

From a Jack to a King: Ceremonial Dress to Elvis Success Part II

By Darren Gallagher

'Who on earth would allow the editor to put a photo of them dressed as Elvis in a Defence Wide publication?' says Darren's mother.

To bring new readers into play – last edition I explained how I transformed my old Naval Uniform into an Elvis Jump Suit, in preparation for my Bucks Party that I intended to have at the Annual Parkes Elvis Festival. Here I provide you with a few pics from the trip and a little insight as to what this young man learned along the way.

In presenting a photo of some of the people that went, I am reminded of the Andy McNabb Novel Bravo Two Zero which I'm sure many of you are familiar with. He provides in his novel a photo of Special Forces members, some of which still are serving and as such he puts that 'I'm a shoplifter' style black mark across their eyes. But, thanks to the \$12.95 Elvis Sunglasses, the anonymity of my crew can be maintained.

I will rely on word of mouth to out my team members' identities in this instance.

What happened at the Parkes Elvis Festival wasn't so much funny as it was encouraging. With a population in the vicinity of about 10,000 people – the residents of Parkes welcomed over 4,000 visitors to town for the event. Not a bad turn out huh?

It is a credit to the citizens of Parkes that they, as a community, met the event yet again with open arms. It is this sense of community that I intend to focus on this edition and how we can all grab our own slice of that 'Community Spirit' pie.



Will McCann puts his back into it

Everyone has vague memories of being a 'local' at some point in time, and too many of us Defence folk, seem to write the idea off in the fashion of 'Well, I'm in Defence now, so I need to get used to the idea that I'll never be a local again.'

Not true. You would be surprised at just how easy it is to reach out across our fair land and be accepted into any local environment in which you are posted.



The Elvises visit the Parkes' dish

Most large cities have all the same kinds of recreational activities within them. If you become involved in a local activity, you are over the first hurdle as you will meet local people. Should you go to your regions big events, then you will undoubtedly meet people who have the same interest from all over the place. Before you know it, you will have heaps of friends outside of Defence, that are a ready made social circle should you be posted anywhere.

My wife Tova and I do Modern Jive Dancing. While I'm a bit of an old hack when it comes to dancing, we still go and have fun. Having only been dancing for a couple of years, we now know dancers in every capital city as we have met them at Annual Balls and Competitions (No, I don't compete) – but the environment is so friendly that you can't help but have fun watching. As the Defence member, what it means to me is – when I go on posting, I don't have to worry as much about Tova being lonely initially as she will have friends wherever we go, that we have cultivated if you like, from the safety of our current posting. The activity is essentially an investment in ourselves.

Overall, the Parkes Elvis Festival was brilliant. The local folks in Parkes were ridiculously friendly, and everyone was just out for a good time. Should you be dressing up as Elvis or just thinking of heading up there to check it out, I can't encourage you enough.

Should you be thinking, 'Well...I have always wanted to try (Fill in your activity here)', then get out there and have a go, it will always be better to be a player in the game of life than simply a spectator in it.

