



*Irmgard Anna  
Bergmann*

*21<sup>st</sup> of May, 1939*

*2<sup>nd</sup> of April, 2025*



*Siblings:*

Frieda Luise:	13/9/1931 – 10/08/2008
Marie Agnes Sophie:	26/12/1932 – living
Anna Hilda:	19/12/1934 – 25/09/2022
Gerhardt Heinrich Wilhelm:	23/07/1936 – 21/02/2019
Anna Luise:	26/06/1938 – 03/07/1938
Irmgard Anna:	21/05/1939 – 02/04/2025
Karl Heinrich:	25/01/1944 – 20/02/2025



### *Eulogy*

Irmgard Anna Bergmann was born at 3:30 pm on a Sunday afternoon, the 21<sup>st</sup> May 1939 at Ega Station, Chimbu, Papua New Guinea. She was the sixth child and fifth daughter born to missionaries Wilhelm and Luise Bergmann. In October of that year the family was evacuated to Lae, then to Finschhafen, then back to Lae, due to the war. Her father was taken to a Prisoner of War camp in Australia. In November 1939 the family was taken to Boana mission station by her Uncle Gustav, to stay with his family. They stayed at Boana until Gustav Bergmann was interned as a Prisoner of War.

In January 1941, both families (wives and children) were moved to Sattelberg for their own safety, and in December 1942 they were sent to Australia. From Cairns they were taken by train to South Australia, where they were looked after by the Paeschke family. In November 1943 both families joined Pastors Wilhelm and Gustav Bergmann in Tatura Internment camp. Here Irmgard passed her 'baby of the family' status to her brother Karl. The family stayed in Tatura until October 1946. It was an unsettled time post-war, and the Australian government took a while to determine their future. Irmgard and her family went to Point Pass in South Australia, where they were looked after by Pastors Prove and Materne, and lived in a house loaned to them by the Schmidt family.

In January 1947 Pastor Bergmann was cleared to return to his missionary work in New Guinea. The family had to stay behind for a bit longer until it was deemed safe for them to return. In May 1947 Irmgard and her family went to Brisbane, Queensland. Here her elder siblings (frieda, Agnes, Hilda and Gerry) were

enrolled at St Peters Lutheran College as boarders, while Irmgard and Karl went back to Sattelberg with their mother. Now a very grown up 8 year old, Irmgard continued her schooling by correspondence. In December the diminished family would be back at Ega. In 1951 and 1952, Irmgard went to boarding school at Wau – where Frieda became a teacher in 1952. In 1953 she was allowed to do her scholarship year by correspondence at Ega, as Frieda was now at home and could help her. Irmgard remembered vividly when the Australian Government put on a large celebration with festivities for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, with lunch and tea at the Government station. 1954 was the year of a return family trip to Germany. The boat voyages there and back gave many sightseeing opportunities at different ports, which Irmgard enjoyed greatly. The family stayed mainly in Alswede with Irmgard's maternal uncle. A brass band welcomed their arrival at Alswede and at Neuendettelsau, which was something different to enjoy. Irmgard was confirmed into the Lutheran Church on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1954. On their return to Australia in January 1955, Irmgard attended St Peters Lutheran College, completing her Junior education in 1956. After a gap year at home in Ega, in 1958 she was finally old enough to start her nurse's training. She commenced in February at the Brisbane General and Princess Alexandra hospitals. After working as a registered nurse she studied midwifery at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Adelaide, and was back in Brisbane for her third certificate in Infant Welfare.

Irmgard nursed in Mount Buffalo, Katoomba, Brisbane, Ega, Mackay, Kundiawa, Lae, Wewak, east and West Sepik and Laidley. Her parents retired from Papua New Guinea in 1969 and



settled at her elder sister Agnes' farm at Mutdapilly, where Irmgard had a permanent room – with a carved crocodile under the bed that scared quite a few of her nieces and nephews! She had helped nurse many of the nieces and nephews after their birth, supporting her sisters and sisters-in-law. In May 1975, at almost 36 years of age, Irmgard joined the RAAF as a nurse. She was the 'cool' Aunt who travelled to exotic places such as Butterworth in Malaysia, and sent those special blue aerogrammes home. Laverton (VIC), Townsville and Amberley (QLD), and Richmond (NSW) did not have the same overseas appeal to the nieces and nephews, but when Irmgard worked in Australia it was much easier to visit her siblings and their families. When she was stationed at Amberley she could live with her extended family at Mutdapilly. In 1983 she took an extended leave to travel to Europe with her ageing father and brother-in-law Brian for 4 months. This kept Brian away from his tractors after major heart surgery.

Irmgard retired from the RAAF in March 1984, and there was another overseas trip to Hong Kong and Japan with her brother Gerry and his wife. She then settled into her room at Mutdapilly, helping in the kitchen garden and around the farm when she was able to. Irmgard visited and supported her siblings throughout their lives, and was an important presence in the life of her nieces and nephews. In 1994 she returned to Germany for a last visit with her sister Agnes. They lived close to Agnes' daughter Anne, and Irmgard became involved in raising Anne's three children, Jacob, Elleke and Daniel. "Aunty" became a major presence in their lives.

Irmgard could now indulge in her handicrafts, producing knitted blankets, tapestries and cross stitch panels, which were very much admired and freely distributed amongst family and friends. After Brian passed, Agnes and Irmgard moved to her house in Mutdapilly across from the school, and later from Mutdapilly into Ipswich. She lived together with Agnes the entire time. In her words – "I hate cooking, and Agnes does it so well!" As she grew less mobile Agnes looked after her until the last major cardiac event in March. An aunt to 3 generations of nieces and nephews, her unassuming presence will be greatly missed.

Vale, Aunty Irmgard.

