

## **Sprengel, Edgar Arnold**

Born c1925 Freeling SA, died 26.4.2009, aged 84. Worked at Mt Burr Forestry Research Station in 1940. Joined RAAF in WWII, posted to Perth, met future wife, Joan Doyle. Graduated from Australian Forestry School 1952. Commenced as Assistant Divisional Forests Officer 1953. Worked in Gnangara pines and the South West of WA. Resigned 1954/55 to go to State Sawmills as Forest Resources Officer. Joined Millars 1957 and became Managing Director in 1979. When Millars merged with Bunnings, became Planning Director in Bunnings, until retired in 1985. Set up consulting company with Phil Shedley "Valuwood International".

Obituary from Obituaries Australia website

## **Sprengel, Edgar Arnold (Ed) (1924–2009)**

Edgar Arnold Sprengel, a long time member of the Institute of Foresters of Australia and career Western Australian forester, who would be known to many members, passed away peacefully on Sunday the 26th of April 2009, aged 84, of brain cancer.

Ed was born at Freeling in South Australia, the son of an immigrant Lutheran pastor. His association with forestry began early as one of his first jobs was working at the Mt Burr forestry research station in 1940. The war then intervened and he joined the RAAF. He became a radar operator and was posted to Western Australia, initially near Perth, where he met his future wife Joan Doyle, then to Exmouth, in the North West, to help man the radar station there. He returned to Mt Burr after being demobilised but subsequently returned to WA to marry Joan. He obtained his BSc from the University of WA and then qualified as a professional forester at the Australian Forestry School in Canberra in 1952 returning to WA where he joined the Forests Department in 1953. One of his first jobs involved working on extending the Gnangarra pine plantations North of Perth. He later worked at various locations through our South West Jarrah and Karri forests before starting a long career, in 1957, with the saw milling company Millars Timber and Trading. He worked his way up through the company to be Operations Manager then Production Director and then finally Managing Director in 1979. At this time the company employed over a thousand people and was second in size only to Bunnings. Unfortunately Millars fell prey to the "corporate raiders" building their empires around the world at the time and in 1983 he helped to merge what remained of the company with Bunnings to save as many West Australian jobs as possible. Through the merger he became Planning Director at Bunnings until his retirement in 1985.

Of course this was not the end of his involvement in forestry. He first set up his own consulting company and also became involved with the network group Australian Forest and Land Management Pty Ltd which sought to market Australian expertise in forestry internationally. In 1994 Ed joined his long time contemporary and friend Phil Shedley in forming Valuwood International Pty Ltd to provide forest consultancy services as well as undertaking research into small log utilisation.

Ed was a passionate and outspoken advocate for the native forest timber industry which he believed not only provided us with one of the best sustainable products available but was vital to maintaining our ability to manage our forests properly. Of course this often brought him into conflict with the "protest industry" (so called green groups) which had emerged over the years. He had very little respect for the vast majority, believing them to be very dishonest and that their activities have resulted in enormous damage being done both to our forests and our native forest timber industry.

Ed stands as a fine example of someone who achieved much in a very full life involved in a profession which he loved. He believed that one of the most rewarding aspects of his chosen career was the opportunity to work with and be a part of a community of the sort of people who have made Australia what it is today. Honest, hardworking people who sought to do no more than to earn a living, support their families and leave the world a better place than it was. He made many great friends and helped many others along the way. He has been an active member of the IFA throughout his career and we will all miss him greatly.