



NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1975

REUNIONS

Victorian Reunion

To save on postage, Charles Carthew has advised that he will not be sending out Reunion notices this year. The Victorian Reunion will be held in O.T.C. House on Friday, 14th November, 1975 starting at the usual time. Those wishing to attend, and this includes an invitation to any interstate veteran in Melbourne on that night, please advise Charles by letter or phone. Charles can be contacted on phone 544-2514. He would also appreciate apologies from those unable to attend.

Sydney Reunion

The New South Wales Association's Annual Reunion will be held on Friday, 14th November, 1975 commencing at around 6.00 p.m. The venue is the same as last year, that is the Functions Room on the 9th Floor of the G.P.O. Any interstate or overseas Veterans in Sydney on that night are welcome to attend but please contact Gordon Cupit beforehand.

South Australian Reunion

The Christmas Reunion of the South Australian Association will be held at the Public Service Club, 73 Wakefield Street, Adelaide on Tuesday, 25th November, 1975 commencing at 7.30 p.m.

West Australian Reunion

The West Australian Association will be having its reunion on Thursday, 13th November, 1975 at the Imperial Hotel commencing at 5.00 p.m. The arrangements are those pertaining to last year's reunion.

ASSOCIATION IN QUEENSLAND

Jim Banks, O.T.C.'s Brisbane Manager, arranged for a meeting to be called on 5th June, 1975 with a view to forming a Veterans' Association in that state. Nine old-timers attended and we are pleased to note that it was decided to proceed with the plan with Scotty Hamilton as interim President and Jim Banks as interim Secretary/Treasurer.

An inaugural meeting was called for 4th September, 1975 and the attendance of 18 veterans is encouraging. Those appearing were Jim Banks, Charles Carthew (National Secretary), Allen Cox, Paddy Garrett, Sid Gill, Scotty Hamilton, Charles Hurndell, Bill Hyde, Alan Jones, Tom Molloy (representing O.T.C.), John Norris, Tom Pattinson (South Australia), George Scott, Perc Sellar, John Stubbs, Fabian Sutherland, Harry Sutherland and Bob Webster.

Charles Carthew spoke briefly of the aims and background of the Veterans and of his pleasure that it was now represented in every State.

Scotty Hamilton was elected President; Jim Banks, Secretary and John Norris, Treasurer.

We welcome our Queensland colleagues to our ranks and congratulate them on forming the Association.

The next meeting of the Queensland Association will be held on Thursday, 4th March, 1976 the venue again being in the Manager's Office, O.T.C., 4th Floor, Guardian Royal Exchange Building, 380 Queen Street, Brisbane commencing at noon.

IDENTIFICATION

Recently one of our members was knocked down and killed instantly by a car. Our late colleague carried no means of identification and near relatives were unaware of the tragedy until next day.

Members are reminded ALWAYS to have name and address, phone number, with next of kin's name somewhere on their person and/or drivers licence, pension card, bank book - or somewhere else where it will be helpful both to your family and the police.

This precaution is so essential.

TRANSIT CARTOON

Recently a cartoon appeared on the back page of Transit and Marjorie Reed, Widow of well-known Joe Reed, came forward with the following story.

The cartoon was drawn by Bill Hill when he was a Marine operator in the Coastal Radio Service in the 1920's. No doubt the call signal VKG was a ship on which he was serving at the time. Joe photographed the original cartoon, the negative of which she had passed on to Phillip Geeves, AWA Archivist recently. Marjorie says that she was in the office at Collins House, Melbourne at the time and remembers that Bill was exceptional at sketching. He was also an amateur actor - was tall, fair and handsome. (Sounds as if Marjorie may have had a crush on him.) Later Bill was posted to Tasmania as Sales Representative for AWA when broadcasting first started.

VIM was the call signal of Melbourne Radio (still retained) which was situated in the domain South Yarra in those days. Marjorie thinks the cartoon referred to a change over from spark to valve techniques.

VALENed Newell

Ned, one of Melbourne's nonagenarians, passed on in July. It looks as if he may have created a record as he retired in 1932 and enjoyed 43 years of healthy retirement.

Ned started in communications in 1901 in the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company. He first served at Flinders, followed by La Perouse, Adelaide, Singapore, Labuan Island, again at Singapore and Adelaide and finally at Melbourne. Even though Ned retired in 1932, he was recalled to telegraph duties in the post office during World War II.

Ned is an example to many of our serving members in the fact that he planned his retirement by obtaining an interest in farming whilst still in employment. During the time he was in Adelaide he served with, amongst others, the two Hardy brothers. In fact, he courted and married their sister, Hilda. With brother-in-law Frank, Ned developed a vineyard at Magill as a weekend and off-duty interest. This is how he gained his farming knowledge. On retirement, he moved to Wantirna on an orchard which he had acquired some years before as something to do in his spare time. The Editor does not suggest that all members take up farming, but recommends to all those in the later years of their working life to start planning their retirement so that they will have sufficient interests, hobbies, etc. to replace the long hours spent under the grindstone.

Ned is survived by his good wife and all members of his family, which includes two sons and two daughters, ten grandchildren and two great grandchildren. He was lucky that some of the members of his family had settled in Queensland, and for many years spent his winters in that area. As a result of his activities and interests he was always physically and mentally active and enjoyed every year of his retirement.

Dick Heaps

Joined the Eastern Extension at Wakapuaka Cable Station at Nelson at the turn of the century. His first posting from there was La Perouse and later he saw service at Adelaide, Perth, Darwin, Bangowangi, Singapore and Cocos. Dick was well known for his tennis prowess and played in many matches with colleagues at his various stations. He retired under the D/N Scheme and farmed a tobacco plantation near Nelson until a virus wiped out the whole of his crop. During the second war he rejoined the cable service at Auckland where he trained young New Zealand people to man the Colombo Cable Station. These young trainees later moved up to Malaysian and other eastern stations as the various locations were progressively liberated from the Japanese. His second retirement came in 1946 and he took up residence in Auckland. His ninety-third birthday was celebrated last month with some of his old colleagues.

Jack Henderson

From Auckland also comes the news of the passing of J.B.C. (Jack) Henderson, another Eastern pioneer. Jack spent most of his time in the Mediterranean and Asian areas and was Manager of Manila at the time of his retirement. Prior to this he had been Manager at Malta. During the war he was a P.O.W. and came out of captivity in a fairly good state of health. This no doubt being due to his excellent physique. On retirement Jack decided to live in New Zealand and purchased a farm at Upper Moutere near Nelson. He always had unbounded energy, was very strong and extremely keen on his farm. His sudden death was quite a shock to his colleagues.

Roy Colyer

Another Eastern member, Roy Colyer, passed away in September last year. Fondly known as "Blue" Roy served his time on the Foreign staff and although recruited in Australia spent most of his time in the Mediterranean and Asian areas. He served at Cyprus during the hectic war years and was Manager of that station at the time of his retirement. Settling down in Australia he found city life a bit hectic and moved to the quieter and more English type climate of Moss Vale.

Charlie Barden

Gooch passed away in June following a heart attack. He had been in excellent health up till last December when he had his first attack. He joined the P.C.B. in the early twenties and served at most of the stations on the Pacific Chain. He retired under the D/N Scheme and during the war joined the army as a Telegraph Instructor. At the end of hostilities Gooch was employed at O.T.C. in the Sydney Operating Room where he remained until his retirement. On retirement he took up residency at Tuggerah and became an ardent bowler.

At the time of his death Charlie was Secretary of the Tuggerah Lakes Bowling Club and had previously served as Committee-man and Bowls Secretary in that club. On a number of occasions he represented the Central Coast in inter-district fixtures.

Tom Finch

Another nonagenarian from the Veteran's Association Tom Finch passed away only a week after Ned Newell. Tom at the time of his death was the oldest Veteran in all the Associations, being ninety-three. Tom was born in Kent in 1882 and christened Arthur Richard Finch. He never knew how he received the name of Tom but he held it all his life. The youngest of thirteen children he went to sea when he was sixteen in sailing ships. He made a number of voyages to Australia in wool clippers and decided to settle here in 1910. He was a Quartermaster of an emigrant steamer and put his belongings amongst the emigrants' luggage and had them taken ashore by the obliging authorities. A novel way to jump ship!

His first job in Australia was Quartermaster on the "Loongana" plying between Melbourne and Tasmania. He then joined the P.M.G.'s Department as a Cable Jointer and because of his splicing skills learnt at sea he was given the job to splice the armouring on the submarine cable to Tasmania.

Tom enlisted in 1916, served with the 1st Pioneer Battalion in Egypt and France, was wounded and evacuated back to Australia in a hospital ship and became a patient in the Caulfield Hospital. On discharge from hospital he was declared unfit for cable work and given a job as armed escort by Treasury delivering currency to banks. At night he had the unusual task of burning old bank notes under supervision. The method employed was to lock him in a room with a police guard outside the room and he was required to stay locked in for the entire night until the Treasury officials arrived the next morning. These tasks didn't appeal to him and as soon as he was able to he returned to cable jointing.

In the early twenties Tom applied for a position in the Coastal Radio Service as Rigger following an add in the Government Gazette. Soon after (1922) the Coastal Service was taken over by AWA with Tom included. His first major rigging job was to raise the 2 F.C. aerals at Willoughby quickly followed by the 3 L.O. aerals at Braysbrook.

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During his career Tom had a hand in practically every AWA Broadcasting C.R.S. and Beam, mast and aerial in Australia and New Guinea. He even went as far as Fiji.

During his thirty odd years retirement he always kept in touch with his old workmates and was present at most of the Veterans' functions.

Eric Story

The early history of Eric Story is a little vague but he was well known to Pat Sykes who knew; or knew of Eric most of his service life. He was approximately ten years older than Pat who met him in Adelaide about 1927 when Eric came down from the Far East to take a short engineering course. Pat again met up with Eric in 1932 when he attended his wedding in St. Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore. It is interesting to note that Tufty Baker was the best man at the wedding. In the early war years Eric was number two man to D.J. Mackie in Cocos. He was a very quiet and competent cable man and it was always said that he was completely unflappable. He treated everybody Malays, Chinese and Europeans with equal understanding and courtesy and spoke fluent Malay. He was posted to Cocos on a number of occasions and because of his Malaysian, the Cocos islanders hailed him as an old friend.

After the war Eric was one of the few old timers who returned to the Far East and his knowledge and interest in the local staff in Penang, Singapore, etc. extended to putting their point of view up to Head Office when none of the strangers to the area or the frightened younger fry would have taken the initiative. Eric had a long full and useful retirement and will be missed by his colleagues in the Adelaide Association.

George Donaldson

News from New Zealand that George passed away recently at the age of 84. He joined the Eastern Extension Company when but a boy.

Jack Hutchinson

Unfortunately Jack was knocked down by a car recently and fatally injured. He joined the Coastal Radio Service in 1925 and served at numerous stations. He retired from the C.R.S. in 1947 whilst stationed at Perth and decided to settle down in Melbourne. It was only early in the year that we reported the passing of his wife, Bess.

Spencer Rowley

Just as we were going to press the news came through from New Zealand of the passing of Spencer Rowley at the age of 90. Until recently Spencer was residing in Sydney but got the wander bug and decided to migrate to New Zealand where he and his wife Doreen purchased a home unit in Nelson. Spencer chose Nelson as many years ago he was stationed at the cable station in that town. Spencer was an old Eastern Extension man and although he did not spend many years of his service in the Australian area, decided that Australia and New Zealand were the best places to settle.

Our deepest sympathy to Hedley Tyler on the loss of his wife, Beth.

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Friends of Darcy Plominsky will be sorry at the news of his death in his mid-fifties. Plom served for many years at Townsville in the Coastal Radio Service and was one of those characters that seem to be produced from time to time.

16/4
05/1972
News Letter

FANNING ISLAND

A couple of years back a very good article written by Tom Condon appeared in our Newsletter. There is no doubt Tom is an expert on Fanning and requests came from numerous places for information. His article is held by the Bishop Museum in Honolulu and by a number of scientific people including a Dr. Vitousek, who goes to Fanning Island quite often in a Piper Aztec aircraft. He has written to Tom asking for the location and general information on the weather data taken there during the period that Tom was on the Island. This information was duly forwarded and it led to a request from the Meteorological Department in Wellington, New Zealand for plans and general data as their own records were incomplete. What brought this all about was the advent of Amelia Erhardt crossing the Pacific and all weather data was solicited to ensure a safe and known channel for her to pursue. Unfortunately, as is well known, she was lost. Later airlines benefited from this data and other information.

Latest information on Fanning Island from Dr. Vitousek advises that the station tennis court still survives and has recently got new fences. The equipment in the recreation hall was all removed by C. & W. but the ping-pong table has been replaced and the library has been built up. Unfortunately, there is no billiard table as yet. They now show movies in the recreation hall instead of outside, and the wooden houses have gone but the concrete ones still stand. There is quite a good coral road to English Harbour and a "jeep" road to North Pass.

A modern feature to Fanning Island is Perl International Airport which is situated astride the Island from Bicknell Point to the lagoon at the south end of the old Guano area. This is named from the title given to the old Cable Station which is the Pacific Equatorial Research Laboratory of the University of Hawaii. The airstrip is grass, 3,000 feet long being extended to 4,000 feet which is the total width of the Island. Shipping is still restricted to the odd colony boat and the six-monthly call of the Bank Line for copra. The fishing is still excellent and one may still set out at 5.00 p.m. in quest of Pihere and be assured of fish for dinner.

Dr. Vitousek advises that Phil Palmer is now retired and living in Northern Queensland. Hugh Greig passed on about 1956/57. The Doctor said he had the pleasure of meeting Hugh before he died and had spent countless hours socialising with Phil Palmer. During his last flight to Fanning in December he had along as his guest Marian Greig Anderson Kelly of Honolulu. The names will be familiar to some of the old Fanning staff. Marian is the daughter of Captain Anderson who was the son of one of William Greig's daughters. Whilst on the Island she spent a lot of time with Rakarōa, the retired foreman at Fanning Island plantations and an adopted son of one of the Greig's.

Tom told the Editor that Charlie Barden got his nickname of Gooch by one Tomi Chapman. He was so named after a Japanese cook who suicided on Fanning.

Tom has given us some excellent information on Fanning, so how about some other chaps penning stories on incidents that happened during their stay on the Island.

COTTESLOE

Those who have worked at Cottesloe Cable Station will be pleased to know that the Cottesloe Town Council have incorporated in what is known as the Vlaminth Memorial, a section to commemorate the existence and operation of the Cottesloe Cable Station and the Indian Ocean Telegraph System.

O.T.C. have made a contribution to the memorial, their share being the cost of a white cement path, the erection of a seat and a plinth and bronze plaque at the memorial site.

The idea of the memorial was at the instigation of West Australian Veteran and retired Cable Engineer, Arthur Black. Congratulations to you Arthur for your efforts.

VETERANS TO LONDON

Veterans are reminded that the facilities of the Exiles Club in London are available to them for short stays. The Exiles Club have superior residential facilities at "Meadowbank" which is situated on the banks of the Thames near Richmond Bridge. Meadowbank is a new building with 7½ acres of lawns and pleasant grounds.

In addition to accommodation the Dining Room is open to non-residents for lunch and dinner but prior notice is essential.

Meadowbank will accept children, and enquiries and prior bookings should be made to the Secretary, Exiles Club (Meadowbank), 27 Cambridge Park, Twickenham, Middlesex.

The tariffs are reasonable, the minimum adult daily rate including evening meal and breakfast is \$2.50. The Secretary advises that this rate is subject to revision around about now and is subject to a 10% service charge and 8% V.A.T. The rates for meals are extremely good and our members who have stayed at Meadowbank always speak of it in glowing terms.

A PIECE OF HUMOUR

He was one of those inconsiderate Veterans who liked fishing and often left his wife to pursue this past-time. It was quite understandable that when she was asked where her husband was she replied:-

"Go down to the pier and look for a pole with a worm on each end."

SHIP/SHORE PIONEERING

by "PONTO"

In April 1925 the very first Short Wave tests were carried out by Pennant Hills with the "Niagara" enroute to Vancouver Viv Brooker and one other whose name escapes me at the moment set up some very crude apparatus in the oil store at Pennant Hills. Our only means of communication prior to this was on 600 and 450 metres and today's wireless operators would not credit the distances we worked on those wavelengths. Viv and his mate

established good contact from the day the Niagara left but as we were having no difficulty handling traffic for the first few days they just exchanged signals. As the distance grew and it became difficult they took over handling traffic and as the ship got nearer and nearer to the Canadian coast excitement mounted and reached a crescendo when the ship finally worked us from port in Vancouver. Some time later the "Largs Bay" exchanged signals from an English port and this event made headlines throughout Australia. As everyone at that time knew Mr. Fisk (later Sir Ernest) never missed an opportunity of furthering publicity. In this regard I may now divulge a bit of ancient history. When the "Macdhui" was carrying out her first trials from a Scottish port Mr. Hooke was on board and Mr. Fisk handed in a 60 word message from La Perouse to be sent to the ship congratulating them on establishing contact with Australia on gear "Made in Australia By Australians for Australians" HOW IT WORKED OVERTIME!! Well at about 3.00 a.m. I managed to get contact with the Macdhui - anyone who ever worked her will remember the horrible flat signal that came from her! After a marathon struggle he gave OK for the message and replied "Hang on Mr. Hooke will send a reply". Shortly after he started a message of 70 Odd words. I got the preamble and Mr. Fisk then complete silence, and no amount of hunting found him again. God forgive me but Mr. Fisk got his 70 word message and it was featured in the Sydney Morning Herald next day!! If Mr. Hooke had ever compared it with his original message I am afraid he would have said "I've been out bulled by a bigger bull artist!!" All in the line of publicity!!

TRADITION

Cadet ship's officer John Keenan (19) today emerged as the hero of the dramatic rescue of all hands from the sinking Tropic Queen north-west of Port Hedland.

Keenan stayed in his cabin sending distress signals by radio until ordered by the ship's master, his father Captain Sidney Keenan, to leave.

He later dived into rough seas to rescue four crewmen who were floundering near the stricken ship. None of the four could swim.

He dragged two of them back to a liferaft, but the others were lost in the darkness.

On board the liferaft with his father and some of the Indonesian and Singaporean crew, he transmitted the messages on an emergency radio which led to their rescue by searching aircraft and ships alerted by his earlier signals.

His report in his own words was:

"I stayed in my cabin transmitting distress signals for about 10 minutes before my father ordered me to abandon ship with the others.

The radio operator in Broome was terrific - I knew before I left that vessels had been diverted to where we reported we were sinking."

ANOTHER PAGE FROM THE DIARY OF A WIRELESS OPERATOR

One of our junior wireless officers had a letter of introduction from a family friend to a business associate in Singapore who in turn arranged for him to enjoy the privilege of a visitor at a cricket club.

On the first visit, when sitting alone in the club lounge, our colleague noticed four members steadily drinking at a nearby table. To his surprise, one of the other members came across and invited the young stranger to join the group. Following introductions and handshakes all round, someone ordered five gin slings or colloquially "stingahs", whereupon the lad interjected and asked for a lemon squash in an apparent provocative tone of voice.

The member who ordered drinks ridiculed lemon squash and insisted on a "man's drink". Not to be intimidated the odd man out remained firm and maintained a teatotal stand.

One of the group, either annoyed or exasperated at the turn of events, suddenly swept the glasses off the table in all directions. The noise alerted the manager of the cricket club, who intervened to calm things down. The visitor thereby left the club and returned to the ship.

The next day all concerned in the unfortunate disturbance were, by invitation, brought together at the cricket club to iron out differences and exchange apologies.

With excellent timing, borne of long experience, the cricket club served drinks "on the house" and the lemon squash was not forgotten.

FAR AND NEAR

Western Australian Member, Herk Clark, is living in a "village" run by the Salvation Army. He has no garden worries, or house repairs. Should a tap need a new washer, he send for the Maintenance Man. The Village has its own Bowling Green and a Nine Hole Putting Green, where the residents are able to take mild exercise. Unfortunately, Herk has not been very well of late, but is now well on the road to recovery.

Congratulations to Alec Griffith for appearing the feature page of the Daily Telegraph on 15th July. Alec's photo appeared together with an article on his part in the communication activities of the American/Russian space link-up.

Recent visitor to Sydney was Adelaide Veteran and broadcasting pioneer Bill Bearup. He contacted Phillip Geeves and Gordon Cupit during his stay and was shown some of the mysteries of a modern computerised operating room. Bill joined the marine service in 1916 and is well known for his broadcasting exploits when 2 F.C. and 3 L.O. initially went on air.

Sydneyites were pleased to see Bob Wright, an old Suva character recently in Sydney on holidays and for a bit of eye repair. He was full of ditties of the old days in Suva and wonders if Izzy Towner remembers the Nukualofa honeymoon voyage and his endeavour to hang the lantern on the invisible nail. Travellers to Suva will normally find Bob in the Defence Club or the Yacht Club.

South Australian President, Brax Horrocks, recently spent a holiday in New Zealand where he stayed for a few days with Bruce and Mavis Sutherland in their lovely home in Nelson. Whilst in Auckland he made contact with old colleagues, Bill Craig and Les Davidson.

Friends of Ellis Smellie will be sorry to hear that he recently had a prang in his super Jaguar, it being a complete right-off. We are pleased to know that it was not the fault of Ellis. The offending driver being drunk. Injuries to Ellis were not too bad and he only remained in hospital for four hours and there does not appear to be any permanent damage. At the accident, Ellis got all the attention in the world in that a lass who claimed she was "trained" took over and started to give first aid to his passenger. Another girl, who also claimed she was trained, rushed up and shoved the first girl aside, and they had an argument who was to attend to the victims. This caused a great deal of amusement to Ellis who on laughing found he had injured ribs and split top lip.

The Editor has been in contact with Bert Conley who served with the Eastern Company from 1917 to 1932. Unfortunately, Bert does not make the required number of years for membership. He wishes to be remembered to any of his old colleagues who worked with him in O'Connell Street and later in that beaut new building in Spring Street. He remembers sending the 1918 peace message around all world stations in 3½ minutes. Also the building of the Harbour Bridge and Fred's Cafe de Fairfax outside the Herald Office.

News from Wilf Atkin (of AKTUG Fame) is that he is in the best of health after an abdominal operation and is as good as ever. He recently had visits from Tom Pattinson (Adelaide) and Lyle Gowanloch (Sydney) and wife.

Good news from Tom Connolly in that his wife is far better and nearly back to normal. He is enjoying life in Canberra and even finding the weather better than Melbourne. He is feeling so spritely, he is thinking of taking up bowls again.

In Sydney town and looking up old friends were Bruce Sutherland from New Zealand and Long-Un Evans from Adelaide. Both on their way to the Gold Coast where they intend to seek out old colleagues. It was interesting to note that Long-Un was an Australian Rules State representative in his early years. With his height, he was one of the best markers in the country.

Charles Carthew has been in touch with George Napper after many years of no contact. George is an ex-AWA marine officer and due to his wife being an invalid he doesn't have much opportunity to leave his home environment.

Tom Pattinson, who hails from Adelaide, has been holidaying on the Gold Coast and whilst there attended the Queensland get together by courtesy of Perc Sellar who took him by car to Brisbane.

New South Wales Veterans are indebted to Eileen Haran for organising a couple of raffles and adding quite a considerable sum to our bank balance. Well done Eileen.

Colleagues of Bert Edwards may have difficulty in recognising him these days as he is down to a miserable thirteen stone. Bert retired to Southport and is in good health except for a spot of leg trouble. Others living in the Gold Coast area are Andy McCollum, Ken Macmillan, Hec Freeman,

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Eric Wickham, Sid Legrand, Perc Sellar, Wilf Atkin, John Stubbs, Fabian Sutherland and Don Soraghan. There could be others and maybe we could think of having a Gold Coast sub-branch of the Queensland Association. Unfortunately, some of the news from that area is not good in that Andy McCollum's wife, Lyn has had a series of strokes and is now an invalid and Hec Freeman is restricted by Osteo-Arthritis.

Eric Wickham is not only a new Gold Coaster but recently won a huge prize in the "Golden Casket" and has added a new Chrysler and a Honda motor cycle to his fleet of vehicles.

Paddy Garrett, ex-Captain of C. & W. cable ships now lives in Brisbane and is the port Meteorological Officer for the Weather Bureau in his spare time. He recently returned from a trip to the U.K. and looks really fit and well.

Scotty Hamilton lives at Redcliffe and keeps active with his croquet club and garden. Scotty's friends will remember his daughter, Judith who was a regular correspondent for the "Far and Near" columns of Transit under the signature of "J.A.Y.". She is now married and living in South Africa.

PIONEERING

Another old Seadog, Oscar Ash served on thirty ships during his career. During World War I, he was on the S.S. "Anhui" owned by the China Navigation Company. It was running between Cyprus and Kantara on the Suez Canal. Each trip it carried 2,000 goats, ostensibly for the Indian Army, but he believes that the Australians got most of them. On August 12th 1918, the ship was torpedoed and sunk off Cape Greco. Oscar was in the water for twelve hours, six of the crew were lost, as well as all of the goats.

Oscar also got caught up during the Second World War, on the "Stratheden", carrying troops. For his war service, Oscar received the General Service Medal, The Merchant Navy Medal, The 1939-45 Star, Atlantic Star, Africa Star and Clasp, 1939-45 War Medal and the Italy Star. At the time of his retirement he was the Marconi Company's Marine Staff Recruitment and Welfare Superintendent. This is a pretty fair 48 years service in anyone's language.

THOSE DAYS

(Stories from numerous members)

One of our Members brings to mind the printing of Beam Messages on paper tape. During the war, these were pasted on to quarto sized rice paper. As cigarette papers were fairly hard to come by, it was not uncommon to see the boys cutting up some of this paper in which to roll their fags.

Some of the Members will remember the time that "Dogger" Mancer came back from a hearty lunch, sat down at his desk and carefully positioned an open book upright in front of him. After a while, one of the boys noticed he had dozed off, so he carefully turned the book upside down, told the boys what he had done and then made a loud noise. Roy came to life with a start, grabbed the book and made out he was reading. It took him a full twenty seconds to realise he had been done.

Brian Morrell's Ditty on a Yank wishing to cable home a Xmas present to his mother, brings back memories of the Overseas Gift Service operated by the AWA. This service was operated between Australian and the U.K. and a person could have such things as flowers, chocolates, sides of lamb and a host of other gifts delivered to an address in the U.K. It was one of those services which seems to have disappeared over the years.

I wonder if any old timer remembers the famous verses on Harold Cocos Emden Cox (Ted O'Donnell may). They caused many a goodnatured chuckle at the time. All I can recall is that they were entitled "WHEN I AM OIC" "Although I am a little worm, I'll make that Bastard Wolfie squirm. When I am OIC." Talking of "Wolfie", he was very bald and had a brother who likewise was devoid of foliage on top. One day in Melbourne they both wanted their sparse undergrowth trimmed and the brother went in whilst Wolfie did something in another shop. When he got to the barbers, brother was in the chair and Wolfie, with his hat on, kept up a running commentary on how bald the bloke in the chair was. Finally the barber ticked him off good and proper and told him if he didn't shut up he'd throw him out of the shop. When the brother was finished, Wolfie took off his hat and sat in the chair. The barber looked at him and burst out laughing - he realised he had been taken for a ride. Its OK said Wolfie, he's my brother and isn't he bald!!

I remember the time Leo arrived with his alarm clock dangling from his finger and when asked "Why have you brought the clock", he said "Good God I've left my lunch at home". I had to do an extra half hour whilst he went back home to retrieve it! Also how he moved to a new home during the day, came to work 5.30 p.m. to midnight then went home to the old house and wondered why the key wouldn't fit the lock!!

I wonder how many remember the time a girl in Townsville climbed to the top of the 270' odd mast and stood on her hands on the top rail; or the time the old wooden building directly in front of the window of the used building was burnt down at about 1.00 or 2.00 a.m. and the operator on duty was quite unaware of this till his relief arrived at 7.00 am.!!

I remember the time at La Perouse gazing out of the window at 4.00 a.m. watching a rabbit browsing on the path and thinking everyone should be at work now and finish at noon. Just then Joe the black cleaner came bounding over the rise with his eyes sticking out like-well sticking out, his wooden leg going faster than it had ever done in his life. He burst through the door exclaiming, "There's a dead woman lying on the path". "Are you sure she is dead?" "I didn't go too near but she's dead all right." I strolled down and sure enought a young girl was stretched out with her brains blown out. About 50' further down the track there was a parked car with a man sitting in the front seat. I watched him for a while and as there was no movement I cautiously approached ready to heave myself over the bank if he moved. When I got to the door he was stone dead with a stream of congealed blood from his mouth to his waist. I rang the police and soon three detectives were on the scene. The afternoon paper came out with scream headlines "Young girl dies defending her honour". Later it was established the revolver came from her office and medical evidence stated the man was dead before the girl. Sitting in the car with a dead body evidently was too much for her. She must have got out and blown her own brains out. For days after I could see that patch of dried blood as I biked over it on my way to and from the station. It so upset me, for days I couldn't bear to look at my collection of egg shell china!!

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With all the improvements in the electronic field it cannot prevent human errors such as a well-known announcer in the early days, who certainly wasn't "on the job" when he announced "and now we cross to the Sydney Cricket Ground for community singing". When the announcer there continued his description of the Test Match, or as still happens, when the announcer giving the weather report forecasts "fost and frogs" on the highlands - or the Minister, after giving his first devotional service announced the Benediction, concluded with "I don't think" before the announcer could switch him off - Actually, he turned to the announcer and remarked, "I don't think I did so bad, do you?".

HAM NEWS

The following letter is an echo from the early years of Australian "wireless" when amateurs - or "experimenters" as they were known - needed special licences to operate any sort of receiving equipment.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

In reply please quote
No. G9236/12

Postmaster-General's Department

Melbourne, 13th September, 1912

Mr. A.W. Deane,
"Singora",
Etham Avenue,
Darling Point,
SYDNEY

Sir,

With reference to the particulars recently supplied by you, relative to your application for a licence to experiment with Wireless Telegraph apparatus at Darling Point, Sydney, I am to inform you the Postmaster General provisionally authorises you to conduct experiments in Radio-Telegraphy, (for receiving purposes only) on the basis of my communication of the 26th July last. Your call signal will be XGD (-...- --. -...).

I may add that in due course the Postmaster General will be pleased to license your station at Darling Point, Sydney accordingly.

Yours faithfully,

(sgd) Justinian Oxenham

SECRETARY

Two years later, on the outbreak of World War I, all experimental apparatus was impounded by Government regulation. Amateurs were required to dismantle their gear, pack and label it, then deliver it to the nearest Post Office.

The experimenter mentioned in this letter, Albert William Deane, is still living in New York, U.S.A. Born in Sydney in February 1897 and educated at Fort Street Boy's High School, he served with the Royal Australian

Navy during World War I. Mr. Deane's early interest in radio undoubtedly influenced his posting to the naval wireless station on Garden Island, where he worked with Joe Reed.

After the Armistice, Albert Deane entered the film industry, joining the New York office of Paramount Films in 1926. During his long service with Paramount Mr. Deane had many international responsibilities in publicity and promotion, as well as being friend and adviser to Hollywood directors and stars.

Mr. Deane's American-born wife, Dorothy, enjoys a unique distinction in telecommunications, having been the first woman in the United States to converse with Australia by radio telephone. This occurred during the original tests of the international phone circuit in October/November 1928, when VK2ME, Pennant Hills, was working duplex with WGY, Schenectady, New York.

BROADCASTING

Last year Phillip Geeves recorded a number of stories from the real pioneers and the following one by Tom Finch is typical of the early days. Tom was detailed to erect aerials for the new broadcasting station 2 A.Y. at Albury in December 1930. The announcer hadn't arrived on the opening night so Tom was briefed to hold the fort with Gordon Betteridge who was in charge of the installation. Tom was at the studio playing records and peddling the pianola while Gordon was stationed on the transmitter. Listeners in the Albury area had been alerted to telephone the station and report on its transmission. After Tom Finch had completed several records and pianola rolls, Betteridge rang through on the order line and asked him to read something. Tom went out to the battery room and found an old newspaper in which some of the gear had been wrapped; bringing this back to the microphone he smoothed out the paper and was surprised to discover that it was not in English. Tom announced to an astonished audience "This bloody thing is in Italian", where upon listeners rang in for miles around complaining. It was under such strange circumstances that many a new commercial station was launched.

MARINE RADIO OFFICER CLAIM

You old timers will be more than amazed at the log of claims recently presented to shipowners. Broadly the log is as follows:-

- (1) Salaries to be brought in line with that of the 2nd Officer of each vessel and then increased by 35%.
- (2) Leave Entitlement be given on the basis of a day's leave for a day's duty.
- (3) A new clause be inserted in the Award to provide 14 days Sick Leave per year for illness or accident, not attributable to normal duties, whilst on leave.
- (4) Deletion of provision for payment of keep.
- (5) Personal issue of wet weather clothing and gear to each M.R.O.
- (6) Provision of Portable Long Service Leave and Superannuation within the Industry.

- (7) Study Leave for M.R.O's.
- (8) Increases in Victualling and Accommodation Allowances.
- (9) Provision for the member's wife to be carried on board for two voyages per year.
- (10) Compensation for Loss of Personal Effects be increased to \$1200 per year.
- (11) Passenger Ship and Radio Officer-in-Charge allowances be doubled.
- (12) A payment of \$10 be made for each call out.
- (13) Alterations to Schedule V Clause 2(a) and (b).
- (14) Provision of maker's manual on each ship for each piece of Radio and Electronic equipment.
- (15) Reclassification of container ships to equal salary standard as tankers or equivalent allowance.
- (16) Cost of home telephone rental to be paid by employer.
- (17) After a suitable qualifying time the Shipowner and/or Radio Company to make available low cost housing loans on a once only basis, subject to a contract being signed.

LOOKING BACK

by Harry Tuson

I was always interested in any form of communication, whether by flags, semaphore or lamp. About 1912 or 1913 when we were living at Coffs Harbour in a house overlooking the sea - an ideal location for my father, who served over thirty years at sea, finishing as master - I used to communicate with passing ships with a Morse lamp. My father designed that lamp incidentally, and had it made up to his specifications by a firm in Sydney.

I taught myself the Morse alphabet and, together with an interested friend, spent almost every night on our front verandah keeping a lookout for passing ships. One night we received a call from the Solitary Island lighthouse, asking us to get medical advice for a member of the lighthouse staff who had been taken ill. We phoned the local doctor who came up to the house and made a preliminary diagnosis on the basis of our Morse messages, then arranged to visit the lighthouse the next morning by launch and bring the patient back to the hospital for treatment.

It was hardly surprising that I became the first chap in our town to apply for an amateur radio licence; in those days it was known as an experimenter's licence. The next highlight in my communications career was a crystal receiving set, made rather roughly from the instructions printed in a book I had acquired. Most of my time was spent "listening in", although it proved difficult to concentrate with the family around. Again my father came to the rescue. He was involved with sawmilling and arranged for two timber masts to be erected at some distance from the house, as well as a small shed with a bench. This became my radio shack, where I listened avidly at night by the light of a hurricane lamp.

In those days of spark transmitters, radio signals were much better at night, so I was thrilled at being able to pick up the New Zealand station at Awanui. I had already listened many times to Sydney Radio (V15) as well as ships along the coast. On Sundays I would walk up the hill and watch them pass, bound for Sydney or further on. This stirred my first ambition to be an operator aboard one of those vessels, taking an active part in communication.

Meanwhile it was time for me to decide what I was going to do for a living - my father, who had to go to Sydney on business, decided to make enquiries and went aboard the "Katoomba" and had a chat with the Radio man who told him there was no future in the job really as the salary was very poor, even though one lived on board, which meant three meals a day and a bed in one's own cabin - Despite the poor prospects, I decided to go to Sydney and board with some very good friends and attend the only Radio School for studying the theoretical side. Meantime, my parents had also decided to live in Sydney so I obtained a job as messenger boy and after going home for dinner, returned to the city for the Radio class at night. By this time the Marconi School was built to which I changed until obtaining my 1st Class Certificate just before World War I started.

My first ship was the Howard Smith "Bombala" which traded between Melbourne and Townsville, via Sydney and Brisbane. I only did the trip from Sydney to Brisbane then transferred to a small A.U.S.N. Ship called the "Suva", trading between Brisbane via ports to the Gulf of Carpentaria, calling at Normanton and Burketown, which were practically uninhabited, which reminds me of an incident:

When we were signalled by an Australian Navy ship for our name, the next thing I knew we were signalled to stop and a naval launch came alongside and the Captain of our ship was asked why we did not reply when asked to identify and was informed the R flag which was part of our signal code was missing - After a naval reprimand the flag was supplied and we proceeded on our way. That wasn't the end of the story. During the weekend the officer on duty happened to pass the freezer room and, finding the door open, he spotted the missing flag wrapped around a carcass of beef. Talk about the "casual Aussie" -

After being appointed to various ships I got a bit fed up and joined the Army in Melbourne, advising the Company I was resigning.

Was on the New Zealand run at the time and on arrival in Wellington soon after was told by the Manager to join a ship going to Sydney for leave. On arrival there told them I wanted a ship on real war service. Was informed there was a vacancy on a British ship owing to one of the Radio men being taken off sick but it would only be a one way job. The other ship was the "Kanowna" - Australia's No. 2 Hospital ship, which I decided to join.

Being a Hospital Ship meant we were not allowed to use the radio or be supplied with code books which also meant that although we sighted mines, we could not warn other ships.

On one trip we arrived at Aden and after coaling, were about to raise anchor and proceed through the Canal when a fast naval launch signalled and informed the Captain to proceed via the Cape, which meant we crossed the line 4 times to travel from Australia to England. In those days it wasn't a pleasant trip with no air-conditioning or stabilisers. We subsequently were informed why we were diverted from the Canal. German submarines had been sinking Hospital Ships outside Alexandria.

The next trip we were the first ship to enter Turkish waters, after they signed an Armistice. Our job was to embark prisoners of war, mostly British, including survivors of the Australian submarine which penetrated the Dardanelles and was mined.

One trip to Southampton I noticed a lot of ships bunched together and destroyers patrolling off the Ushant, although we proceeded on our way and anchored off port for a pilot. Again a naval launch rushed up the side and an officer boarded and made for the bridge - It turned out we had been prowling around a minefield - it must have been our lucky day!

Being on the 8.00 p.m. to midnight shift, I usually joined the 2nd Mate on the bridge for a cup of coffee before turning in. I usually walked along the starboard side and back the same way however, on this particular night I walked across the bridge to the port side, for some unknown reason and just about to step off the ladder to the boat deck when one of the patients stepped over to the nearest boat. I quietly took him by the arm and settled him on his mattress, asking the 2nd Mate to keep an eye on him. I might mention we had left Sierra Leone on the West Coast of Africa and it was terribly hot, which was why a lot of the wounded were being allowed to sleep on deck.

I knew if it became known what the poor fellow tried to do they would all be ordered below. I was subsequently informed he was a Lieutenant in a Queensland Regiment and had a plate in his head. What guided me to cross over instead of coming down the usual side?

The greatest thrill I received, was picking up the ARMISTICE message when we were in the Med, from the British Legation, Athens. We were limping along with a damaged propellor when a pilot in the Suez Canal ran us into a sandbank.

After the War and a few more trips round the Islands, I joined the "Ulimaroa" on the New Zealand run, was with her three years before getting a shore job.

During my time on the "Ulimaroa" the Captain woke me up about 4.00 a.m. one morning to report a dismasted sailing ship between Sydney and Hobart. Another sailing ship incident was picking up a message from the Helen B. Sterling, dismasted in the Tasman. I asked if they wanted assistance, was informed the H.M.A.S. Melbourne was on her way.

Among the humorous incidents was when a New Zealand station was trying to get in touch with a small trading vessel named "Flora" who had to leave port with urgent cargo before she could be informed of her allotted call sign; after several calls one of the ships in the vicinity saw the funny side and promptly called "speak, speak to me Flora".

As in life, there are happy and sad times at sea. I enjoyed every minute of my eight years, met many good shipmates and visited many countries and places at no cost. I visited practically every port from Normanton in the Gulf of Carpentaria to Freemantle in the West.

I have experienced the days of the crystal set, spark transmitters to the radio telephone and push button stage, from when the microphone placed in front of the loudspeaker prior to the advent of the pick-up, from the carbon type microphone to the modern highly improved type giving really true reproduction of speech and music.

In the early days, transmitters went off the air when singers, particularly sopranos, hit a high note or someone knocked the microphone stand. Modern equipment provides safeguards before the audio reaches the transmitter.

SICKIES

Fred Davis

Sorry to hear that Fred's ulcer has been playing up and he was required to attend Heidelberg Rapatriation Hospital for treatment.

Alec Stewart

When a leg of his office chair collapsed recently Alec took a fast journey to the floor and in so doing injured his leg - result - he has been walking with the aid of a stick.

Jack Martin

Regret that Jack Martin Melbourne Association, is now blind and unfortunately is not taking much interest in things. He is at present in a rest home at Camberwell.

Dick Osborn

Dick has been in hospital with heart trouble, but we are pleased to tell that he is now home again and on the mend.

Charles Donne

Charles has had a nasty fall and it now appears that movement outside his home town of Mornington could be difficult. He normally spends the winters with the family on the Gold Coast and we trust that he can continue this practice.

Win Donnelly

Win Donnelly, one of Sydney's young lady members recently spent a short period in hospital. All her friends wish her a swift recovery.

Jim Davis

Jim's doctor thought he was working too hard and Jim is on extended sick leave.

Ken Stone

Ken, Manager of La Perouse, is having tummy troubles and partaking of some sick leave. It is hoped that this will be of short duration.

MODERN COMMUNICATIONS

The end of September saw the completion of the laying of a new 640 channel telephone cable between New Zealand and Australia. A number of our members were involved with the new cable, particularly jointing the land section and shore end.

Also on 26th September the first of a new generation of international communication satellites was successfully launched from Cape Canaveral. The new satellite is the first of the INTELSAT IVA series and will have a capacity of more than 12,000 simultaneous telephone channels plus one coloured T.V. channel.

O.T.C.'s earth station at Carnarvon, Western Australia played a significant role in the successful launch operation. The Carnarvon installation; a tracking, telemetry, launching and monitoring station, was the first to pick up and track the satellite as it circled the earth on its first orbit.

A total of six satellites are planned in the series, each costing about 46.5 million U.S. dollars.

When these modern miracles appear it is felt that the young man of today tends to forget all the pioneering work done by the old timer. The old timer in turn is still thinking to the old days and no doubt often doesn't give due credit to those who are developing new techniques. To the old timers the Editor would like to make the following comments:

To the Coastal Radio Marine Man

The telex service using radio teletype is now open to shipping and it is expected that ship short transmission through satellites will be operative from early next year.

To the Cable Man

The laying of the new 640 channel telephone cable which could alternatively carry approximately 20,000 telegraph channels is a far cry to the once revolutionary loaded cable.

To the Technical Man

The transmission of data information at the rate of 56,000 bits of information per second.

To the Accounts Man

The preparation of customer accounts and all abstracting by means of computers.

To All

The utilisation of modern techniques to operate the vast communication networks with no increase in rates since 1958. In some cases there has been a lowering of charges and taking into account inflation, the rates have virtually been drastically decreased.

KEY-POUNDERS

The Third Branch of Australia's Morsecodian Fraternity was brought to life in Parramatta recently when more than 130 operators from all parts of New South Wales converged on that suburb to relive odd days. Many noted former crack morsemen demonstrated their ability on old telegraph apparatus used in the early days of postal communications

The Branch, which is the third to be formed in Australia, will meet once every twelve months for a reunion.

RABAU 1937 - THE SOUND AND THE FURY

The story on the Darwin Cyclone in the last issue of the Newsletter brings to mind another disaster involving our pioneers, that is the Rabaul earthquake and volcano. Philip Geeves has supplied the following story on that event.

On 28th May 1937 earth tremors alarmed the people of Rabaul. At 1.15 p.m. the harbour waters receded and returned; there were landslides along the Kokopo Road and Matupi crater began pouring out smoke. The next afternoon, Vulcan Island blew up in a succession of terrifying explosions. Masses of smoke, steam and volcanic dust filled the sky and within thirty minutes Rabaul was in total darkness.

Rabaul's radio staff had more than their fair share of troubles during that 1937 emergency. How they weathered the crisis is worth retelling.

The captain of the American vessel "Golden Bear" decided to get out of the harbour and, in the darkness, ran the gauntlet between Vulcan and Matupi, through water covered with masses of dust and cinders. He got his ship safely into Blanche Bay, then went around to Nordup, where he lay for the rest of the night. Victor Castner, radio operator of the "Golden Bear", was ashore in Rabaul when Vulcan erupted and was never seen again.

Because the eruption was threatening Rabaul's radio communications, Mr. S.W. Faulkner, a member of the staff of W.R. Carpenter & Co., volunteered to man the radio equipment aboard the "Golden Bear". Confronted by a great pile of official and private messages he battled on gallantly. When AWA's radio staff were eventually driven from their equipment by sulphur fumes and ash, Mr. Faulkner's radio was Rabaul's only means of communications with the outside world. So Rabaul's 1937 disaster case history reveals some intering parallels to the situation in Darwin following Cyclone Tracy.

The Radio receiving station at Malaguna, two miles from Rabaul, was in danger and the Rabaul inspector, Jack Twycross, advised the operator on duty, L.C. Coleman, to leave. As things turned out, he remained, however. Meanwhile another operator, C.H. Sturgeon, got the women into a car and set off for the north coast. This party encountered dust, ashes, mud and torrential rain. One lady fell and broke her leg, but the refugees got through. Sturgeon attempted to return to the station, but was held up by cloudbursts and washaways.

At the Rabaul transmitting station, C.B. Alexander made frantic efforts to keep the equipment in action, but when the power plant broke down and cinders, ash and sulphurous smoke overwhelmed him, the poor chap acknowledged defeat. Thus Rabaul station was off the air from 6.00 p.m. Saturday until 12.15 a.m. Sunday.

On Sunday morning, 30th May, the AWA men set about the task of re-establishing communications. Twycross started for Kokopo to take over the radio cabin of the "Montoro", which was then approaching. Sturgeon somehow got back to the Rabaul station after a nightmarish journey over wrecked roads. On arriving, he found that Alexander had managed to get the emergency generator working, so the station was on the air again. H.S. (Jack) Burgess was busy at the receiving station and was actually "working" Sydney. That was the situation when the crater of Matupi erupted at 1.00 p.m.

Jack Twycross joined the "Montoro" on Sunday night and established communication with Australia through that ship's equipment. Finding that Rabaul station was again exchanging traffic with Sydney, Twycross hurried back to Rabaul and sent a small emergency set to Kokopo, thus giving that twon a radio link with Rabaul.

The staff worked 18 hours per day to cope with the vastly increased traffic; from 1st June to 5th June, approximately 1,700 official and private messages, representing about 60,000 words, were handled by the Rabaul and Kokopo stations, quite apart from a great deal of traffic diverted through the Papuan stations.

The radio operators carried on despite four major difficulties - depositis of pumice broke down the electric power lines (they overcame this problem by running their own petrol-driven generating plant); they had no light, so they used oil lamps; the fine pumice dust invaded their offices and clogged their typewriters, so they reverted to handwriting; and because they had four or five times the normal traffic, they worked 18 hours a day. Rabaul 1937 was an unforgettable achievement.

S.L.A.P.S.

Ellis Smellie cannot agree with Ponto's comments on S.L.A.P.S. advising members to take cash. Ellis comments that had he taken the lump sum he would have received \$14,000. However, he has already received \$40,000 in pension without having the worry of the rise and fall and in some cases the complete collapse of investments.

Any comments or views from other members as the Editor is convinced that this is quite a controversial subject.

VICTORIAN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The attendance at the Melbourne General Meeting was sixty-five which included Mr. Bill McCasker (who came from Canberra to represent O.T.C. Commissioner Lawler), Sir Albert Chadwick, Commissioner Curtis, Chairman Turnbull and General Manager Harold White. Jack Hunter was elected President and Geoff Day elected as new Auditor. The remainder of the office bearers were returned unopposed. The outgoing President, George McDonald, thanked everyone for making his year of office so successful and enjoyable. By a unanimous vote it was agreed to increase the annual subscription from \$1.00 to \$2.00.

A list of the signatures of those attending is included in the Newsletter.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINTER MEETING

The South Australian Branch held their winter meeting in Adelaide on 2nd June. Once again through the courtesy of Ken Collett the meeting was held at the Public Service Club in Wakefield Street. This has proven an excellent venue for the members and more satisfactory in every way (including financially) than going to a hotel. The attendance was disappointing and those present were Longun Evans, Charles Smith, Graham Little, George Rowe, Ron Ward, Harry Naylor, Ken Springbett, Cliff Birks, Norman Giles, Alf Kerr, Frank Forrest and Brax Horrocks.

Members were pleased to see Harry Naylor at the meeting, being blind he is unable to go out often and enjoys having a yarn to old workmates.

A number of apologies were received and news on absent members was conveyed to those present. Herbert Muhlhan was not well enough to attend the meeting but pleasing to hear that he is a lot better. Leo Gleeson is suffering from severe respiratory trouble and Rocky Gordon far from well.

The news is a little better on Eric Symes. Although still in the home for Incurables he is now able to get out of bed and spend time in a wheel chair.



SYDNEY MEETING

The Sydney Annual General Meeting was held in O.T.C. House on Friday 30th May 1975 with 93 in attendance. The office bearers were all re-elected with the omission of Harry Cook who did not stand. He was replaced by lady member Audrey Keenan.

The only matter brought up was an increase in the Annual subscription and after general discussion it was left in the hands of the Committee as provided in the Constitution to decide the subscription. At a subsequent Committee meeting it was decided that the subscription for the N.S.W. Association be increased to \$2.00 per annum.

The following attended the meeting and partook of refreshments during the social evening which followed:-

Eileen Haran, Keith Vincent, Gordon Cupit, Dave Fleming, Joe Collister, Roy Doohan, Des Woods, John Hodgson, Trev Thatcher, Joe Patiniott, Val Litchfield, Ted O'Donnell, Bill Luke, Albert Sheppherd, Jim Donnelly, Horrie McInnes, Joe Bonnici, Jack Chant, Dave Bourne, Athoc Brown, Charles Downer (guest), Russ Welbourn, George Wheeler, Shaddie Meynert, Don Montgomery, Hedley Caswell, Nell Donoghue, Bert Waugh, Jack Guthrie, Greg Gregory, Claire Brophy, Elsie Thornley, Philip Geeves, Ron Smith, Charlie Swinney, Win Donnelly, Ted Gunning, Jack Burgess, Jack Creswick, Alec Cilia, Alf Agius, Fred Doolette, John Creswick, Randy Payne, Norm Alderson, Jack Davis, John Toland, Arthur Oliver, Keith Oxley, Dick Christoffersen, Jim Davis, Murray Hill, Reg Towner, Charlie Maiden, Ron Flood, Jim Pow, John Mulholland, George Brown, Alan Ritchie, Vin Sim, Cyril Manning, Arthur Purtill, Audrey Keenan, Derek Jolly, Kath Morgan, Ken Erickson, Val Moore, Molly Condon, Cec Watson, Gordon Johnston, Eric Cockle, Ray Carragher, Edgar Harcourt, Jim Shore, Gray MacDonald, Stan Gray, Phil Chapman, Len Rourke, Ken Stone, Arch Barrie, Barry Henson, Brian Woods, Ray Baty, Bob Wright, Betty Leweniec, John Lee, Tom Molloy, Charlie Raecke, Margaret Reed (guest) Orm Cooper, Norm Harris, Ron Mackenzie, Marie Casey.

NEAR AND FAR (CONTINUED)

Bill Jenvey writing from Nauru call sign now C2N instead of VKT says that it is now no longer the fairly peaceful station of earlier times. In July the station had Aeradio communications for three busy aircraft to cope with plus a very busy Sydney circuit, the radio telephone channel which has recently been extended from eight hours daily to fourteen hours to cope with the forty plus calls outward daily and about the same incoming. In addition two teleprinter channels one for public traffic and one leased for sharing between the Republic and the Phosphate Corporation plus point-to-point morse circuits to neighbouring islands. Traffic of all circuits ever increasing.

The above is interspersed with "search and rescue" about every two months, some involving all night sessions at the station. Korean trawlers on fire, injured seamen, and two occasions when local fishermen broke down in their outboard boats and drifted up to twenty-five miles from the island with nothing but hundreds of miles of ocean between them and the nearest island. The latter involved aircraft searches resulting in communication requirements between the aircraft, radio station and rescue barges.

The latest scare was the recent discovery of three "alleged" war-time bombs, (there are still plenty around Nauru) buried in the earth right alongside the air strip. Bill says we were about to divert the aircraft incoming from Japan when closer inspection by the Flight Service Officer proved they were only parachute flares which were promptly dealt with.

However, Bill agrees life at Nauru is still pretty good despite the occasional bursts of panic.

Motor accidents seem to be the "in" thing in Victoria as in addition to Ellis Smellie, Alan Munroe the O.T.C. driver had a narrow escape from serious injury when crashed into by another car out of control and also Fred Davis had a narrow escape when side-swiped by a big transport. Alan retired in June and is now living at Cowes on Phillip Island.

TO PASTURE

Jack Hunter

Jack, Staff Officer, O.T.C. Melbourne retired after forty-seven years service. He was very active in welfare and other benevolent matters and for a number of years was Honorary Secretary of the Provident Fund (known to many as the Coffin Fund). Jack and his good wife have just completed an Asian tour taking in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore, Indonesia and Bali.

Dave Abercrombie

Dave started in radio in 1934 as a young Engineer fresh out of university. Although he spent the majority of his working life with S.T.C., he has been the Chief Engineer and Director (Engineering) of O.T.C. for the last ten years.

His period with O.T.C. was one when so many major changes in telecommunications, including space and satellite communications, were developed. As far as O.T.C. was concerned Dave was in the thick of the activities over this period.

At his farewell function it was revealed that Dave, over his years had tutored a number of Engineers in their early stages of development to assist them in gaining their present positions. Due to his outstanding talents, activities and appointments he was well known throughout the whole of the telecommunications world and his presence will be missed around the office.

Peter Finlayson

Peter joined O.T.C. in 1949 in the Melbourne Operating Room where he spent the whole of the period until his retirement. Peter has always been a very popular member of M.O.R. and will be missed off shift.

Clive Purvis

Veteran Alec Stewart, Manager AWA Ltd., Melbourne, was at his humorous best at the send-off to Clive Purvis after forty-seven years service.

Prior to presenting Clive with a camera and equipment as a mark of the high esteem in which he was held, Alec Stewart read out extracts from the history file of Clive who started as a Beam Messenger in 1928 and had some difficulty in accounting for one pair of boots and a cap cover plus, instances of please explains for one misdemeanour after another. Then there was the classic instance of a memo from the Accountant to the Staff Officer advising an increment of sixpence per week!

When Clive suitably responded he reacted in light hearted vein punctuated by laughter and spontaneous applause. His story of one experience as a bundler on the Beam Telegraph Floor was typical. Reuters insisted that their press messages be telephoned AFTER OFFICE HOURS to a named representative. Clive considered 2.00 a.m. BEFORE not AFTER and left the accumulated traffic for delivery in the morning. A complaint came in and Clive collected a Major "A" and a severe reprimand. By way of reprisal the boys ganged up and kept disturbing the Reuters' bloke right through the night with repeated calls until, by way of capitulation, the press order was amended to cover urgent news ONLY! To cap the lot Clive's original engagement as a temporary officer at 20/- a week was never endorsed to stipulate PERMANENT status despite a life time of service in which to discover the omission!

Clive Purvis is a Past President of O.T.V.A. (Vic.) and fellow Veterans wish him all the best in retirement years ahead.

Vin Sim

Vin joined AWA in August 1925 and was posted to the Coastal Radio Service in 1931. He decided that a technical career was a happier lot than the Coastal Radio Service and later obtained a transfer to Pennant Hills. He was at Pennant Hills at the time of the O.T.C. takeover as a Technician and promoted to Senior Technician four years later. On the closing of Pennant Hills he transferred to Doonside where he remained for twenty years until his retirement.

Vin has travelled from Doonside to most of the Veterans' functions and will be well remembered for his activities on the piano at our reunions at the High Club. A social evening to mark his retirement was held at the Blacktown R.S.L. Club with over one hundred of his old colleagues and wives in attendance.

DARWIN AIR-RAID

Further to our article on the radio station's activities during the Darwin air-raid, Melbourne member Bill Hosking has advised that there is a very good account of the cable stations activities in a book published by C. & W. "The Thin Red Lines".

Bill goes on to say that those on duty that interesting! morning were Roley Lane and himself and he was the senior operator who "copped it" whilst sheltering on the cliff face. Roley and another gent parked in the hole that was to be a toilet (doesn't think it was ever completed). Roley escaped unhurt but Bill finished up in hospital as he was on the receiving end of all the rocks and debris from the bomb craters. After the event the boys on the station dubbed Bill "the official receiver of injuries". Although it happened thirty-three years ago he can remember it as if it happened yesterday and he is thankful to be alive.

- 25 -

As far as it is known Bill was the only communicator in Darwin who was wounded by enemy action. He has now been in retirement for twelve years and keeps himself active by continuing his life time musical interests. He is still a playing member of the Maroondah Symphony Orchestra and the Nunawading City Band. Good blowing Bill.

STOP PRESS

Regret to advise that Les Coley has been admitted to the Royal North Shore Hospital with a heart attack. We understand it is not serious and the hospital staff hope to have him on his feet very shortly.

✓

HON. SEC.:
C. CARTHEW
7 LANTANA ST.
CLAYTON. VIC. 3168
TELEPHONE 544-2514

(By courtesy Management)

[illegible]

C. W. Carthens
 J. E. Green
 Howell
 J. Foley
 H. A. Greer
 Stewart
 Bruce H. Neal
 Vin. L. Ligon
 J. Holmberg
 Chas. L. Lash
 E. Drezice
 J. Stanton
 H. A. Lash
 Frank McCormack
 Bice Munnis
 C. A. Willington
 A. L. Lane
 J. P. Harvey
 John I. Cooper
 James C. H. H.

June
7.7. Johns. A.P.I. RETIRE
OFFICE.
- Hero Krinnerberg
Wendrich.
Wario Humphries
Kew. Wm.
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