY and was born on the 21st of July 1872 in St Vincent St, Pt Adelaide SA. Her mother died when she was 13 years of age and at the time, her eldest sister ran the household until she married in 1889. In 1889, Sarah took over the running of the household, at the age of 17.

His father; Alexander was the son of Alexander RUSSELL & Eleanor IRELAND and was born on the 11th of June 1864 in Pt Adelaide, SA.

His parents were married on the 6th of November 1894 in the Congregational Church, Pt Adelaide SA. Reverend Kirby officiated.

The family lived in Cairo Street, Alberton.

Charles joined the CMF Cadets in 1917 and in 1920 Russell he received a Sergeant's Certificate from the Commonwealth Military Forces of South Australia. He was with the 10th Infantry Battalion Senior Cadets, when examined at Alberton Station on the 28th of April 1919 and qualified for the rank of Sergeant. He was then appointed rank of Second Lieutenant, Officer of the Cadet Corps of the Commonwealth from July 1920 to 1923, before the cessation of training.

During this time, Charles entered into the profession of architecture at a time when architectural education comprised part-time articulated training and academic tuition. In 1919 he was articulated to the prominent Adelaide architect, F. Kenneth Milne, with whom he later entered into partnership.

Charles balanced his office training with the study of several academic subjects, including in 1919 Architectural History. He studied at the only institution which offered this type of education – the South Australian School of Mines and Industries which had established an Architectural Department in 1906.

Charles had many partnerships over the years. He joined the partnership of Milne & Evans in 1925. However on the 31st of December 1930 the partnership of Milne, Evans and Russell was terminated.

Jacob & Russell operated c.1928, presumably while Charles was still employed by Milne.

One of Jacob & Russell's works was a Masonic Temple at Melrose c.1928. The partnership of Milne, Evans and Russell was involved in a range of works including extensions and additions to the Laura hotel c.1929, alterations and additions to a Kensington Park residence c.1929, renovations and repair at Lady Galway Convalescent Home at Henley Beach South c.1930.

In 1931 Charles operated as C.A. Russell and one of the earliest projects Charles undertook as a sole practitioner, was alterations and additions to a residence at College Park c.1931.

Shortly after, c.1932, the partnership of Malin Russell & Co Ltd was established. 'Two brick shops' on Commercial Road, Port Adelaide were undertaken by Malin Russell & Co Ltd c.1932.

By 1934-35 Charles returned to working as C.A. Russell and was engaged with designing a new theatre for the town of Gawler. Throughout 1934 and 1935 he continued to work on residential and commercial works.

In 1934 Charles was an Associate of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. He married Doreen Nina RYAN on the 12th of December 1935 in the St Peters College Chapel, Hackney SA. Doreen was the daughter of Victor Herbert RYAN.

They lived at 14 Glen Avenue, Unley Park.

He moved on to designing a petrol station at Dulwich c.1937-39 and motor showrooms at Broken Hill c.1937. Both projects signified the growing importance of the motor car. In 1937-39 he was an Associate of the South Australian Institute of Architects.

From 1935 to 1936 Charles's office address was the same as fellow architects Bruce & Harral, and in 1938 it was the same as Ashton & Fisher. The proximity of their offices led to various collaborations including, in 1938, C.A. Russell's association with Caradoc Ashton & Fisher. One of Charles's most productive partnerships was with Keith Mills Yelland. Russell & Yelland was established c.1939 and still exists today (2022). Russell & Yelland continued to work on joint projects with others such as William Lucas.

One of Russell & Yelland's earliest works was a 'Seven roomed residence' at Springfield c.1939. The partnership balanced residential commissions with an addition to a factory in Grote Street, Adelaide c.1939 and extensions, additions and alterations to the Green Dragon Hotel in Adelaide c.1939 (Willis 1998). In 1940 Russell & Yelland entered the Adelaide Boys High School Competition which was won by the Sydney architects Fitzgerald and Brogan.

In 1941 he became a Fellow of the SAIA. In 1940 he registered as an architect following the introduction of the Architects Act in South Australia.

Ten years later he registered with the Architects Registration Board of Victoria.

Charles enlisted into the 3rd Battalion, C Company on the 6th of April 1942 in Adelaide, SA and was allotted the service number S70310.

On the 14th of December 1943 he was transferred to HQ 203 Search Light Battery in Dequetteville Terrace, East Parklands.

He was then transferred to the 12th Anti Aircraft Battery on the 11th of September 1944. Transferring back to 3rd BTN (SA) VDC 31 December 1944.

Charles was discharged on the 8th of November 1945, because of the disbandment of his Corps.

As a practice Russell & Yelland played an important role in the architectural profession during World War Two. It designed and documented not only Air Raid Precautions including the conversion of both the Sir Edwin Smith Stand at Adelaide Oval and the Norwood Oval grandstand, but also an Air Raid Shelter as a private commission for Mrs T.R. Scarfe of Eden Park, Marryatville. Russell & Yelland was an

active practice in the post World War Two period. It undertook a significant number of rural projects particularly in Broken Hill necessitating an office there as well as Adelaide.

The firm of Russell & Yelland continued to grow. In the RAIA publication Architecture SA 1970-1980 it was considered to be among South Australia's 'leading' architectural practices. Its project 'Housing for the Aged' at Woodville was showcased. It was praised for its sense of community and the design scheme had a clear expression of materials including brick, timber siding, and skillion roofs. The practice of Russell & Yelland survives today (2022).

Charles died on the 15th of May 1975 in Unley, SA and was cremated in the Centennial Park Crematorium.

Doreen died on the 26th of September 1991 in Parkside, SA and was cremated in the Centennial Park Crematorium.

They had two sons Alexander Richard, who became an engineer, John Victor, who became an architect and a daughter Rosie.

Natalie Lemar (nee McAllister)

1 January 2022-01-02

RSL Macclesfield Sub Branch