

## Flamboyant at Another Level: Lyn Jones

Crooksy was in our house again. He was a big man, a big blowhard I thought, wearing his stupid slouch hat every place, covered in badges & feathers. He was Dad's best mate from next door. He drank & swore too much & laughed too loud.

Everyone but me thought he was great. "He's just flamboyant Danny" Mum said, explaining that meant being different, having style & flair.

We were all, well Crooksy, Dad, Mum, little Ruthie, my younger sister & me watching the box as Dad called the tv. My older brother Hugh was out, "Getting up to shenanigans" Crooksy reckoned "but good on him as you're only young once". "A-men" Dad agreed & they both laughed. Mum, I could tell, wasn't as sure about that as they were.

Crooksy's real name was Ed Crookshanks. He drove me batty, always showing off & trying to make you laugh. So I'd give him cheek. Mum would say "Mind your manners Danny" in 'the voice', which meant keep your 11 year old mouth zipped. Well, for a while anyway.

Then, something happened that changed everything.

I got a skateboard for my birthday. After practicing heaps, I could work up real hoony speeds, do 360's, flips, all sorts. I guess I was getting pretty cocky, which always seemed to end up a mistake.

One arvo, I fanged down our hill road at top speed, was hit by a car & flung across the street. I vaguely remember Crooksy racing over to where I landed. Next Mum tore out of our house followed by little Ruthie who was letting out a long scream as only she could. Dogs in countries overseas probably start howling when she really lets loose.

I woke up in hospital, 15 stitches in my head, broken left arm & leg & mega other stuff. Hughie & his mates even turned up & stood around staring, super-impressed by me for once. "Check out the runt's black eyes will ya!" one said. "He looks like a Panda & how about the rest of him! Good one Dude, awesome!"

Anyway, apparently by his quick actions, Crooksy saved me from being worse. Dad said he'd been a top medic in the war, awarded a Purple Heart Medal for his fearless bravery & by doing all he could to lift the morale of his wounded mates, by making them laugh.

Good old flamboyant Crooksy, my best friend now & my hero.