

Silvester Bole was born on 27 December 1912, in Voglje, Slovenia, near Monrupino, (Repentabor), the son of Jože and Johana Bole. Silvester was the tenth child of twelve children. Some of his siblings died in infancy and three others died later in life. Only five of the remaining children reached adulthood. They were Albin, Ivanka, Valeria, Silvester and Vida.

After completing primary school, Silvester completed an apprenticeship as a cabinetmaker in Aurisina, (Nabrežina), Italy and then worked in Monfalcone (Tržič), in the shipyard as a cabinetmaker.

Silvester's father, Jože was born in Šepulje in 1867. He married Johana, born 1875, and lived in Voglje. Johana was a very kind hearted and hard working woman. She tended her cows to sell their milk to help support her family. Jože was a stonemason by trade, also owning a large vineyard where he made and sold his own wine. Before WWII, Jože borrowed a large amount of money to invest into a marble mine which proved fruitless driving to bankruptcy. Once the war began the value of money dropped drastically and Jože found himself in strife and as a result he avoided paying on credit and paid everything with cash.

As a teenager Silvester often would go bike riding with his friends. It was on one of these rides where he met Marcela, the woman he later married.

In 1932 Silvester was conscripted into the Italian army at the age of 20. After he served his time in the army he returned to his previous job as a cabinetmaker. Life looked promising for Silvester, however, not for long for in 1935 another unpleasant letter arrived. Italy was at war in one of its colonies in Africa and Silvester was sent to serve in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Italian forces conquered Ethiopia in 1936 and from there Silvester was sent to the war in Somalia. Our father shared many stories with us from his time in Africa. One day whilst walking through a village, he was amazed how young African boys were able to play Italian band music on primitive instruments.

Silvester assisted many soldiers in writing letters to their families. He would write on the envelope in Italian, "Viva il Duce, viva il Re francoboli non che ne", which translated to "Long live Duce and long live the King", but there were no stamps available. To everyone's amazement the letters all arrived safely in Italy despite this.

Whilst serving in Africa, Silvester suffered from hunger and hardship due to delays in shipments of food supplies and stresses of the war which resulted in him having numerous issues with his health such as stomach ulcers. Our father was discharged from service in Africa after serving for three years due to his ill health. He was awarded a cross of merit and a medal for his service which to him were sad reminders of the war in Africa.

Upon his return from the war, our father was amazed that his dog Lola recognized him as his hair had turned golden from the sun. Silvester was happy to finally return home, however, it was short lived because in 1939 WWII had commenced and he was again conscripted to serve in Calabria, Italy. He was allowed three days leave in 1939 to marry Marcela Gec.

Silvester arranged for Marcela to move to a nice seaside flat in Sistiana, (Sesljan) near Trieste. His first born daughter Neva was born in Trieste hospital in 1940. Neva was delivered by candlelight as the city was in the midst of an attack. Marcela was very lonely whilst Silvester was at war. She had travelled with Neva in her arms to live with her parents on their farm in Šepulje, where in 1944 Silvester's second daughter, Danila, was born. Marcela remained with her parents until the end of the war where she was provided for and was safe from the ongoing assaults.

Silvester once returned home from his service in Calabria due to illness. Despite being ill, he was called to serve with the Partisans. The war ended in 1945 and Silvester was at last able to return home to his family. He found a place to stay in a beautiful villa in Opčine, near Trieste. Trieste and the surrounding land was declared a free zone under the Anglo-American administration and had it's own police force, the "Venezia Giulia Police Force", which Silvester was fortunate to join and he served for ten years. A recollection of our father's time with the police force was when he was called to the local cinema to stop a brawl amongst seven rowdy young men. He soon sorted them out when he stood with his back against the wall and threatened them with his baton and sent them all off running. The owner of the cinema was so grateful he gave him free entry to the cinema from then on.

Neva completed her technical schooling in Opčine and Danila completed five years of primary school in Opčine. Marcela worked as a dressmaker to help support the family.

In 1954 due to political unrest, Silvester was worried about losing his job and successfully applied to migrate to Australia. He was given seven days to prepare and sell all his possessions. It was very sad for the family to leave given that in those days families would rarely return home to visit.

Silvester and his family left Trieste in 1955 on a ship named the "Toscana" and arrived in Sydney, Australia. Silvester's family travelled by train to Melbourne. They moved into accommodation in Brunswick, which they had arranged prior to leaving Trieste via a friend.

Our father found work two weeks after arriving in Australia as a carpenter. He worked hard and bought a house in Pascoe Vale. He had a beautiful garden and was happy to tend to his grape vines and produced his own wine. He enjoyed spending time at the Slovenian clubs, especially the Eltham club (S.D.M) and also the Slovenian St. Cyril and Methodius church in Kew. He enjoyed travelling the world with his wife Marcela.

Silvester had many jobs throughout his time in Australia. His final job was with PMG (now known as Australia Post). He was a very honest and well respected man within his work community, so much so, that upon retiring he was given a watch as a gift from his employer.

Silvester survived his wife Marcela and lived until the age of 94. He passed away on 29th April 2007.

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