



# ADOPTED AUSSIE UNCLES

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Adopted Aussie Uncles was a concept I created many years ago.

I did so in order to surround my four sons in order to provide some form of mentorship as they grew and developed. It was almost my insurance policy for them should I have had an early demise and left them without a parent. Yes life was very tough for all of us, especially during their formative years and although the boys struggled in the early stages they grew into fine men. Mind you it was not without some heartache along the line, something that the boy's school educators had envisaged when they were younger. But then what does a single bloke do under those circumstances but to keep going come rain hail or thunder.

The following is a list of adopted Aussie uncles whose names were changed to make them sound more Hellenistic and as such they accepted the role with some amusements. Their Greek pseudonyms and Australian names can be seen below:

- |     |                              |   |
|-----|------------------------------|---|
| 1.  | Uncle Eddie Blackoropoulos   | Eddie Black, (Military friend);             |
| 2.  | Uncle Barry Ziebelopoulos    | Barry Ziebell, (Childhood mate);            |
| 3.  | Uncle Maurice Barwickopoulos | Maurice Barwick, (Military friend);         |
| 4.  | Uncle Clinton Breezeopoulos  | Clinton Breeze, (Military friend);          |
| 5.  | Uncle Barrie Danielopoulos   | Barrie Daniels, (Military friend);          |
| 6.  | Uncle Joe De Simonopoulos    | Giuseppe De Simone, (Personal friend);      |
| 7.  | Uncle Michael Krogeropoulos  | Michael Kroger, (Personal friend);          |
| 8.  | Uncle Chris Fenneropoulos    | Chris Fenner, (Personal friend);            |
| 9.  | Uncle Tony Kellyopoulos      | Tony Kelly, (Military friend);              |
| 10. | Uncle Mick Harderopoulos     | Mick Hardless, (Military friend);           |
| 11. | Uncle Kevin Hurleyopoulos    | Kevin Hurley, (Personal friend);            |
| 12. | Uncle Peter Hatheropoulos    | Peter Hatherly, (Military friend);          |
| 13. | Uncle Warren Payneopoulos    | Warren Payne, (Military friend);            |
| 14. | Uncle Noel Greavesopoulos    | Noel Greaves, (Military friend); and        |
| 15. | Uncle Bonnie Wasiuopoulos    | Bonnie Wasiu, (Military friend - deceased). |

Although the boys do not remember all of them, they all had an influence on them one way or another and as such assisted me during the difficult years. Each gave advice and/or support throughout the boy's lives and such all of the above are still very dear friends of the family and very much respected. Words alone cannot describe my appreciation for all their help and support, for without them life would have been far more difficult than it was at any point in time. Some lived interstate, but they were always there when needed for advice and support.

Readers will wonder why I have gone public. Well the answer is simple. I have written this in view of a telephone call today from one of the above who just blew me away with his telephone call. I felt that it was time that these adopted uncles so to speak were acknowledged and recognised publicly by me on social media. In fact everyone with exception of my dear friend Bonnie could pick up the phone now and pick up the pieces of our friendship forged many years ago. Such is the quality of friendship that only time was the measure of those bonds. I am a great believer in thanking and acknowledging friends who have been a big part of our lives, during and post military career.

Over the years those friendships developed through the good times and the bad times and were further strengthened when I remarried to my lovely wife Yovanna who travelled all the way from Canada to be with me. The friends above embraced my wife, Yovanna and as such the adopted family of uncles strengthen the fabric of our family. Mind you there were Aussie Aunties involved but my initial friendships began with the blokes and no disrespect to the Aussie Aunties. During those formative years and when my wife Yovanna joined us, we as a family have endured many challenges and in each case overcoming them with the strength and support of the above Uncles and their wives.

I have not included the numerous friends and Uncles of Greek heritage as this article is more about the adopted Aussie Uncles and how I was able to combine two cultures into one without fear or favour or being biased one way or another. I would prefer to believe that my four sons are a product of two cultures that will grow and develop even further than I and achieve their goals that they have chosen in life. I could only lay the foundations for them to build upon and as such I can do no more at this point in time but to listen and give advice only if they seek it.

To all of the above, I thank you for your friendship, support and advice throughout the years. You are all cobber digger mates to me and thank you for assisting me with my boys. It is the highest praise that I can give.

2017 was laced with sadness with the passing of family friends and acquaintances and yet despite their passing, I have become the recipient of their memories and will not forget their contribution to making me who I am. Life as we know it can only be sustained by vigilance and with that vigilance comes responsibility.



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