



NEWSLETTER

A P R I L 1 9 7 5

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

A Notice of Motion has been received for an amendment to the Subscription Clause of the Constitution.

The present clause reads: "The annual subscription for members in employment shall be \$1.00 or such sum as the committee may from time to time determine and members who have reached the age of 65 shall automatically qualify for life membership after four annual subscriptions have been paid.

Any member being in arrears in his subscription for a period of two years, may, not sooner than one month after the issue of a final notice, be removed from membership by resolution of the committee."

The proposed amendment to the clause is: "The annual subscription for members in employment shall be \$2.00 or such sum as the committee may from time to time determine and members who have reached the age of 65 shall automatically qualify for life membership after four annual subscriptions have been paid.

Any member being in arrears in his subscription for a period of two years, may, not sooner than one month after the issue of a final notice, be removed from membership by resolution of the committee."

The Sydney Treasurer has drawn up the following precis of the N.S.W. Veterans' diminishing dollar because of inflation and which substantiates the case for the amendment:

In 1956 the New South Wales Association founded with 240 members at \$1.00 - Bank Balance \$240.

The Bank Balance for the subsequent years is; 1957 \$86.00; 1958 \$228.00; 1959 \$310.00; 1960 \$436.00; 1961 \$572.00; 1962 \$579.00; 1963 \$614.00; 1964 \$657.00; 1965 \$675.00; 1966 \$704.00; 1967 \$610.00; 1968 \$590.00; 1969 \$567.00; 1970 \$524.00; 1971 \$472.00; 1972 \$508.00; 1973 \$413.00; 1974 it is hoped \$350.00.

All costs have increased 10 fold over the last few years and if we wish to continue the high standard set for our functions, it will be necessary to increase the Subscriptions fees.

Your committees have considered the Notice of Motion and recommend to the members that it be adopted.

NATIONAL SECRETARY

On the closing dates for nominations for National Secretary of the Veterans' Associations the only application received was that of our present National Secretary, Charles Charthew.

The Editor is sure that all members are satisfied with the outstanding work that Charles is doing on their behalf and there is no doubt that his re-election will be confirmed at the forthcoming Annual Meeting.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members to our ranks: Philip Geeves N.S.W., Henry Stewart N.S.W., Molly Condon N.S.W., Ron Flood N.S.W., Barry Henson N.S.W., Edgar Appleton N.S.W., Bill O'Donnell Vic., Kevin Cooney Vic., Fred Jenkins N.S.W., John Ponsonbey Tas., Dave Abercrombie N.S.W., Bill Bearup S.A., Noreen Gosney Vic., Phyl Burgess Vic.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

Victorian Association

The Victorian Association's Annual General Meeting will be held on 30th May, 1975 at O.T.C. House. An invitation has been sent to the Commission's new Chairman, Mr. Bill Gibbs who has indicated that he will most likely attend. Mr. Gibbs is also the interim Chairman of the proposed Australian Telecommunications Commission.

New South Wales Association

The New South Wales Association's Annual General Meeting will be held at O.T.C. House, Martin Place, on 30th May, 1975. Any interstate Veterans in Sydney on that day are cordially invited to attend the Meeting and the social function that follows.

DARWIN CYCLONE

The Darwin Cyclone has been well covered in the special issue of "Transit" and we do not intend to give much space to this subject in the news-letter. It is interesting however, to amateur members that during part of the time when we had no commercial links, that Manager, Bob Hooper, a mobile "Ham" contacted another "Ham" in Cairns and requested he get hold of Keith Parker, Cairns Manager, also "Ham" and get him on the air.

As a result Bob and Keith ran a "Ham" circuit between Darwin and Cairns and Keith followed through to Head Office per telephone.

O.T.C. had workmen, riggers etc. in the area fairly quickly and as a result four of the houses were reconstructed and four of the staff were able to be reunited with their families on the 21st February. Whereas other organisations only patched up houses, O.T.C. practically rebuilt and the houses are as good as new. In summary, both O.T.C. and the staff must be congratulated on their fine efforts during this emergency.

The cyclone devastation to Darwin on Christmas Day stirred memories of another great crisis in Australia's northernmost capital, the destructive Japanese air raid of February 1942. Below are some extracts from the logs of VID, Darwin Radio, which was then operated by AWA.

- 6.12.41 9 p.m. RAAF request message be passed to Batavia by any means possible, as they cannot do so. Message passed.
11. 1.42 12.37 a.m. Intercept call ship PATRAS gunned 8.52 south 144.44 east...Naval authorities advised.
19. 1.42 12.49 a.m. Intercept call ship BANTAM. Submarine fired three torpedoes, all missed, 7.16 south 126.30 east...BANTAM replied to and Naval authorities advised.
1. 2.42 12.57 p.m. Intercept call ship BANTAM bombed by eight planes. Naval authorities advised.
8. 2.42 11.52 a.m. Ship, callsign unreadable, bombed 12.3 south 129.49 east (approx 50 miles from Darwin). Ship replied to and Naval authorities advised.
16. 2.42 1.02 p.m. Intercept call MAUNALOA attacked by 27 Jap bombers 12.55 south 125.48 east. Acknowledged and passed to Naval authorities.
(This ship was in convoy with the U.S. transports MEIGS, PORT MARR and TULAGI, escorted by cruiser HOUSTON. This convoy returned to Darwin within the next two days. During the air raid MEIGS, 12,560 tons, and MAUNA LOA, 5,436 tons, both caught fire and sank in Darwin Harbour).
18. 2.42 11.01 a.m. Intercept call ship DON ISIDRO attacked by bombers 60 miles north of Wessel Island (This ship 200 miles airline from Darwin). Acknowledged and passed to Naval authorities.
19. 2.42 9.35 a.m. 8SE ('X' frequency coast watching station on Bathurst Island) calls with HUGE FLIGHT OF BOMBERS PASSED OVER BOUND DARWIN. Call acknowledged but nil further from 8SE. (This message was acknowledged by Officer-in-Charge Lou Curnock and transmitted immediately to RAAF operations room, where it was received at 9.37 a.m. No general alarm was sounded until 9.58 a.m., almost at the exact moment when the first bombs fell on Darwin. The delay has never been satisfactorily explained).
9.59 a.m. AAAA de VID Air raid in progress. Jap fighter machine-gunned station and knocked down high frequency directional aerial to VKS (Sydney Radio). All power off and no phone communication due to lines being bombed. During next hour on emergency gear. Following message passed to Sydney Radio DEVASTATING AIR RAID IN PROGRESS.
Whilst working Sydney, ship DON ISIDRO calls BEING ATTACKED BY LARGE NUMBER OF BOMBERS NEAR MELVILLE ISLAND, then "HIT" (DON ISIDRO was sunk).
12.00 approx Further flight of bombers attack Darwin drome
6.00 p.m. 8SE (Bathurst Island) calls with AFTER I GAVE YOU WARNING SIX BOMBERS BROKE FORMATION AND BOMBED US, DAMAGED AIRFORCE INSTALLATIONS HERE AND PUT MY RADIO OFF AIR UNTIL NOW. Acknowledged.
20. 2.42 10.00 a.m. Message received via aeradio circuits manned at VID that fighters on way to Darwin and what drome will they land at. As no phone communication, this message delivered by hand to Naval Intelligence. (Delivered by Phil Chapman)
1.12 p.m. Intercept KOOLAMA BOMBED BY JAP FLYING BOATS, ALL MISSED 13.30 SOUTH 127.10 EAST. Acknowledged and Navy advised.
3.00 p.m. Intercept KOOLAMA STILL BEING ATTACKED.
3.06 p.m. Intercept KOOLAMA DIRECT HIT TRYING TO PUT SHIP ASHORE IF POSSIBLE. Acknowledged and passed to Navy.
7.05 p.m. 8SE (Bathurst Island) calls with HAVE CAPTURED JAPANESE AIRMAN HERE. Acknowledged and passed to Navy.

POSTSCRIPT

The Japanese aircraft which raided Darwin were launched from four aircraft carriers in the Timor Sea, some 220 miles north west of Darwin. Those same vessels, AKAGI, SORYU, HIRYU and KAGA were destined to be destroyed by the United States Navy at the Battle of Midway in June 1942.

The only casualties suffered of the Radio Station were dented steel helmets, but the Cable boys did get injuries. A story from one of the cable chaps would be welcomed.

DARWIN APPEAL

The response to the Darwin Cyclone Appeal was most gratifying and there is now \$1,500.00 in the fund.

Although this sum does not seem very large, it is remarkable considering so many people donated to other funds before our fund was started.

To those veterans who so generously donated, we would like to extend our thanks.

TO PASTURE

Lyle Gowanloch

Lyle joined the Cable Service around about 1925 and transferred to Beam when that service opened in 1927. The remainder of his working life was spent in the Sydney Operating Room and on retirement held the rank of Shift Controller, which is the modern term for Beam Supervisor. In his youth Lyle was a fairly ardent angler and we can expect to find him sitting on Manly Wharf should he not be able to be contacted at his home.

Fred Hinds

Fred joined A.W.A. in the mid '30's and served in many accounting areas. For a time he was A.W.A.'s happy Paymaster followed by Accountant of O.T.C.'s General Accounts and on retirement was the Commission's Chief Auditor. Auditors are not particularly popular people by virtue of their duties but this could not be said of Fred and trust to see him at our Meetings for many years to come.

Eric Wickham

Wick has had a similar career to Lyle Gowanloch and also retired from the Shift Controller's desk. We have tried on many occasions to get Wick to join the Veterans' but he has never considered himself old enough for our ranks. Any person who can get Wick to join the Veterans' is a better man than the New South Wales Secretary and will receive special mention in these privilege pages.

BOWLS DAY

The New South Wales Association, will be holding a Bowls Day on Sunday 18th May, 1975 at Hunters Hill. Members wishing to participate should contact Bernie White on 20333, extension 239.

SICKIES

Charlie Barden

Sorry to hear that Gooch suffered a fairly massive heart attack over the Christmas period. It is pleasing to see he is quickly recovering but still unable to play bowls and I believe now off the grog.

SALVAGING HISTORY

Because OTC and AWA share quite a lot of common history, the Commission last year approached the Company, suggesting that some of this history should be preserved before it is lost forever. As a result, AWA Archivist Philip Geeves went to Melbourne, by courtesy of OTC, to record interviews with some of the thinning band of original AWA employees who joined OTC at its formation.

Thanks to Charles Carthew's organisation, Philip Geeves was able to record some unique oral history. Interviewees included nonagenarian Cliff Cutler, who recalled assisting pioneer wireless experimenter Walter Jenvey during the first decade of this century. The outbreak of war in 1914 found Cliff working long hours helping Commonwealth "wireless expert" J.G. Balsillie to install radio in the troopships earmarked to carry the A.I.F. overseas. In 1921 Cliff was given the task of establishing the cyclone warning station on Willis Island (or Willis Islets, to use the official designation of that period). Then in 1924 Cliff Cutler, by now on AWA's payroll, brought a new name into the vocabulary of radio men by selecting Braybrook as the location for what proved to be the most successful broadcasting station of the 1920's - 3LO.

Somewhat junior to Cliff, and full of wonderful anecdotes, octogenarian Ellis Smellie claims to have lived by the Morse code for 64 years, 4 months and 1 day. A 40 word-per-minute man, Ellis spent 45 years in the CRS then, following his formal retirement, decided to explore the other side of the hill and became a marine operator. Ten years and some thirty ships later, he was finally lured ashore to tidy up the garden of his snug cottage in suburban Melbourne. In retirement Ellis served as Radio Officer on the following ships:

TATANA, MINKARA, BARWON, DANDENONG, CRONULLA, BAROSSA,
TALINGA, IRON MONARCH, TARINNA, BASS TRADER, MARRA,
YANDERRA, LAKE MACQUARIE, ADELONG, NORTH ESK, LAKE
BARAINE, LAKE ILLAWARRA, IRANDA, TIMBARRA, YARRINGA,
YOLANDA, DISCOVERY II (oil rig), NAVIGATOR (oil rig),
MILLERS McARTHUR, VICTORIA, THERMISTOCLES.

In addition to the above he served six terms on the pilot vessel WYUNA and on tugs going to rescues.

The Editor does not know of anyone bettering this record unless it could be "old sea dog", Dave Fleming.

FURTHER EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF A WIRELESS OPERATOR

At a foreign port two sailors, the worse for drink, came upon a couple of rickshaw men and decided to reverse the order of things by taking the shafts themselves with the indigenies as passengers. Hardly good for the white mans' image nevertheless the practical jokers persisted and duly arrived at the wharf. To their quite obvious surprise and by sheer coincidence the first Mate was there and ordered them to pay the correct fare and get aboard immediately.

On another occasion, when approaching Suez, the alarm sounded for emergency fire drill and the carpenter (Chips) quickly donned a special helmet with a long hose attachment for oxygen supply. The duty of the

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ships' "boy" was to pump at a prescribed rate and keep the oxygen within limits. By the way, it was known that "Chippie" and the "Boy" were at loggerheads. As the carpenter descended the ladder of Nr2 hatch the oxygen supply accelerated and "Chips" duly lost his grip and fell fortunately without injury. Quite obviously the lad expected reprisal and left his post pronto with his victim hot in pursuit. Discipline was restored when smoke was seen coming from the paint room aft... a small blaze quickly subdued along with the frayed temper of poor old "Chippie" !

The first day at sea and the start of a life long career surely must leave an indelible imprint ... in this instance it was the voice of the Captain, quote "A damn shame lads like you take up wireless - there's no future in it", unquote. Then, many years later, and a touch of irony, to meet again that self same critic and to find him quite reconciled to progress!

WORLD WAR I

John Ponsonby relates his worst World War I experiences.

1. Eight day railway journey through thick snow in third class carriages minus windows from Southern Italy to Northern France. There were eight men allotted to a compartment designed for a maximum of six. They were given an army tin of Bully Beef and a loaf of bread, somewhere between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. each morning and in the afternoon the train stopped at a station where they were given a cup of cold tea. One can imagine trying to fill eight starving, frozen men on one tin of Bully Beef and one small loaf of bread each day. There were no toilet facilities and they were required to climb out on to the buffers of the moving train to relieve themselves.

2. On July 15th 1918 Ponto was returning home on the transport "Barunga" which was torpedoed in the Bay of Biscay. On board were 900 sick and wounded soldiers and there was only one life boat which had accommodation for 700. As a result 200 of the complement, including Ponto had to float about in the water for many hours until two destroyers, "Lance" and "Midge" picked them up at dusk. "Nat" Clifford, an old Coastal Radio man was also aboard as he was coming home on naval leave, granted to men who had served aboard since 1914. The third engineer of the "Barunga" had bought a brand spanking new motor bike and side car in England and had parked it outside his cabin. As the ship was sinking he sold the bike to Ponto for sixpence. The "Housie Housie" man had spilt his bag of pennies on the deck, so Ponto picked up six and handed them to the Engineer, remarking "If she doesn't sink it's mine. Unfortunately the ship was a complete loss. The bike went down and expenditure was a dead loss. This event happened on his birthday and as it grew dark and he was still in the water he said to himself "Ponto this may be your last". "Pim" Watt, who we last heard of in Sydney was one of the wireless operators on the "Barunga".

AUSTRALIA AT WAR

Archivist, Philip Geeves, was recently sent a copy of a Beam Wireless form which we have photographed for this Newsletter. The message was supplied by an ex-Commando Sig. When his unit was rushed to New Guinea following the first devastating months of the Japanese southward drive through the Pacific, the Sig's were short of message pads so following their arrival in Port Moresby they descended on the local Beam office and made good their shortages of one thing and another. The cipher message was transmitted from a forward post and received at the Commando Base Station on a Beam Message form. You will note the date - 2nd May, 1942 - the very period during which the Allied Naval Forces with their carrier - bourne aircraft were preparing for the Coral Sea Battle. You will remember this important battle, the outcome of which dampened the Japs' enthusiasm for taking Port Moresby by force.

COCOS ISLAND

The following is a newspaper extract which I am sure many Veterans who served at Cocos Island will be interested.

"I do not look for additional publicity" - with these few words Mr. John Clunies Ross (5th uncrowned King of Cocos) dismissed Ken Mullen a Sydney writer's request for information on the early history of his domain. (It is to be noted that Ken Mullen is an ex O.T.C. Telegraphist, who served a term at Cocos Island.)

But time has caught up with this remote cluster of exotic islands. Political and strategic events have combined to pose a strong challenge to the 150 year rule of the Clunies Ross family.

Following the slavery charges of 1972 and the recent visit by a United Nations Investigating Committee, the Labour Government has vowed to break the links binding the Cocos people to the Ross estate.

And while Australia keeps anxious eyes on Russian war ships in the area, the U.S. Air Force uses Cocos as a staging place and route to the controversial base on Diego Garcia.

"Cocos Keeling - Islands time forgot", published by Angus and Robertson, traces the history of this Indian Ocean sentry box.

Congratulations to Ken on having his book published and anyone interested can buy the book at Angus and Robertson for \$3.95.

FROM FAR AND NEAR

Friends of Harry Hicks will be surprised to know that he is now only 11 stone 7 lbs. and off the grog. Unfortunately Harry suffered a pretty savage heart attack twelve months ago but thankfully he has just about recovered and fighting fit.

Jock Cowie is now living in Tumut where he has a new home and is finding most of his time is taken up with setting up and looking after the garden.

Trevor Hughes, back at Crescent Head after a nine months trip covering the U.S., British Isles and Europe, is in the process of building a new home at Crescent Head.

John Ponsonby, living in Devonport, Tasmania, spends most of his time sawing up gum trees, tending his vegetable patch and playing indoor bowls. Not bad for 78 years old. At present counting his cash to see if he could have another trip to the U.K. Ponto wisely invested his S.L.A.P.S. lump sum and is managing to live quite comfortably. In fact many of the S.L.A.P.S. people will be interested in a quote from a letter that Ponto forwarded to the Editor, "Many times I have gone down on my sparrow bones and thanked God I took my S.L.A.P.S. in cash in preference to a pension. It is now well over the ten years since I retired and if I'd taken the pension instead of cash the pension could cease any day now should I die. As it is that lump sum I drew has increased considerably and Mum will be assured of a good income - if of course the economy does not fold up on us! If there are still members of the old A.W.A. scheme and there must be. If their health is reasonably good on retirement I strongly urge them to take the cash. My last year of service, Super cost me £1,500 but it increased my amount by £3,000, which I felt was a good return on twelve months outlay".

Vets will remember Ponto by his amusing contributions to the staff magazine. In his usual style he closed off in his letter in saying "I am fit and well and ready to fight five fast rounds with any elderly house maid with one foot in the grave!"

(Editor's Note - wondering if Ponto has a flaming fury at Devonport.)

The 7th April was the 70th Anniversary of Dave Fleming's entry into Communications. He joined the P.M.G.'s Department as a Telegraph Messenger at Thursday Island on 7th April, 1905. The Editor believes that Thursday Island was pretty rugged in those days but our present Staff still say the snakes, toads and cockroaches are still just as big.

Rockie Gordon has made a name for himself as the recipient of the first Meals on Wheels in the Murray River town of Mannum. Charles Raecke recently had a letter from Rockie which included a newspaper article and photograph of Rockie with the organisers of the Meals on Wheels. He also enclosed photographs of the Murray in flood with the paddle steamers moored in the front of his home. It appears this only happens when the river is in flood and the steamer cannot get under the bridge. Rockie is spending his time in his workshop. looking after the garden, and watching colour T.V.

John Davies and his good wife, Dallas, are still cleaning up all the Flower and Garden Shows in the Esperance area, taking out 62 first and second prizes during the year. Dallas won the Flower Show outright and this is a very creditable feat considering when they moved into the OTC cottage it was only a mass of weeds and grass. They also grow all their own vegetables.

Because of their show successes and the charity work carried out by Dallas, they quite often hit the headlines in the local papers. John appeared recently in the press in an unusual way when the Superphosphate Bulk Carrier, "Triatic", pulled in at Esperance. John was having a beer with Radio Officer, Tim Williams and a local, Kingsley Austin, who served in the Royal Navy during the War. It developed from the conversation that "Triatic" was built in 1944 and started her life as "H.M.S. Dungeness" and that Kingsley Austin was a member of her crew at that time. Although the "Triatic" had been in Esperance a number of occasions he had never recognised the ship and on having a good look over it said he did not recognise it as it had been painted. During the War "Dungeness" was a floating workshop accommodating over 500 men and servicing five battleships, 2 aircraft carriers and a flotilla of landing craft. At the end of the War she was sold to a passenger line and bore the name of "Leuoka" and was finally bought by the British Phosphate Commission in 1948. The only memento of "H.M.S. Dungeness" that Kingsley could find was the original brass Ship's Bell which still hangs to one side of the present Wheel House.

Bill Jenvey called in late January on recreation leave from Nauru. After ten years or so of retirement and the loss of his wife, Bill decided to revalidate his ticket to go to sea. In the meantime, however, the opportunity arose for Officer-in-Charge Nauru and Bill immediately accepted. He has now done twelve months over there and will be returning for another six months to organise installation of new equipment. Bill has bought a block of ground at Nelligen near Batemans Bay where he intends to build and settle down and spend his time "haming" and fishing.

Bob Wright appeared lost for sometime but we have now tracked him down again. Bob seems to commute between Sydney, Forster and the Gold Coast and late last year did an extended tour of the Pacific Islands taking in New Zealand, Somoa, Fiji, Tonga and Nauru. He was entertained by Bill Jenvey whilst at Nauru.

Old pioneer, Harry Tuson, was invited to join our Association but advises that he is not in the best of health, particularly, from his last heart attack and could not possibly attend our functions. However we will keep in touch with him. His old colleagues will be sorry to hear that his wife passed away recently.

Geoff Cox is now living in Port Noarlunga, South Australia, where he is spending most of his time bowling and breathing in the unpolluted air of the Gulf. On reading of Alfred McMurray, he recalls that they were in the Eastern Extension Adelaide office together with Geoff's brother, Keith and Wilf Ellershaw.

MISSING

We are trying to contact Pacific cable veterans Percy Sellar in Brisbane, Gordon Collyer (ex A.W.A.) somewhere in Queensland and/or any other likely O.T.V.A. members who have moved up Queensland way.

It is the intention of the National Secretary to form a Queensland Association and we feel sure that there are a lot of old Communicators retired and living in that area. Any information on such people should be conveyed to Charles Carthew or Gordon Cupit.

Correspondence has been returned from the Post Office for a number of our members who have apparently moved to a new address. Anyone knowing the address of any of the following should contact their Secretaries or Gordon Cupit, c/o O.T.C., Box 7000 G.P.O., Sydney: Mr. G. Berry, Mr. J.T. Blackley, Mr. W.G. Cowley, Mr. A.E. Fox, Mr. A.J. Money, Mr. G.M. Riley, Mr. J. Shaw, Mr. W.V. Telford, Mr. L.C. Waters, Mr. A. Whittaker.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NEWS

The South Australian Association held their reunion on 25th November and once again, through the courtesy of Ken Collett had the use of the facilities of the Public Service Club. Present at the get together were Eric Story, Geoff Cox, Ken Springbett, Alf Kerr, Bill Lemon, Ron Ward, George Rowe, Harold Oates, Norm Giles, Cliff Birks, Herbert Muhlhan, Cecil Shortt, Dick Evans, Norm MacKay, Harry Naylor, Gerald Shaw, Bert Dudley, Charles Smith, Grahame Little and Brax Horrocks.

Brax was re-elected as President and Bert Dudley re-elected as Secretary/Treasurer.

Greetings and good wishes were received from a number of other States including one from Bruce Sutherland in New Zealand.

The event of the evening was to have Harry Naylor with us on the evening. He is blind but enjoyed chatting to his old colleagues and listening to their voices once again. Harry is just on 90 years of age and looks remarkably fit. Muhlhan has had his 92nd birthday and looks exactly the same as he did some 50 years ago.

Unfortunately Leo Gleeson, Harry Chinner, Rocky Gordon and Eric Symes were unable to attend for health reasons. Eric is still a very sick man and is in the Home for Incurables.

Brax was recently in Perth and spent some time with Pat Sykes at his very pleasant home in Dalkeith. Pat is very fit and fully occupied with some clerical work, his tennis and a small property some 40 miles out of Perth.

PERTH INAUGURAL REUNION

The Inaugural Reunion of the Perth Association was held on 28th November in the Memorial Hospital at Perth. The meeting confirmed Geoff Warner as President and Brian Morrell as Secretary/Treasurer.

With the grateful assistance of the management of O.T.C. our General Secretary, Charles Carthew was able to attend. Those attending the reunion were Geoff Warner, Brian Morrell, Ron Cocker, Fred James, Tony Hanson, Norm Odgers, Paul Cooper, Ron Fisher, Charlie Watt, Des Else, Tim McCarthy, Harold Burdett, Pat Sykes, C. Eaton, Jack Thomas and Gerry Tacey.

VICTORIAN NEWS

The Victorian Association held their 18th Annual Reunion in O.T.C. House, Melbourne on 18th November, 1974. President George McDonald welcomed the members, and 77 attended. Guests included Harold White and Tom Molloy from Sydney. A photocopy of a page from the attendance book is included in this Newsletter.

We welcome new lady members, Mrs. P. Burgess and Mrs. M. Gosney, it is nice to see our ladies joining the Association.

Our Secretary, Charles Carthew, who is also National Secretary, visited South Australia for their Annual Reunion and Western Australia for their Inaugural Meeting.

NEW SOUTH WALES NEWS

The New South Wales Association held their Annual Reunion in the Function Room of the G.P.O. on Friday, 22nd November, 1974. O.T.C.'s Deputy General Manager, Cyril Vahtrick was Guest of Honour and interstate Veterans Jack Cornish (Victoria), Alec Stewart (Victoria) and Les Doubleday (Queensland) were very welcome. The following is a list of those in attendance: Keith Vincent, Roy Doohan, Harry Cook, Trev Thatcher, Charlie Hale, Des Woods, Jack Bassett, Percy Day, Joe Collister, Brian Woods, Jack Cornish, Claude Dalley, John Hodgson, Les Hunt, Bruce Collett, Maurie Matthysz, Alec Griffiths, Alec Stewart, Jack Davis, Bob Reeks, Tony Ebert, Len Rourke, Ted Bishton, Jim Vasek, Wilf Ellershaw, Fred Hinds, Jim Davis, Stan Gray, Horrie McInnes, Jack Guthrie, Stan Ellis, Blue Easterling, Rus. Welbourn, Lyle Gowanlock, Murray Hill, Des Kinnersley, Edgar Harcourt, Eric Burbury, Cyril Vahtrick, Murray Johnson, Joe Hawkins, Kath Morgan, Eileen Haran, Athol Brown, Dick Christoffersen, Dave Bourne, Wilf O'Donnell, Les Coley, Jack Creswick, Eric Cockle, Ray Carragher, Bill Luke, Ced Dale, Albert Sheppherd, Fred St. Julian, Charlie Swinney, Jack Bullen, Nell Donoghue, Valerie Moore, Jack Burgess, Bill Hickling, Eric Meredith, Dave Fleming, Bill Chant, Willy Chant, John Mulholland, Tom Hughes, Orm Cooper, Claude Pickford, Marie Casey, Jack Hansson, Fred Doolette, John Creswick, Sandy Sandilands, Bill Brown, Jim Blemings, Charlie Raecke, Betty Leweniec, Albyn Gregory, Tufty Baker, Harold White, John Rowley, Ron MacKenzie, Charlie Watson, Reg Towner, Gordon Cupit and J. Lee.

NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION

The annual meeting and reunion of the Veteran Cable Men's Association was held in Auckland on the 6th December, 1974. In attendance were:

T.B. Condon, W. Craig, O.C. Crossley, L.H. Davison, H.G. Evetts,
H.J. Fox, B. Giles, L. Gladding, F.N. Harry, R.K. Hosking,
R.C. Langford, R.G. Marchant, A.G. Miller, H. Mortensen,



L.H. Russell, L. Sedman, R.L.C. Sextie, C.L. Smyth, F.C. Studman, K. Clarke, R.P. Connolly, D.C. Erson, K.J. Healy, C. Nielsen, D.H. Thompson, J. Walker, R.J. Bell and M. Fulton.

Much interest was shown in a staff photograph of the "25 Year Club" taken at their last annual dinner in Vancouver and sent by Fred Yeomans. Likewise, a descriptive account of present conditions at Fanning Island, our original mid Pacific link of the old type cable days, sent in by Mrs. Dulcie Heron.

It was particularly pleasing to see at the re-union Mike Fulton, (now living in Nelson) Jack Potter and Bob Martin previously attached to the cable station in Auckland for a number of years. The sustained interest in functions by a good number of the "Telecom" trained staff mostly now in business far removed from communications is most gratifying.

Previous office bearers, Chairman W. Craig, Honorary Secretary and Treasurer F. Studman, Auditor T.B. Condon, Committee L. Davison, R. Atkins and L. Gladding were re-elected.

U.K. NEWS

John Ash has been elected as Honorary Secretary of EROS and Veterans visiting England should contact John for the address of any of their old friends in that Organisation they may care to look up. John's address is 58 St. Johns Road, Petts Wood, Orpington, Kent. BR5 1HY.

John was posted during his time with C. & W. to both Hong Kong and Singapore and sends his regards and best wishes to Tufty Baker, Eric Story, Sandy Sanders, John Henderson, and others who served on those stations.

The Annual Luncheon of EROS was held on 6th October, 1974 with a very good attendance and this was featured in "Mercury".

PROPOSED NEW FASHION POST OFFICE

Our National Secretary has been in contact with the General Secretary of the National Veterans of Post Office and Civil Servants in the U.K. They have a membership of 35,000 with 245 branches, each branch having full autonomy.

This gives room for thought of the Australian Government's proposal for a reorganised Australian Post Office. Many of our Veterans may not have heard of the proposals but OTC members of our Association are really concerned and are hungry for any little piece of detailed information on the new set-up.

Broadly, the Australian Government were concerned at the mounting criticism on the operation of the Australian Post Office and set up a Select Committee to look into its operations and submit a report to the Government. In carrying out their investigations the Committee also had a look at the operation of OTC and were impressed with their management and the manner in which the organisation and its staff conducted the business. Following their report, Cabinet decided that the Australian Post Office should be divided into two sections, each controlled by a Commission. The Postal Services are to be formed into the Australian Postal Commission and the Telecommunications Services into the Australian Telecommunications Commission. The proposal is that OTC will be incorporated into the Telecommunications Commission, hence the concern by our OTC members.

Legislation has been drafted for the new Commissions and this is expected to be presented to Parliament in time for them to commence operating on 1st July, 1975.

Our Committees have given thought to the future of our Association but point out although there is such a huge organisation like the Post Office and Civil Servants Association in the U.K. EROS and Marconi Veterans have continued to function. We will be investigating these organisations and at some later date making recommendations to members.

FIRSTS

The 'Brisbane Sunday Mail' recently featured an article on Allan Cox of Coastal Radio fame under the heading "RADIO'S FORGOTTEN FIRST". The following is the article on Allen.

1st December, 1974.

Australia's first disc jockey cast his mind back 54 years yesterday - and still couldn't remember anything about the first record he played.

In fact, Mr. Allen Cox can't recall the titles of any of the records he used to play on the HMV horn gramophone for an hour every Monday night.

"Playing records was only a secondary consideration", he said. "The station, VIM Melbourne, was a radio telegraph station built by Federal Government for the safety of life at sea."

It was 1920. The electronic valve hadn't been invented and no-one in Australia owned a radio receiver.

"The only ones who could hear me were ships' wireless officers, and I don't know what they thought of my selections because none ever wrote to tell me," said Mr. Cox.

He had charge of the telegraph station and a broadcasting one which operated in conjunction with it.

Morse code

Mr. Cox, now 82 and living at Chermside Street, Hendra, said a transmitter was installed at the station in 1920.

But before then he had been sending weather information and private messages to ships by Morse code.

He said there was "a terrible rush" to start radio stations after VIM Melbourne's transmitter was installed. First of the newcomers, he said, was 3DB Melbourne.

But he said that in spite of racing's popularity with Australians radio race-calling didn't start until 12 years later.

Mr. Cox worked in various States and New Guinea in the radio telegraph service before retiring from the Overseas Telecommunications Commission in Brisbane.

He still enjoys listening to the radio - and particularly the record programmes.

"The invention of radio was a wonderful thing," he said. "But too many people have lost sight of that these days and take it for granted."

According to our learned archivist, some of the story is slightly misquoted, probably perpetrated by some teenage reporter.

Some of our members may like to comment, as this is the sort of information urgently sought from some of our older members, to piece together

a really good history of the early pioneer days. The work of Philip Geeves, the A.W.A. archivist is featured in another part of this Newsletter.

WILLING WORKERS

The following is some of the transcript of tapes recorded by Philip Geeves in his talk to Elis Smellie. The main character in his story is none other than Fred "Daddy" Christmas:

Fred Christmas, at Applecross, around the 1920's, was a wizard in encouraging willing workers. An eager beaver, fed up and bored stiff with never having any messages to or from his own ship, was thrilled to be able to relay messages from anywhere to anywhere. The dizzy limit of his pipe-dream was to assist a land station. Especially the one with possibly the largest coverage, like Perth Radio.

Fred shamelessly exploited this aspect of human nature. He allowed ships to call him till a willing worker offered his services. If the ship was about 500 miles West of Australia, Freddy gleefully kidded him on. Fred did not then have to struggle with weak signals from two or three thousand miles away. The willing worker did all that. The strong clear signals from the willing worker, relaying the bunch of traffic he would collect, suited Fred fine. Not having Fred's guile or aplomb I did not approve. It was low-grade and damaging. One bitterly cold midnight I climbed the hill and relieved Fred. He told me he had had the phones on head. His feet were on the fireplace, his chair a bit out of reach of the receiver. Fred was clever. He had nussed it out that dropping the telephones down around his neck for strong signals and pressing them to his ears for weak signals was easier, when near the fire, than reaching for the audio tuning knob. Logs were blazing nicely, Fred was cosy. He was well balanced in his chair and was reading a book.

A Swedish ship had called him. The signals were weak and Fred expected his willing worker to take over. The ship called again. Fred told him his signals were weak and for him to relay it through his willing worker for the night. "It pays to let them do it and keep them busy" he said to himself. He was snug and liked it.

The ship, Swedes had powerful transmitters, said "But I have just left Fremantle" and sent his "T R." Fred reached out full stretch and tuned the signal in. The roar in the earphones could have been heard at the top of our 400ft. mast. Fred went into a frenzy. He let go the tuning knob and tried to get hold of it again. With his other hand he tried to tear the earphones off his ears. The hellish noise was driving him nuts. His chair toppled over and he had to use his hands to save himself from rolling into the fire. It was quite some time before he got clear. I told him it served him damn well right, that is, after I got my breath, after roaring with laughter. I also, could have been heard at the top of the mast.

N. Beard, now a retired A.W.A. engineer, then on a Bay boat was a typical willing worker not only from 500 miles from Perth but also when his ship was between Colombo and Suez. He had his transmitter rigged for all wave lengths. You name it and he could give it, to avoid interference. A skilled and clever cookie. Thanks mate.

SECOND WORLD WAR

The following story comes from Charles Martin residing in the U.K.

During the last war we were not allowed to use radio sets at sea for security reasons and had to rely on the wireless room for a short daily bulletin of what was going on. These were very welcome as cable ships, being very much "birds of passage" were often months without mail

- 14 -

from home due to the fact that they had no real base port during war time.

We were working off the Cape Verde Islands in February, 1941 and picked up a wireless request for a drug urgently required on one of the Islands. We did not know what was behind this and were duly suspicious particularly being in a neutral area and other craft might be there also. However, the urgency was recognised and a conference of senior officers decided on action. The Doctor produced the necessary drugs and we steamed into the Island where we were met by an official launch who wanted to know why we were there. The package was handed over and we took precautions by going off another way. Later we had a cable-end on board and received a message from the Manager to say that our drug had been very successful and the little girl involved had completely recovered. Thanks were sent to the "heroic Britons" from the family and the officials on the Island.

RELICS

As advised in previous Newsletters the Association is interested in setting up a museum and we would be grateful for any historical communications equipment or other relevant items of an historical nature.

In addition to the Veterans' museum one of our members Graham Gosewinckel is collecting items from the pioneer era of sound production. If you have any early radio sets, gramophones, old-style tubular records or any other things he would be very pleased if you could contact him. Graham is located in the Commission's Head Office, 32 Martin Place.

RADIO INTERVIEW

The following is a transcription of a tape interview by the A.B.C. with Cliff Cutler made during the "50 Years of Broadcasting" celebrations.

This is an item for light entertainment about "50 years of 3LO", an interview with Mr. Cliff Cutler.

"Well it was somewhere near there, Collins Street has altered to such an extent since then, but it was alongside the old Argus office which was of course in Collins Street before they built their new building in Elizabeth Street."

*Well if that's more or less where it was, what sort of facilities were there then? What did you have in the studios?

"Well the facilities were very crude to modern standards but we had a studio and there was the ladies and gents waiting rooms and that was practically all we had in that particular building and the studio was very crude. I did the technical talk once a week and Mr. Leslie Brumines I think it was did the natural gardening section and we used to just take it in turns, I sometimes followed him and sometimes he followed me and it was rather amusing, two or three times he rang me and asked would I do his stunt because he could not get in but all the particulars were in the studio."

*So as maintenance engineer you were doing the gardening session?

"Yes I did the gardening session but I still have a giggle to myself about announcing some of the gardening names of plants and that but I got away with it alright. I never got any queries but I understand he got a few and my talks were generally on maintenance of batteries, crystals and things like that."

*What were some of the other broadcasts that you had round that time?
Did you have much singing and this sort of thing?

"The most interesting to me was when Mr. Maurice Dudley was the announcer and his perfect English and diction were lovely to listen to and his wife, Mrs. Dudley, she did the singing and looked after the ladies' side of the broadcast or we had Captain Donald McLean I think it was, he ran a serial, Moby Dick, that was one of the first serial broadcasts I think that we put over and he had a lovely way with him and it was very very popular with everybody who listened to 3LO. One of the best broadcasts that I ever heard I reckon I still remember it as clear as the day it was put over and it was when Harry Lauder was visiting Melbourne and he gave us half an hour of 'Lauderisms' and, by jove, it was a marvellous turnout and it was popular with everybody and old Harry, I don't think he was Sir Harry then, just Harry Lauder, put over his gag about his generosity that he had given £ 5,000 to the widow of the unknown soldier, that was one of his gags that I still remember."

*Did you ever meet Dame Nellie Melba around those times?

"No, she was out at Coal Stream and she never came into the city, into the Melbourne broadcasts at all."

*There was that famous event of course, when there was a transmission made from her home, were you ever involved in that?

"Yes it was at the Institute Hall I think it was, at Coal Stream and there was a lot of interruption to her. She was as wild as anything about it you know, and I don't blame her, it was an historical event and they blamed it on line trouble or something but personally I think it was entirely "man-made", people ear-wigging on the line."

*What, having a listen in?

"Yes, you see, so many points that the line went through you could not blame the fellows or anybody wanting to hear. Of course, that was the night of the first broadcast and when she was on the air in full voice it was marvellous, she had a wonderful voice, I never heard anything like it since and the public they received it alright except for the annoyance of the interruptions."

*Did you have to bear the brunt of her anger at all? Did you have to face her?

"No, the broadcasting company had to stand that. Major Connor was the manager and he got a bit of it, I believe, but I didn't have anything to do with that fortunately, I was only on the technical side."

*Well Melbourne would have been a very different place in those days with the cable trams and the streets filled with horses. What about the people of Melbourne then, was it a more relaxed style of life, were people perhaps more pleasant in a way?

"Well, of course, there wasn't the hustle and bustle and it was all handsome cabs and cable trams in those days and life was certainly a lot easier and more relaxed than it is today, there wasn't the quantity of people about you see. One of the most remarkable things was the white line down all the pathways in the city, if you were in the outside path and you wanted to get a look at a shop window you had to go ...

*like swimming against the current?...

"yes, into the stream coming the other way. That was one of the peculiarities of those days."

*Well Mr. Cutler your memories certainly take you back quite a bit. Do you mind if I ask how old you are?

"I'm 92 next year - 91 plus."

*You are certainly looking pretty hale and hearty. Do you think you will make the century?

"Well I'm hoping to. If I could only get a new pair of feet I would be 100%."

FURTHER EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF A WIRELESS OPERATOR

In the early 1920's we called at Pulo Laut, an island off South Borneo, for a cargo of teak logs. Steaming up river, with impenetrable jungle on either bank, to arrive at the trading post hewn out of raw jungle the ship berthed and prepared to load. The head serang of the remote settlement strutted up the gang-way resplendent in tropical whites with golden sovereigns attached as buttons to the coat...seven in all... gold bangles; gold ear-rings; dentures filled with gold; a veritable walking gold mine typical of the custom to carry all worldly substance on on the person.

The handling of those teak logs called for uncanny skill ... the indigenous timber-men worked fast and with efficiency borne of long experience. A halt was called when it rained inches within minutes only to stop and let the steam rise! Incredible country.

On another trading trip the port of call was an Island off Singapore on which huge containers stored oil for the refinery with indentured labour segregated in a closely guarded compound. Management had comfortable housing and amenities plus the inevitable Club. Our cargo was kerosene...two tins to the case. Incidentally, no danger money then! One evening an invitation was extended to join a launch cruise round the Island with the lights of Singapore clear in the distance and Johore not so far away. When questioned just why the guns of Singapore pointed only one way the reply indicated supremacy of sea power made Singapore impregnable. Queried what would happen should an attack come from the mainland of the Malay States one single word sufficed "IMPOSSIBLE".

THOSE TERMITES

Our destinies often hang by slender threads. Consider the strange case of veteran rigger Tom Finch, for instance. Born at Deptford, Kent, in August 1882, Tom was the youngest of thirteen children of a marine engineer in steam. Yet Tom was the only one of that large family who took to the sea and, unlike his father, his marine baptism was in sailing vessels. If he had followed in his father's footsteps and gone to sea in steamships, Tom might never have become a rigger.

One rigging job which Tom Finch will never forget was at Thursday Island. His allotted task was to put up a new aerial for the coastal station so our rigger hero began climbing the existing wooden mast, which had projecting wooden pegs to provide a foothold. About a hundred feet above ground, Tom noticed that one peg was rather loose and gave it a twist to firm it into position. Instead, it came away in his hand and revealed something infinitely more disturbing to a man poised precariously at such a height...a nest of termites. Tom Finch is not a man who exaggerates, but he swears that his speed of descent at Thursday Island must have established some sort of record. Anyway, that was how the first steel masts found their way to the Coastal Station at Thursday Island.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS HISTORY

The following history of Telecommunications developments has been taken from a recent issue of the Australian Post Office News:

- "1854 Australia's first telegraph line was opened from Williamstown to Melbourne,
- 1858 Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide linked by telegraph.
- 1859 Victoria-Tasmania submarine telegraph cable opened.
- 1861 Sydney-Brisbane telegraph line opened,
- 1872 The 2000 mile, Adelaide to Darwin Overland Telegraph Line completed. England-Java cable extended to Darwin and Australian network connected to London.
- 1877 Perth-Adelaide telegraph line opened. South Australia became first Australian colony to join the International Telegraph Union later to become International Telecommunication Union,
- 1878 First trunk telephone call demonstrated in South Australia between Semaphore and Pt. Augusta (240 miles) and between Sydney and West Maitland (140 miles) only two years after Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone,
- 1880 First telephone exchanges opened at Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne two years after world's first,
- 1883 Telephone exchanges opened in Adelaide and Hobart,
- 1887 Telephone exchange opened in Perth.
- 1901 Federation, Introduction of Post and Telegraph Act under which all postal and telecommunications services were taken over by the Commonwealth under the control of a Federal Postmaster-General.
- 1902 Pacific telegraph cable opened. First interstate trunk line opened from Mt. Gambier (South Australia) to Nelson (Victoria).
- 1907 Sydney-Melbourne trunk line service in operation and first Central Battery Telephone Exchange opened at Hobart.
- 1911 First automatic telephone exchange in Australia opened at the GPO Sydney, for internal use,
- 1912 Radio-telegraph services introduced.
- 1924 Direct operator dialling over trunk routes introduced at some centres in Victoria,
- 1925 Australia's first telephone carrier system (three channels) installed between Melbourne and Sydney.
- 1926 First country automatic exchange opened.
- 1927 First public overseas radio-telegraph service (beam wireless) opened between Australia and Europe. First telegraph carrier system started between Melbourne and Sydney.
- 1929 Melbourne-Sydney picturegram service began.
- 1930 Overseas radio-telephone service started.
- 1933 Table handset telephone and private-wire tele-printer services introduced.
- 1934 Beam picturegram service opened, Australia-England.
- 1936 Tasmania-mainland telephone service opened over the then longest submarine telephone cable in the world.
- 1945 Inter-capital city operator dialling over trunk lines introduced.
- 1949 Telephones connected reach one million.
- 1950 First mobile radio-telephone exchange services introduced, Melbourne and Sydney.
- 1953 1,000,000 telephone subscribers in Australia.

- 1956 Subscriber Trunk Dialling (STD) first introduced in Australia between Dandenong and Melbourne and between St. Mary's and Sydney.
- 1959 ~~STRESS~~ - automatic transmission of telegrams through intermediate points, without manual handling, in operation for first time.
- 1960 Automatic time and weather forecast services extended to all capital cities.
- 1961 Broadband network: Sydney-Canberra section of coaxial cable opened for all types of telecommunications traffic.
- 1962 Broadband network: Sydney-Canberra-Melbourne coaxial cable opened for all telecommunications traffic (first interstate broadband system). STD introduced between Canberra and Sydney. Australia-New Zealand-Fiji links of the Commonwealth Pacific Cable (Compac) opened.
- 1963 STD introduced between Canberra and Melbourne. First data transmission service introduced over telegraph circuits between Sydney and Melbourne. Compac cable completed between Fiji and Hawaii and Vancouver. Cable officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen, 2 December. Australian telephone operators able to dial direct to subscribers in Canada, the USA and Britain.
- 1964 STD introduced between Sydney and Melbourne. Broadband network: Sydney-Brisbane microwave radio and coaxial cable system completed.

VALE

Bill RINGROSE (N.S.W.)

Bill Ringrose, who has not been in good health lately suffered a heart attack at his home Forster. Bill served for many years in a technical capacity at Pennant Hills and Doonside and on retirement, some nine years ago, was the Supervising Technician - 2IC of Doonside. On retirement he built himself a beautiful home overlooking One Mile Beach at Forster and immediately proceeded to set up his "Ham" equipment. Even to the uninitiated his house was easy to find as he had an antenna on each corner. During the whole of his retirement Bill has been a very active Ham and kept in touch with a number of his old work mates on a regular hook-up. His presence on the air will be sadly missed.

Jack HEAVEY (N.S.W.)

Jack Heavey was knocked down by a car at Coogee and died in hospital three days later. Jack was an old marine man who transferred to C.R.S. and technical duties. He served for many years at La Perouse and Bringelly and throughout a great deal of his working life took a very active part in P.R.E.I. affairs. For a number of years he was the Federal President of that organisation and was well known in Union circles throughout Australia.

Alec BATTEN (N.S.W.)

Alec started his career in the Marine Service where he spent many years before transferring to DCA. On retirement he found it hard to settle down and took a job in the city on minor clerical and messenger duties. He was a dedicated Veteran and our last Christmas Reunion was about the first function that he has not attended. A few months ago he developed cancer, which led to his death.

Norm SAMSON (W. Aust.)

From the West we received news of Norm Samson's passing. Norm served for many years on the Pacific chain and was at Cottesloe when that Station closed down. He preferred to remain in the West and so retired from OTC.

Teddy EDWARDS (Vic.)

TBD Edwards joined the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company at Flinders as a probationary in 1907 on the huge salary of £2 per month payable in gold. His overtime rates were five pence per hour. He was

next stationed at Georgetown in Tasmania until that Station was closed down. His next posting was to the old Cable station at La Perouse where he remained for a short term and then transferred to Cable Bay near Nelson in New Zealand. At Cable Bay he served for a number of years as an Operator and there passed his Supervisor's examination. The company then sent him to Adelaide on promotion.

During World War I, he obtained a passage on a cargo ship to New Zealand where he married his wife, Gladys and took her back to Adelaide. After Adelaide he served at Perth and was transferred to Cottesloe for the opening. At that station he was actively involved in the preliminary testing of the new loaded cable to Cocos and the setting up of the new "regenerator" system. From Cottesloe Teddy was transferred to Far East stations and served at Singapore and Batavia. Batavia was his first in-charge station.

During World War II Teddy was Manager of Fanning Island and whilst there entertained the famous American, General Patton. His last posting in the service was to Melbourne and on the take-over by O.T.C. became the Melbourne Manager of the Commission. On his retirement from communications in 1955 he considered himself too young to be idle and took a Procurement Officer's position on a huge Commonwealth Government building project near Sydney. He remained in this position for three years and was responsible for liaison with a number of American contractors such as Utah.

On retirement, Teddy settled down in Torquay, Victoria. Throughout his retirement Teddy has been an active Veteran and attended most of the functions.

Mary BLAIN

Mary Blain will be remembered by all who served at the Rockbank Receiving Station as Mrs. Mary Hodder who, with her husband Tom, held the position of resident house-keeper and maintenance man respectively, commencing 4th October, 1940.

Mary Hodder had the care of eight rooms in actual use and two others kept in reserve and was also held responsible for meals in the Staff Mess together with general household duties.

Everyone held Mary Hodder in high esteem and with affectionate regard for it was through her painstaking efforts that the atmosphere of "home" prevailed throughout the Station.

After the death of her husband Mrs. Hodder remarried and became Mrs. Blain, wife of Mr. W.A. Blain.

When Rockbank closed down in 1969 Mrs. Blain was transferred to O.T.C. House, Melbourne, as temporary tea attendant subsequently resigning at the expiration of sick leave September, 1973.

Mrs. Blain joined O.T.V.A. (Victoria) in 1971 and helped prepare the tables and make veteran "get together" functions so successful.

Geoff MILLER (N.S.W.)

For a number of years Geoff seriously considered joining the veterans association and only a couple of months ago decided to join our ranks. Unfortunately, he passed away on 13th March after a short illness and was denied the opportunity to attend one of our functions. Geoff joined the Marine Service in the 1930's and at the end of the war left the sea and became Officer-in-Charge of the Beam despatch. On the closing of the despatch, he was transferred to the O.T.C. Stores Section and remained in charge of that section until his retirement through invalidity last year.

Eric RICHARDSON (N.S.W.)

Retired from OTC four years ago and has been living at Killarney Vale on Tuggerah Lakes. He served for many years as a Telegraph Technician, the majority of his time being spent in the S.O.R. Workshop.

Jack NICHOLS (South Australia)

Jack died in December from cancer of the bones and for the last couple of years has been very ill. As a result he was unable to attend functions.

Charles WATT (W. Aust.)

Charlie died on 2nd April in Perth and members in that area saw him at the Reunion late last year. He initially started his career as an Operator in the Eastern Extension Company and was serving at Madras when the service in that area was taken over by Indian Radio and Cable Communications and accordingly remained with that organisation. It is understood that on India's independence he was transferred back to Australia and served on the Telegraph Staff at Cottesloe until that Station was closed down as a result of the opening of the SEACOM cable. Cottesloe Staff were given the option to remain in Perth on transfer to the P.M.G.'s Department or transfer to the Sydney Operating Room. Charles preferred to remain in Perth and served with the P.M.G. until the time of his retirement.

Fred REITZ (N.S.W.)

Fred Reitz, although not a veteran was an old cable pioneer. He had not been very well in the latter months of his life but enjoyed ten years of retirement. Fred was always a very energetic man who lapped up the night shift and was always ready for a bit of overtime. The night shift was never the same when Fred was not on duty.

Tom MacGREGOR (Canada)

We have news from Vancouver that Tom has passed on. He commenced his career with PCG in Australia and served his working life in the Pacific chain finishing at Bamfield. On retirement he decided to live in Vancouver.

Martha MORRISON (Suva)

All Veterans who have served in Suva will be sorrowed by the news of the death of Martha Morrison. Martha spent many years with the PCB in their Suva office.

New Zealand

From Auckland we have received the news that Tom Smales, Bill Stoupe and Roy McCombie all old PCB pioneers died during the year.

Stop Press News from Auckland advises the passing of Bob Collins on 30th March, 1975. Bob commenced with the Eastern Extension Company and had a spell of service on the "Recorder" tossing around in the Tasman Sea trying to hook the Sydney-Auckland Cable which was eventually abandoned. After this he stayed in the Pacific area until his retirement in 1960.

Life Partners

Friends of Jack Hutchinson (ex CRS) send their sympathy to Jack on the loss of his wife, Betty.

Gwen EWING

Friends of the late Jock Ewing will be sorry to hear of the death of his wife, Gwen in February. Gwen was well-known to cable staff who served with Jock on the Pacific chain and she was among the first women evacuees from Fanning Island to Pearl Harbour during World War 2. The editor understands that Gwen was quite an expert in instructing skippers in berthing their ships and accordingly earned the name of "Tugboat".

STOP PRESS

Bill Jenvey advises from Nauru that the position of Officer-in-Charge, Nauru Radio, will be advertised in the Australian and Age sometime prior to the 24th August.

Any member interested should contact the Naurun Phosphate Commission, Melbourne.

✓

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OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

(VICTORIA)

18th ANNUAL REUNION

-By courtesy Management-

O.T.C. House,
Melbourne.

8th November, 1974.

HON. SEC.:
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7 LANTANA ST.
CLAYTON, VIC. 3168
TELEPHONE 544-2814

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Vin. Dignam
Cliff Carter
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Les Brown
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