



# NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 PT. 4

APRIL 1980

## NATIONAL SECRETARY

Once again the only nomination received within the prescribed time for the position of General Secretary of the Veterans' Association of Australia was from Charles Carthew. Charles has held this important office since its creation and has also carried out the duties of Secretary of the Victorian Association since the inauguration of the Veterans' Associations in 1956. Charles has kept regular contact, and liaised with State Associations and our numerous overseas kindred bodies. In addition he has also kept personal contact with a number of overseas pioneers.

The nomination will be considered at the next Annual General Meeting of all States' Associations and once again there is no doubt that confirmation will be formally approved.

## EXPRESSION OF THANKS

On behalf of all Veterans' Associations throughout Australia the General Secretary, Charles Carthew, wishes to express through our Newsletter his sincere thanks to O.T.C.(A) for kind courtesies and helpful co-operation, particularly to the General Manager, Bill Schmidt, and Commission Management for permitting use of OTC property and facilities for functions and for reciprocal representation at OTVA(A) reunions and for the assistance given to the printing and distribution of our Newsletter both in Australia and overseas.

OTVA (Australia) is also grateful to the Eastern Extension and Associated Companies Retired Officers Society - Marconi Trans-Oceanic Guild ... Teleglobe (Canada) Quarter Century Club ... U.K. Marconi-Operators Society ... Society of Wireless Pioneers of America ... Cable & Wireless Ltd. London and O.T.C.(A) for complimentary mailing lists.

Finally, a thank you to fellow veterans for sending in contributions to our Newsletter.

## A TRIBUTE

During my term of office as General Secretary it has been an honour and a privilege to meet many retired pioneer overseas telecommunicators within the privacy of their own homes. Thanks to the kind and helpful co-operation of State Branch Presidents and/or Secretaries.

Previously known by name only it was an added pleasure to make the acquaintance of pioneer veterans, to converse with them and, more especially to enjoy their company.

Before 1947 cable and radio personnel were competitive in approach and really worlds apart but the merger altered all that and brought about a welcome change and with it the guide-lines of good fellowship extant today under O.T.V.A. auspices.

In all walks of life personalities stand out and among overseas telecommunicators we remember colleagues who excelled on the morse key, had rhythm and speed on the kleinsmith, uncanny at reading indistinct cable tape and, overall, could adapt to any emergency; each one in his own field contributing to Service esprit-de-corps.

Looking back over the years and making allowance for humour and pathos, inseparable from every day life, overseas telecommunicators have a distinct history of their own not in any way confined but spread world wide and for that should feel justifiably proud.

#### VICTORIAN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 23rd Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Association will be held on Friday, 30th May, 1980 commencing at 5.30 pm. With the kind permission of OTC Management it will once again be held at the usual venue, the Amenities Room of OTC House, 382 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. Charles Carthew has OTCVA badges available at \$1. Interstate visitors are welcome but an approach beforehand to Charles Carthew, 7 Lantana Street, Clayton, 3168 or telephone Melbourne 544 2514 would be appreciated.

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINTER MEETING

The winter meeting of the South Australian Association will be held at the Public Service Club, 73 Wakefield Street, Adelaide on Thursday, May 22, 1980, commencing at 7.30 pm. Visitors are welcome. Contact President Brax Horrocks on Adelaide telephone 71 7524 or Secretary Bert Dudley on telephone 228 2867.

#### QUEENSLAND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Queensland Association will be holding their 5th Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 7th May, commencing at noon. The venue is Jim Banks' office, OTC, 380 Queen Street, Brisbane. Members and visitors from other states would be most welcome. Just contact Jim on 221 6250, STD code 07.

#### NEW SOUTH WALES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The New South Wales Association will be holding their Annual General Meeting on Friday 2nd May 1980, commencing at 6 pm. The venue being the OTC Staff Cafeteria in Hosking Place, which is immediately behind the OTC building, 32 Martin Place. Overseas and Interstate Veterans welcome. Contact is Gordon Cupit, telephone 230 5840.

#### CANADIAN MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Canadian Quarter Century Club was held on the 19th April in the Hotel Vancouver. At going to press a report had not been received.

#### WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The WA Association held their 5th Annual General Meeting in the Imperial Hotel, Wellington Street, Perth, on the 28th November, 1979. Those in attendance were:

Norm Odgers, Fred James, Ron Fisher, "Trig" Trigwell, Paul Cooper, Jack Thomas, Harold Burdett, Gerry Tacey, Jim O'Toole, Jack Whittaker, Tom Bryant, Dick Christoffersen, Des Walker, Ron Cocker, Brian Morrell, Les Owen, Doug Lancaster, Ron Airey, Dick Hickinbotham.

With 19 in attendance, including 2 visitors from OTVA (NSW), namely, Dick Christoffersen and Jack Whittaker, fellowship got under way soon after 1700. The Annual General Meeting saw the election of Fred James, enjoying retirement and tripping around the world, making time to take on the onerous duties of President. The "UN-ONEROUS" DUTIES of Honorary Secretary/Treasurer, were quickly snapped up by Brian Morrell, just in case someone else jumped in and grabbed the "PLUMS". The need for other "office bearers" was quickly dismissed, especially that of Auditor - he wants to know too much!

Apologies for non-attendance were received from the General Manager, OTC(A), MR BILL SCHMIDT, conveyed to us personally by Dick Christoffersen. Other apologies were: Arthur Black, Frank McCay, Charles Carthew, Pat Gray, Pat Sykes, and we were disappointed at not hearing from Des Else and Fred McNulty (or seeing them in person of course!)

Although donations from ABSENT FRIENDS were "down" this year, it didn't seem to deter the "amber fluid" consumers - even noticed a couple of chaps hopping into jugs of squash - cost-wise there is very little difference these days!

To mark the retirement of our Inaugural President, Geoff Warner, a small token of esteem was conveyed to him by Jack Whittaker, on our behalf, and a card was sent to Ms Sykes who has been experiencing indifferent health of late. A card with signatures was prepared for despatch to Frank McCay, who together with Arthur Black, is one of our Stalwarts who does NOT venture out at night. The Hon Sec personally conveyed the card to Frank during the week following the 1979 GATHERING, and he was thrilled with it.

During the meeting it was unanimously resolved that OTVA (WA) support the nomination of Charles Carthew to the position of General Secretary, OTVA (AUSTRALIA) if/when he nominates.

By 2200 the "old young-ones" and younger "old-ones" were starting to drift away - and so the curtain was drawn on our 1979 GATHERING - one of the happiest to date, borne out by the fact that all joined in, and everyone

talked to everyone. The 1980 Gathering basically, will follow the same pattern.

#### QUEENSLAND ANNUAL REUNION

Fifteen were present at the 5th annual reunion of the Queensland Veterans held in Jim Banks' office on 29th November, 1979. They were: President George Scott, members Alan Jones, John Clendinning, Eric Cramp, Alf Geoby, Dean Laws, John Marshall, John Ponsonby, Vince Sim, Jim Banks and - from the NSW Veterans - Des Woods, whilst associate members Denis Moorhouse, John Guest and John Jackson were joined by Jack Dowling, now working with the Department of Transport.

With the apologies came some news from other veterans: new General Manager Bill Schmidt was still heavily engaged, whilst George Maltby was on a spot of well-earned leave and Dick Christoffersen was in Perth for the W.A. Veterans meeting. Des Woods ably represented the Commission on his first visit to Brisbane in many years.

Charles Carthew was still getting over his illness whilst others who weren't well enough to make the journey included Wilf Atkin, Bert Edwards and Bill Hyde. Gordon Collyer and Harry Sutherland both had other commitments, and Bob Webster was busy putting in a new dam at his property at Mudgereeba. Lou Heggie, who has had the good sense to move to the Gold Coast, was still settling in, and others who couldn't make it were Alf MacMurray, still writing poetry up on the farm near Toowoomba, Jock Kellie, John Stubbs and John Norris, who was on furlough.

The meeting began on a sad note, with a minute's silence for late member Fabian Sutherland and for Amour McCollum's wife, Lyn, who passed away after a long illness.

However, 'Ponto' had us all laughing again before long - those who know him will know why - and a most enjoyable reunion resulted over a buffet lunch and a few XXXX's.

#### MELBOURNE 23RD ANNUAL REUNION

OTVA (Victoria) 23rd annual reunion held at OTC House, Melbourne, by kind permission of Management, 9th November, 1979, brought fifty veterans together again. Although the attendance was down owing to illness, a car accident, a robbery and other at the last moment happenings it was good to learn that no one was hurt in the car smash although the house-breakers ruined a good front door and pinched a colour TV. The period of silence was observed with due solemnity more especially because of the recent demise of so many old and esteemed colleagues. Mrs Edwards, nee Jean Constable, again made and presented the now traditional reunion cake which was cut in ceremonial manner by Jean, ably assisted by octogenarian veteran

Ellis Smellie just back home from a trip overseas. Jack Curtis looked in for thirty minutes or so before going along to the Lord Mayors Dinner at the Town Hall. Popular Edgar Harcourt stayed the evening and Jim Robinson returned from the Manager's conference in Sydney in time to meet everyone. It was the usual "family" get together and the ladies, the young veterans and Ted Read at the bar by collective effort, helped make the occasion a memorable one. Those attending were

C.F. Green, C.W. Carthew, G. Magnus, H.G. Lake, Jean Edwards (nee Constable), F. Patrick, Pearl Peat, D. Chambers, J. Curtis, J.R. Hunter, Ted Lovell, Phil Little, A.K. Ross, V. Duignan, W. Ferguson, L. Foley, L. Sheppard, E. Reed, Noreen Gosney, S. Silver, T. Smith, Mervyn Fernando, M. Wilton, J. Birch, A. Thornton, C. Allison, K. Stockdale, W. Bentley, R.T. Roger, S. Bright, C. Benson, R.B. Campbell, E. Smellie, S. Bright, D. Humphries, J. Robinson, R. Lovett, A. Vagg, Merle Short, J. McGrory, G.J. Day, Max Fernando, G. Russell, G. Campbell, R.L. Lane, C. Tancheff, A. McLean, S. Harvey, J. Cooper, E. Turner, E. Harcourt and F. Ash.

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ANNUAL REUNION

The South Australian Association held their Christmas meeting on 23rd November, 1979 at the Public Service Club, Adelaide. Present were Graham Little, Cliff Birks, George Rowe, Jerrold Shaw, Ron Ward, Claude Whitford, Ken Springbett, Bert Dudley, Brax Horrocks, Ralph Matthews, Norm McKay, Geoff Cox, Harold Oates, Max Lang, Fred Reeve and Dick Evans.

Apologies for absence were received from Keith Cox, Eric Symes, Keith Roberts, Charles Smith, Rocky Gordon, Keith Parker and Ken Collett.

We were very pleased to have a visitor from the Sydney Branch, Fred Doolette, who made a special trip from New South Wales to be with us. Fred of course was stationed at Adelaide for many years, and he knew all present with the exception of the two wireless boys Max Lang and Fred Reeve.

The Xmas meeting also being a General Meeting there was an election of officers and President Brax Horrocks and Secretary Bert Dudley were again re-elected.

Members were not only asked to sign the attendance book but asked to include their date of birth. This revealed that Cliff Birks, Harold Oates and Longun Evans together with NSW visitor Fred Doolette were all born in the last century. the oldest being Cliff Birks born in 1890.

#### NSW REUNION

The NSW Association held their Annual Reunion on 7th December, 1979 in the OTC Staff Cafeteria. Wives were again invited and there was a record attendance of 166. President Philip Geeves with his good wife Leone met everyone at the door which caused quite a holdup as a number

of our members who closely follow his ABC radio programme wished to congratulate him and find out about future programmes. As usual members met up with old colleagues, and as a number of the wives have served on outstations together, the noise level became very high. Some of the ladies even went hoarse with too much talking. All in all a great evening. It was good to see Murray Johnson down from Port Macquarie celebrating his 90th birthday, Mrs Tiny Greenlees escorted by Russ Welbourn, Mrs McAuley (sister of Charles Carthew) escorted by Ted O'Donnell, Les & Hilda Doubleday down from Rockhampton, Thelma Guthrie, Harold & Sonia White (Harold's first function out of harness), Joe Bugeya who was far from well but luckily able to make the effort; and official guests Bob & Mrs Somervaille and Ron & Mrs Turnbull. Those in attendance were:

Margaret Dobson, Betty & Bill Chant, Derek Jolly, Keith Burbury, Ruby & Gordon Cupit, Frank White, Joe Hawkins, Joe Patiniott, Roy Doohan, Bev & Gray MacDonald, Des Woods, Audrey Keenan, Cecile & Doug Lloyd, Harry Cook, Percy Day, George Schultz, Leone & Philip Gieves, Yvonne & Matt Jobson, Don Montgomery, Mary & George Maltby, Fred Keen, Maisie & Cyril Vahtrick, Jack Burgess, Lydia & Joe Bugeya, Bill Jenvey, Eileen Haran, Nell Donoghue, Addie & John Lee, Elsie Thornley, Stan Ellis, Bill Luke, Erica & Edgar Harcourt, Loma & Keith Oxley, Betty & Mick Wood, Bert Waugh, Vere & Gareth Thompson, Jack & Mrs Cresswick, Dorothy & Norm Harris, John Creswick, Norma & John Newlyn, Barry Stockbridge, Len Vella, Roy & Mrs Tully, Charlie Swinney, Audrey & Jack Sheath, Kath & Harry Stone, Molly Condon, Marg & Ron Winders, Molly & Charles Raecke, Arch Barrie, Margaret & Charles Hurndell, Doreen & John Edwards, Derek Hallam, Phoebe & Bill Day, Evelyn & Bernie White, Joyce & Geoff Warner, Hilda & Les Doubleday, Bill Sanders, Ted Bishton, Jack Chant, Orm Cooper, Evelyn & Jack Davis, Bette Greenlees, Keith Burbury, Russ Welbourn, Frank White, Joyce & Jim Anderson, Joe Patiniott, Kath Morgan, Len Rourke, Rit & John Beecham, Ted O'Donnell, Grace & Brian Darragh, Mrs A. McAuley, Ron & Mrs Turnbull, Murray Johnson, Peter Seaton, Doug Temperley, Helen & Phil Hay, Roy Branson, Ramona & Bill Brown, John Maurer, Tom Hughes, Norma & Ron Smith, Lil & Ray Stewart, Joan & Ray Baty, Thelma Guthrie, Jim Shore, Agnes-Mary & Reg Towner, Dick Christoffersen, Jean & Jack Whittaker, Claude Pickford, Betty & Sandilands, Bob & Mrs Imrie, Alf Culloden, John Lennon, Ina & Bob Somervaille, Marie Casey, Mary & Tony Ebert, Sonia & Harold White, Esma & Cec Watson, Hazel & Joe Collister, Jack Hansson, Ena & Bruce Collett, Ailien & Lyle Gowanlock, Isa & Wilf O'Donnell, Dallas & John Davies, Lyl & John Hodgson, Tom Heatley, Betty & John Toland, Lesley & Keith Bondfield.

#### NEW ZEALAND REUNION

The Annual Meeting and Reunion of the Auckland Veteran Cablemens' Association was held in the rooms of the N.Z. Netherlands Society on Friday 30th November 1979 at 3.30 pm.

Present: R.T. Atkins, R.F.V. Carter, T.B. Condon, W. Craig, L.H. Davison, H.G. Evetts, H.J. Fox, L. Gladding, M.H.S. Greenwood, H.N. Jacobs, R.C. Michaels, A.G. Miller, A.B. Mortensen, L. Sedman, F.C. Studman, H.B. Sutherland, J.J. Potter, R.T. Martin, P. Cowlshaw, D.C. Erson, K.J. Healy, C. Nielsen, J. Walker, D.C. Baker.

All office bearers were unanimously re-elected and news and recollections of past incidents were exchanged over liquid refreshments and a tasty meal provided by the ladies.

#### BOWLS

Sydney Veterans are invited to a mixed bowls day to be held at Bankstown on 8th June 1980. Those interested should contact Joe Collister (telephone 230 5722).

#### ILL AND DISABLED

The following members are or have been sick in recent months and to these we wish complete and speedy recoveries. Our communications are relatively good and we hear most news good and bad but to those who have been ill and not on the list we apologise for the omission and also send them the same good wishes.

Hedley Tyler, Claude Dalley, George Wheeler, Dennis Humphries, Lou Brown, Jim Vasek, Claude Waite, Frank Dunstall, Jack McGrory, Bill Jenvey, Frank McCay, Jim Taylor, Jack Cornish, Doug Batten, Eddy Trezise, Ron Roger, Jim Davis.

#### HISTORICAL ITEMS

Historical material and odd museum items are coming in and to those who have made the donations we say thank you. Since the last Newsletter donations have been received from the following:

Alban Gregory, Rocky Gordon, Arthur Oliver, Tom Condon (NZ), Ron Smith, Fred Keen, Bob Scott (Canada), George Rowe.

#### TO PASTURE (LUCKY GUYS)

#### MOREA MIA

Morea recently retired from the Papua New Guinea P&T Department after 54 years rigging service. At a retirement presentation the Secretary for Public Utilities, Mr Edoni, presented Morea with a beautiful wall clock.

To start his retirement Morea decided on a holiday in Sydney and whilst in Sydney was given the VIP treatment by OTC, the Paddington/Woollahra RSL Club and Victoria Barracks.

Morea joined AWA in 1926 in Port Moresby where he was trained as a Rigger. He remained on that station until 1943 when the facilities were bombed by the Japanese. From 1943-1946 he served as a Rigger with an Australian/New Guinea army unit and was involved in the rebuilding of the Port Moresby receiving station at the end of the war. He was the only New Guinean involved in the project. From then until his retirement he remained at Port Moresby with OTC and then with the P&T Department on its takeover of the OTC New Guinea services. During his time with the P&T Department he has been used on out station radio masts and Telecom towers both in the lowlands and highlands.

Morea has been a member of the NSW Veterans' Association for the last 20 years and we all wish him well in his retirement.

#### H.C. QUINTAL

Cam Quintal, a descendant of the Bounty Mutineers, was born in Norfolk Island where he first joined the Commission as a Labourer/Handyman in December 1949. After nine years in that position, he was promoted to Engineman. A year or so later Cam decided to migrate to the mainland and transferred to Head Office, where he took up duty as Assistant Storeman at the Marrickville Store. During the subsequent years he satisfactorily progressed through various grades in the Supply Section to his last position of Clerical Assistant Grade 5, Head Office. Unfortunately, over the last few months Cam has not been too well and resigned in January due to ill health.

During his 20 years in the Supply Section Cam became an expert and because of this was the one person to direct a supply question and receive the correct answer. "My Friend" Cam will be missed not only by his colleagues in the Supply Section, but by most officers of the Commission.

#### NEW PACIFIC SUBMARINE CABLE PROJECT

The Federal Government has authorised OTC to negotiate Australian participation, in a new Pacific Submarine Cable Project, in conjunction with a number of other international organisations.

The new cable system will provide 1200-1800 telephone circuits between Sydney and Vancouver. As part of the new system, additional capacity will be provided to New Zealand, Fiji and Hawaii; and Norfolk Island will reopen as a cable station. Australia's share in the funding of the new cable will be in the vicinity of \$200 million.

#### VALE

#### KEITH MCKENZIE

Veteran Keith Moar McKenzie privately cremated October 30th, 1979. His widow, nee Norma Brudenall, worked in the Accounts Section during the early AWA Beam Wireless days. Our late highly



esteemed colleague commenced with A.W.A. Ltd. Technical Service in Melbourne December 1937 ..... transferred OTC (A) 1946 and resigned 30th June, 1964 to take up duties with Siemens until retirement in 1977. Keith regularly attended veteran reunions.

JOE BUJEYA

As a result of a serious illness, Joe passed away in March at the age of 71. Of Maltese nationality, he arrived in Australia in 1941 from Egypt, where his family had lived for a couple of generations. Soon after his arrival in Sydney, Joe was successful in gaining employment with OTC as an Assistant in the Sydney Operating Room. The majority of his time in SOR, until his retirement in 1974 was in the position of Storeman, where he maintained the essential stationery supplies and was custodian of all tapes and hard copy.

He was well known by the Commission staff for his activities at childrens picnics, where he ably entertained on his squeeze-box. Always of an extremely happy-go-lucky and friendly nature, he was very popular amongst his workmates.

In retirement, Joe played at the Hero of Waterloo Hotel on the Rocks each evening and had a lot of pleasure out of punting. He will be missed by all his colleagues.

F.S. SUTHERLAND

Like so many of our cable members, Fabian joined the Eastern Extension Australasian and China Telegraph company at Adelaide in 1924. In 1927, still at Adelaide, he became telegraphist and technician.

Following this, he went to Cottesloe (W.A.) as technician engaged on the installation and maintenance of submarine cable, high and low speed equipment.

From 1934 to 1935 he spent his whole time at the London Cable-Wireless training school studying advanced skills of location of breaks and faults in submarine cables and on the newer techniques on equipment. As well he was for a few months at Porthcurno (Eng.) Cable Station gathering operational experience in a large cable station.

In 1936 he was back in Adelaide awaiting transport to Fanning Island. While on Fanning, technical and watchkeeping, he had the pleasure of lunching with General Paton and his charming wife, when they visited the island aboard their luxurious yacht.

Next was Suva, 1938-1940, technical and watchkeeping, plus supervisory duties. Then followed a spell at Darwin from 1940 until the station and the town were bombed out by the Japanese in 1942.

Fabian was the Cable Officer on duty in Darwin when the Japanese overran Java and said goodbye to Jack Henderson in Batavia when the cable closed down. Their final conversation was one of the highlights on a radio broadcast some years later on the subject of the over-land telegraph line.

Then followed various terms from 1942, supervisory and technical at Southport, Suva, and again Southport until 1951.

He transferred to Fanning staying until 1953 as Manager then flew back to Sydney over the Pacific. He was at Sydney 1953-1954 on supervisory technical and traffic, TED and TOC duties before going to Fanning for another stint until 1957. Returning to Sydney he travelled via U.K. visiting C. and W. on the way.

During the period at Sydney 1958 to 1965 he was supervisor, assistant traffic superintendent, VDU (KDU) and from 1965 until 1969 was traffic superintendent associated with the introduction of computer techniques applied to traffic handling.

In 1969, Fabian suffered a stroke from which he recovered but he did not resume duties.

He retired to Southport in 1970.

#### JIM VASEK

In early April Jim passed away at the age of 75. He left the Cable Service some 30 years ago, after having served in the Pacific Cable Service for 29 years. Jim has always been a keen veteran and missed very few of our functions. A very popular character, he will be missed by all his colleagues.

From New Zealand the sad news of the passing of Bob Marchant M.R. (May) Anderson, Bruce Giles and H.C.C. (Snow) Bradnam - from the U.K. the death of Dan Griffin who suffered a fatal stroke whilst playing golf.

Our sympathy goes to Bill Bearup, Pat Sykes, Amour McCollum and Alan Gourlie on the loss of their life partners.

### RETIREMENT SEMINARS

Brian Randall & Co. advise that they will be holding a seminar in Sydney on Monday, 9th June, 1980, the subject being "Investment on Retirement". The venue is the Science Centre, 35 Clarence Street, Sydney (the bridge end of Clarence Street) and the time 7 pm to 10 pm. It is completely free and supper is provided. Members who wish to attend should ring Mr Cornell on Sydney 27 6043.

In Melbourne this Company will be holding seminars in May and July (dates to be set) and further information can be obtained by telephoning Melbourne 62 0611.

### CYRIL URQUHART

As a result of our request in the last Newsletter for information on Cyril Urquhart, we are indebted to "Blue" Easterling for the following story on Cyril. The information for his article was gleaned from a number of sources, such as "The Pacific Islands Monthly", "Front Line Airline", "Qantas At War", "Australia in the War", "The Coast Watchers" and to personal accounts from Philip Geeves, Ken Stone, Bill Luke, Percy Day and the late Tommy Weekes, Clive Northam and Alan Hooper.

It is just on 21 years since Cyril retired from the C.R.S. at La Perouse. We never saw him again. There was talk of his being in a nursing home a few years later, but he had broken all contact. He was always a shy and self-effacing man and very much a "loner". His only known relative in Western Australia has asked after him, so if any reader has anything definite please contact Gordon Cupit.

La Perouse staff of the 1950s will recall Cyril making his way up the hill from the tram stop and along the bush track to the station. He must have known every wildflower and blade of grass. Everyone knew the short, tubby figure and the cherubic countenance. Summer and winter, rain or shine he always wore a grey double breasted suit and a wide brimmed hat. On the midnight shifts he would change into old army denims, predating the "jean" brigade by 30 years. One of the most "unflappable" men the station has every known.

Born at Armadale Victoria in 1894 Cyril was in Telecommunications for at least 42 years. The late Allan Hooper once told us that Cyril had been in the Naval Landing Party that seized the old German radio station at Bitia Paka (Rabaul) only a month after the start of World War 1. This however, was not his first taste of New Guinea; as a boy he had lived at Madang (then FriedrichWillemshafen) where his father was employed.

His name first came onto the books in June 1917 when he was appointed to the C.R.S. at Esperance Radio. Cyril stayed in the West for 7 years at Broome, Wyndham and Perth Radios. In 1925 he was one of a group of technicians and operators sent to England to be trained

in Beam Wireless techniques. (When the course ended they were given a dinner at the Waldorf Hotel by the General Manager on 2nd January 1926; believe it or not.)

After returning from the U.K. Cyril was posted to Brisbane Radio for a few months and then was with the Marine staff temporarily. He took up Beam duties and in December 1929 was transferred to Suva and the books show that he was OIC of Tavu Tavu 1931-32. In April of that year he came back to La Perouse; whether on Beam or C.R.S. work is not known, but after a few months he was away on relieving duty at Thursday Island and Rabaul, fetching up at Aitape in November.

Cyril spent three years there and then took a long leave "up east", sailing on the "Friderun" from Aitape direct to Hong Kong, trans-shipped to visit Canton, Saigon, Cambodia (including a visit to Ankor-Wat) and home via North Borneo, Manila, Salamaua, Rabaul and Sydney. He was soon back in New Guinea; relieving at Kieta for 9 months, a month at Manus and then Madang where he arrived on Armistice Day 1936. Here he remained for five years, apparently his longest up to that time.

Then, as now, it was a beautiful place; the "Jewel of the Pacific", perched on a peninsula surrounded by two splendid harbours and liberally sprinkled with parks, ponds and waterways. The warm wet climate and fertile soil leads to luxuriant growth. Many of the rain trees planted by the Germans still survive, shading the gently curving crushed coral roads.

When the Germans settled it in 1884 it must have been a malarial hell-hole. By 1904 they had drained the swamps and created the present ponds and gardens. Australia took it over after the capture of Rabaul.

Cyril lived in one of the German-built houses. It was white-anted, somewhat risky for a man of his build (he topped 17 stone at one time). He had a punching bag set up under the house and would beat away at this each morning before racing off to his first radio schedule, often still in his pyjamas. Head Office was a long way away and life pretty carefree in those far off days.

The station was the usual corrugated iron shed on a concrete slab; unlined walls but with a ceiling; (this to stop the hornets' nests falling on to the operator!) and double doors at the back with the engine room a short distance away. All the radio gear together with two smaller engines (a Moffat Virtue and a Chapman Pup) were in the main shack. With great patience he taught some of the "bois" to copy morse straight onto a typewriter even though they could not speak English. (I've heard of this being done in Africa by the Americans during World War 2.) Incidentally, the station survived

the tremendous batterings of the Japanese, Americans, Australians and returning scroungers. P&T used it for a while, bullet holes and all. A school now occupies the site.

The old Island Radio Service staff certainly earned their money. They were a special breed, able to stand the climate and the diseases (Cyril had elephantiasis), able to handle native labour (an art in itself), do sales and service work, all the maintenance and paperwork as well as the radio operating. Madang kept regular schedules with Rabaul and in and out traffic; some for hand delivery around the town and some for radiophone delivery to the outposts. This was quite the normal; you name it and they could do it. They were adaptable and they could improvise. Their various abilities and strong sense of duty came to the fore when War came to the Islands in 1942. Sticking to their posts until the very last, they then used their considerable skills and experience to help in the hair-raising escapes and planned evacuations that followed the Japanese air attacks and invasions.

Pearl Harbour, the Philippines and Malaya were simultaneously attacked by Japanese aircraft on 7th December 1941 and within a few days their reconnaissance planes were examining Rabaul and the other towns and settlements in New Britain, New Ireland and New Guinea. For some time previously the Government had been encouraging the unobtrusive removal of women and children and on 12th December this became compulsory and by the end of the month some 600 had been taken out.

At Madang the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles had a detachment under Sgt. Russell. With a radio link to an army station at Bulwa near Wau. The Administration had a link to Rabaul and Cyril manned the commercial circuit with Rabaul Radio. From 4th January 1942 onwards Rabaul was attacked almost daily, on occasion several times the same day. About 18th a message was received by the NGVR from Bulwa advising a probably seaborne landing; this proved incorrect and the Madang people sat tight, waiting.

On 20th January Rabaul had its heaviest raid; bombers, fighters and dive bombers gave the town a murderous pasting. The presence of the fighters and dive bombers indicated an aircraft carrier in the area, giving some justification to the army report of 18th.

The next day (21st) Madang was attacked, along with Kavieng, Lorengau, Salamaua, Lae and Bulolo. Rabaul radioed warnings to these towns but Salamaua did not receive any of them and some 50 Japanese aircraft took a heavy toll of aircraft and property.

Pastor A.H. Freund (Lutheran) was at the mission on Rooke Island and some years later (July 1946) he wrote about these raids in "Pacific Islands Monthly".

"Soon after Rabaul ceased trying to warn Lae and Salamaua. Urquhart at Madang began to call. There were only routine calls that day. Dal Chambers was the last one on the list.

"While Chambers was acknowledging his call, I suddenly heard Urquhart coming with great speed on the key on the emergency wavelength, and he did not acknowledge Chambers' reply. It was not hard to guess what was happening. Madang was also being attacked.

"And, during the whole attack, while bombs were bursting around the radio shack, while the big, new Customs shed was shattered and Carpenter's copra shed with thousands of tons of copra became a mammoth bonfire, Urquhart stuck to his post.

"For a few days there was no sign of VIV (Madang Radio) so Pursehouse (at Finschafen) Chambers (Emirau) and I formed a little group and kept up contact. But within a few days VIV suddenly came on again. Urquhart had put his main set out of action and set up his emergency set at Wagol Plantation across the harbour.

"With panic and flight all around him, Urquhart deserves high praise for his coolness and faithfulness to those who might need his services.

"Evidently, the Japs also took note of the fact that VIV was again on the air and decided that Madang had not yet had enough, so they came and bombed the deserted, battered town again.

"On January 27 we established contact with VIG (Port Moresby) and our faithful friend Urquhart was withdrawn. Two and a half years later, on the Sydney to Brisbane express, I met him again. Needless to say, we re-lived many of the incidents of those stirring days in early 1942."

Cyril's own account was very modest. He wrote it in the third person, saying little about the bombing or the huge copra fire (copra is 70-80% oil and very hard to extinguish when fire takes hold.) After the raid he left town and spent the night at Modilon Plantation (near the present Cable Station area) and went back into the town next morning, (22nd).

Rabaul was silent. The Japanese had invaded during the night. Helped by Sgt. Russell and the NGVR, Cyril put VIV out of action. He collected his 3B teleradio, batteries and charging engine. From W.R. Carpenters' he took a two-valve short wave receiver - regenerative with plug-in coils. It was made by Eddystone Co. in England for people on lonely plantations and ran from dry batteries. Old timers will know how sensitive these could be, and how selective when away from a transmitter. He also collected his home-made standby morse transmitter. This is another one that the old-timers knew all about. It is essentially a triode in a Hartley circuit working straight into the aerial.

The valve was heated by a 6v battery which also powered a Ford coil for the high-tension plate voltage. The new generation might well query why the whole shebang didn't blow up; the Ford coils give a half-inch spark at several thousand volts. However,

they did not; maybe the practice of replacing the breaker points with filed-down threepenny bits may have slowed the trembler and lowered the voltage? The real fact is that they did work and the old hands in the I.R.S. used them for point-to-point circuits when the main transmitter was inoperative. Present day Radio Inspectors would have a fit. Come to think of it, small wonder that the RIs in those days didn't have fits too. The idea was to tune in the station you wanted, then hold the key down and tune the transmitter to net with it.

After wrecking the equipment, Cyril tallied all the stationery and stores and destroyed them. In his report to A.W.A. he accounted for everything and was almost apologetic for having to treat Company property in such a rude manner. Wagol Plantation (across the harbour) was considered safer than the town and that is where he set up the 3B and came back on the air after a few days before the civilians were evacuated. (The NGVR were in Madang for many months afterwards).

The Administration had a well planned evacuation route southwards to Kainantu in the Central Highlands. It was about 75 miles in a direct line but much longer by the tracks. There was no transport; very hard going on foot for middle aged men whose constitution had been sapped by years in the enervating climate and the tropical diseases. However within a fortnight they had arrived at the "secret destination" where the young and fit were sent to report for military service. The others had another walk of 130 miles ahead of them along the ranges of Mount Hagen. For part of the trip Cyril had a horse and for part of it he had to be carried, but he kept his daily (or rather, nightly) skeds with Port Moresby and Thursday Island. Both Clive Northam and Tommy Weeks at Thursday Island recalled his transmissions and his callsign URQ.

At Mount Hagen the Catholic Mission cared for the evacuees and by the end of March there were 90 people waiting to be taken out. Officialdom was not taking any action and Father Glover decided to go to Australia and pleade their case.

He held an Advanced "A" class licence and had been flying people out from the invaded beach-areas on the north coast to Ramu, but eventually crashed his small aircraft there. Knowing that there was a similar plane at Alexishafen he set off on foot accompanied by a mechanic. They got behind the Jap lines, found the plane, patched it up, and flew back to Mount Hagen.

So Father Glover set off in April 1942 for Thursday Island. His luck failed again and he was blown off course and ran out of fuel. He put the aircraft down on the south coast of Papua, and then by canoe, lugger and finally a motor launch he made his way to Thursday Island and from there to Melbourne. Here the "Guvmin" agreed to bring the party out by air and QANTAS was given the job.

Two DH86As were chartered back from the RAAF and volunteers were called for. Captains Sims, Denny and Nicholl with three radio officers and two engineers plus Father Glover and Tommy O'Dea (Guinea Airways) took VHUSC and VHUSF up to Horn Island after a rush job of fitting long range fuel tanks and high altitude controls.

It was to be no "bread run". Radio silence, no en-route or terminal weather reports, no fighter escort. The airstrip at Mount Hagen was only 3000 feet long and at an altitude of 7000 feet the exact load for a safe take-off would be a matter of trial and error. The first trip in was very hairy. The peaks rise to 13000 feet with an average of 12000 and they had to locate the "gap" in the range that led into the valley and then to the strip. They ran into cloud and had to dodge around it. The two aircraft were separated but they found their way in. As the engines were shut off there was a mighty cheer from the crowd on the strip.

They tried taking off with 7 passengers but due to softness of the ground there were several close shaves. The problem was solved in typical New Guinea fashion. The natives were started on a "marching sing sing". About 2000 of them came in and started it off. Up and down they marched and sang. Up and down, up and down, all day and all night. They sang the whole time. When some became tired and began to complain of their legs, others took their places. All one had to do was to start them singing again and off they would go, stamp, stamp, stamp.

After the night and the best part of the next day had passed, Orme Denny decided that the strip could not be improved further and the natives were let go. There was no payment. They were happy; they had had their "sing sing". The strip was now hard and safe and no more scares on take-off.

The planes would leave Horn Island at 7 am, arrive Mount Hagen at 10 am and leave again at noon. This brought them back to Horn Island at 3 pm which was (hopefully) a bit too late in the day for Japanese air raids. Cyril would alert Thursday Island when the planes left by transmitting "blind" a few coded letters.

18 flights were made and only twice did the planes have to turn back when the weather proved impossible. Flying conditions were not always perfect; on one trip Captain Nicholls had his carburetors ice up at 16000 feet along with his instruments. The DH went into a spin but he was able to make a recovery as the plane fell through warmer air and he went on to Mount Hagen a trifle shaken by his experience.

That first flight was made on 13th May and the last on 24th. On Tuesday 21st, while the Japanese were making what might well have been the major air battle for supremacy over Port Moresby, these civilian pilots were sneaking their wood and fabric biplanes in over the ranges, unarmed, not knowing what enemy aircraft might be in the area. All told they brought out 78 persons; (history does not record what happened to the other 12); 45 troops, a doctor, Administration officials, planters, miners, businessmen and "an A.W.A. employee who worked the radio watch during the operations."

Captain Denny received a congratulatory telegram from D.C.A. and a letter of thanks from the Australian Government. No



other recognition; certainly not the medal he deserved.

Cyril came out on the last flight. He crossed to Thursday Island and went down to the station. Tommy Weeks the OIC had been to school with him at Ringwood (Vic) but he gave no sign of recognition. He said very little about the trip. When leaving he did ask about an old school friend and then went on his way leaving behind a very puzzled host.

A.W.A. sent him out to La Perouse after a short leave and in October (1942) he went to Rockbank for a "working rest-cure" and stayed there for about 18 months. Percy Day recalls his method of shooting rabbits: "While the rest of us were chasing up hill and down dale, up and down the deep gullies, Cyril would take his rifle, his book and his rug. He would settle down, wait for a rabbit to appear and then BANG. Whereupon all the rabbits would disappear. Cyril would take up his book and read for 15-20 minutes until an incautious rabbit would show its head. BANG again. By the end of the day Cyril would have bagged six or so rabbits without having moved far from his rug while the rest of us were just about dead on our feet."

In August 1944 he was transferred to Townsville Radio; on the train trip north he met Pastor Freund. This gentleman had temporarily taken off his collar and gone to war; his part in the evacuation of troops from New Britain with the "Harris Navy" is told in Commander Feldt's "The Coast Watchers".

Two years later, in October 1946 with the war over, Cyril came back to La Perouse and stayed there for 13 years until his retirement on 21st June 1959. He rarely spoke of the dark days of 1942, but he did once open a steel trunk and bring out his one-valve transmitter, carefully kept all those years. He would speak about Madang and his great love for the town. The medicos had made life much easier by controlling his elephantiasis; even so, his swollen hand was an embarrassment and often he would hide it behind his back in the presence of strangers. After his U.K. sojourn he developed a rich ultra-BBC type accent which he could use with shattering effect on excited or abusive telephone callers.

Then he retired and just disappeared.

He did leave his steel trunk with Allan Hooper for safekeeping. Does anyone know if Allan's widow, Ruth, is still alive? It is possible that she still has the trunk and the transmitter. Although of no pecuniary value it would be a worthwhile exhibit in a projected OTC museum and show just what could be done by skilled men with simple equipment. Also, do any Victorian readers know of Tiny Ternes' widow or his children. Who may have his papers? He had a copy of Cyril's report to A.W.A.; probably the only one in existence (after the fire in the AWA building in 1956) and the archivist would greatly appreciate a photocopy.

I still chuckle when I remember Cyril's coffee cup. A nice squat little blue cup with saucer (the rest of us slobs scorned such refinements) into which he would put his spoonful of Nescafe with great care and then drink it off with relish. But another character had found that it suited him nicely as a shaving mug; when Cyril was on he drank his coffee from it, and when Lord John from Oireland was on he would shave from it. We all waited for the day when their shifts would coincide, but curiously, in all the years, they never did. Not at shaving time anyway.

#### STATELY HOMES

At 9.30 pm on the 21st January we in Sydney had the pleasure of viewing a 45 minute documentary featuring our President Philip Geeves in his role of Historian. The film was outstanding not only in the presentation but for the fine photography and of course Philip's continual narrative. The subject took in Sydney's Admiralty House and Kirribilli House; and Canberra's Prime Minister's Lodge and the Governor General's residence Yarra Lumla. The commentary was first class in content and interest and done in a way that only Philip Geeves could do. His voice was so pleasant it could easily lull one into slumber but the historical and general interest content was such that one did not even raise a yawn. Philip's smiling countenance appeared on numerous occasions; the highlights being his interview with Mrs Tammy Fraser, the handing over of credentials by the Yugoslav Ambassador to the Governor General and the finale, a garden party on the lawns of Yarralumla with Philip as a guest. A magnificent documentary and the only adverse comment that could be made was the time slot. This will no doubt be rectified by a number of repeats and we trust that it is shown in other States.

On the 27th March we also had the privilege of seeing Philip featured in a one hour documentary entitled Dick Smith Explorer. This documentary featured Dick Smith, the electronics king, his family, Philip Geeves and a helicopter. It was an historical show revisiting places of importance connected with Captain Cook's arrival in Sydney and the days of Governor Phillips. The content and performance was excellent and up to the standard of the Stately Homes show. Congratulations Philip.

#### HERE & THERE

Veteran Ron Roger went motoring (with his dog as sole companion) on a four month trip round the top of Australia and, on return, was unlucky enough to be bumped off the road into a tree by a fast moving car coming up behind. Ron suffered four broken ribs and his car a write off.

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Now who was that octogenarian veteran when reporting for duty at Fiskville many years ago found himself held up at the entrance gate by the station watch-dog snarling and not at all friendly; whereupon our colleague reacted quickly by dropping both his dentures and growling back. Believe it or not the dog turned tail and ran for safety!

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One of our enthusiastic veteran "HAM" radio operators had occasion to send away overseas for a replacement of a faulty part and whilst the apparatus was out of order his good wife came up with a brilliant idea "why not paint the house?" If he handled the brush equally as well as handling the key then it sure must have proved a job well done!

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Two Pacific Cable veterans Bill Craig and Jack Turnbull spent a pleasant afternoon with Vi and Charles Carthew during the Xmas holiday season. Bill Craig over from Auckland on a flying holiday. Nonagenarian veteran Jack Turnbull brought Bill along in his car! Conversation never flagged and many and varied were reminiscences recalled with emphasis on the Vancouver and Southport cable station days not to mention Fanning Island with its never ending and fascinating history. The visit of Lord Jellico aboard H.M.S. New Zealand in 1919 and the tennis match Ships' Officers versus Fanning Island cable staff must have been an excellent lost opportunity for the score card to be autographed??? Jack Turnbull produced a full length photograph of the original Southport Cable Station and adjacent staff quarters which he kindly donated to O.T.V.A. archives.

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Tom Heatley, Doonside, and his son on a recent visit to Canada called in on Harold Le Quesne, Vice President of the Western Division of the Teleglobe Canada Quarter Century Club. Harold had them home for dinner and showed them around the city. Tom speaks very highly of the hospitality and our thanks for such gestures goes to our overseas colleague.

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Congratulations to Sid Zuber on his 94th birthday. He spent the day at his sister's home and Charlie Raecke who visits Sid regularly advises that Sid is still OK and kicking on. Any member wishing to visit Sid will find him always at home at the Braeside Nursing Home, 129 Cambridge St, Stanmore. He is also available on the phone 560-2844.

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Norfolk Island often crops up in conversation and there is obviously an interesting historical background apart from its convict settlement days but more to do with the old cable station history .... contributions to your newsletter are welcome.

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The January edition of "Transit" featured Dennis Chambers standing by the picture of the 1946 M.O.R. staff on duty and it reminded me of the time when A.W.A. Manager, the late Harry Rowe, suggested looking round the Wireless House basement and check on the accumulated odds and ends destined for disposal. This picture aroused instant interest so Harry kindly agreed to have it framed and left in my care. For many years now it has held pride of place in the Amenities Section of O.T.C. House, Melbourne, where it rightly belongs and certainly caught the eye of pioneer veterans at their "get together" functions.

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Watching O.T.V.A. (NSW) President, Philip Geeves, on TV describing the old homes of Sydney proved truly reminiscent of his masterful approach when interviewing the octogenarian and nonagenarian pioneer veterans of overseas telecommunication here in Melbourne .... each cassette recording on that occasion will most certainly prove invaluable to research years hence.

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Brian and Betty Williams met with a car accident on the way home from Wagga. The car a write-off after hitting a power pole. Betty kept in Austin Hospital suffering from multiple injuries and Brian allowed to go home under medical care.

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Members of the ham group please note that Bill Henderson, AWA Aviation, Melbourne, is interested in contacting hams. His call sign is VK3ARX R/T only.

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Best wishes for a complete and fast recovery to Doris Brown following her recent heart attack.

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We recommend looking in at the LATROBE LIBRARY, Swanston Street Melbourne, and to enquire at the entrance desk for permission to see our SCRAP BOOK which is well preserved along with other O.T.V.A memorabilia.

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- 21 -

Deepest sympathy is extended to veteran Pat Sykes on the sad passing of his dear wife, Patricia. Our colleague is deeply grateful for the expressions of condolence received from so many friends.

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Popular veteran Guye Russell, Chief Supervisor, National Art Gallery, Victoria, retired 7th March and, at the send-off function, O.T.V.A. (A) sent along greetings and best wishes.

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Bert Dudley, Secretary of the SA Association, retired again in February and is now on an extended overseas trip.

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Also our regrets to Jim Davis, Bill Chant Snr., Brian Williams and Ron Roger for their recent car accidents.

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Our intrepid traveller, Dave Fleming, is still on the move and in good health and calls in to the office when in Sydney. At other times he keeps us well informed of his movements with some beautiful postcards.

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Alban Gregory (90 next July) flew out to the UK to see his family including his grandchildren. Greg is still having marvellous health, still driving his Ford Capri and grumbling about the lack of rain for the citrus orchard with its 30,000 trees. Greg is share farming.

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Stan Gray back in Sydney after 6 months in the UK and the continent.

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Veteran Ellis Smellie and his son off on a leisurely caravan trip up to Darwin and thence across to Perth and ultimately back home to the Sunny State of Victoria. Pretty good going for a colleague at the 87th milestone.

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- 22 -

Veteran Frank McCay, over in the West, is not so well these days and old mates of Frank can write C/- of Brian Morrell, 416 Great Eastern Highway, Midland, 6056, who will forward correspondence received. Brian is Hon. Secretary, O.T.V.A. (WA).

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Norm Odgers recently visited the Eastern States and looked up colleagues and other "hammers" in Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

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Good to hear Bill Jenvey on the air on the Vet Ham hook-up following his serious illness in Brisbane. Bill is staying with his son and having regular physiotherapy.

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Friends of Ray Bailey (CRS) will be sorry to hear that he is in the Prince of Wales Hospital at Randwick. Ray is now 87 years of age and would welcome visits from any of his old colleagues. He can be found in Ward 3, West Wing.

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#### THE LAYING OF CABLES 1858-1866

W.D. Fowlie (Canada) whilst on a visit to Ireland found a book of poems titled "The Bride" in the Library of the Royal Hotel, Valentia, County of Kerry. One of the poems taking up 15 pages of small close typewriting was titled "The Laying of Cables 1858-1866".

Mr Fowlie gave the poem to Bob Scott the Publicity Officer Archivist of the Canadian Teleglobe Quarter Century Club who was quite impressed by the poem. Bob feels that it is a pity the poem was anonymously written and that we do not know the author. Bob has sent a copy of the poem to us and thinking that few would care to wade through 15 pages of poetry, has recorded on a 90 minute cassette ... on one side, in Banjo Patterson style running verse, a full description of 1858-66 struggle to lay the original Atlantic Cable and on the reverse an interesting talk on the early days of the Bamfield Cable Station and its association with Fanning Island cable link.

Any member interested in hearing the tape should contact Gordon Cupit or Charles Carthew.

Bob has also written an excellent book on British Columbia and any member wishing a loan of the book should also contact Gordon Cupit.

THEN AND NOW

(58 years of Radio By Frank Patrick)

In early 1920's conditions were very different to those that the modern Radio Officer knows. R.O.s were generally known as "Sparks" and, in the eyes of some of the old skippers, a necessary but unwelcome body to account for and keep. Radio slowly became recognised as a useful service even if only to get time pips from the nearest coastal Time Signal transmitter. By the end of the 'twenties' they were accepted universally as one of the ships officers.

In 1923, my first ship was SS Boonah (an ex German) OIC Alan Fregtree (deceased), Clif Allison and self signed on to take wheat to Port Sudan and Europe. The transmitter was a quenched gap Telefunken 2.5 KW and had a good night range. The receiver was a crystal set with limited range. The operators were not only brass pounders and brass polishers, they had to be agile with a pencil to find a new point on the crystal as the transmitter used to make the point U/S. As soon as the transmission ended the operator juggled the catswhisker to get a new point. Next trip was in "Carina" another ex German, wheat to Alexandra, Malta and UK. Vernon Nevins (deceased, Clif Allison and self made the trip. Another trip was made in the SS "Ooma" Claude Waite (Senior), Hedley Tyler and self. She had a speed of 8½ knots except when the mate on watch blew the siren. Then she lost a bit of speed.

The junior operators received 12 pound per calendar month, 144 pound per year. The senior was paid 16 pound to 20 pounds per month. Accommodation was good on overseas runs but on the coast, some left a lot to be desired. One ship "Koonda" ran from Kembla to Melbourne with coal. Going north light ship - she would roll, pitch, piledrive and as the operators cabin was over the propellor, a trip to Kembla really tried out the most hardened old salt. There were many colliers running coast runs, and dust and grime seemed to find its way into every thing on board.

There were quite a number of passenger vessels running a scheduled service from Cairns to Fremantle and most oldtimers will recall such names as Karoola, Katoomba, Orungal, Kanowna. Also the NZ Ferry service, the Tasmania ferry boats, the E and A Service to China and Japan, Burns Philp to Singapore. The Blue Funnel in W.A. and W.A. coastal ships. The number of radio officers employed in A.W.A. on Union Steam is not known but there were many. A lot of the well known men have passed on but there is still quite a good muster of elderly gentlemen who attend the Reunion of the O.T.V.A.

A few years ago I spent some time with Global Marine on their drilling ship the "Gloman Conception", then in 1978 I did a relief trip on a 46000 ton Greek tanker. Both ships had all the latest and most modern equipment: Radar, navigation equipment, weather map facsimile machine. The daily wage was nearly as much as one got in 6 months as a junior op. in 1920. I sometimes used to wonder what Jock Mackay (an AWA sea going inspector) would have thought if he had come on board to do an inspection. I thought of the old days when George Pow and self used to

walk down to Siberia carrying a wave meter to check the frequencies 600 and 450 on the old marine spark transmitter Type F and marconi rotary gaps etc.

Very interesting old days when the operators used to gather in York Street Sydney or Queen Street Melbourne to sign the appearance book and then adjourn to the nearest pub and tell lies as to how far they copied VLW VIS or VIP on their favourite crystal. Some used to even carry their crystal, wrapped in cotton wool, in their waistcoat pocket. By 11.30 am on a warm Sydney day, the distance would have doubled from 400 miles to 800 miles. No kilometres in those days.

#### LADIES IN THE COASTAL RADIO SERVICE

It has happened at long last. There is now a lady member of the Coastal Radio Service, one Dianne Hick who has just completed her training as a Coastal Radio Officer at the OTC Training School. In a recent article in "Women's World" (December 5, 1979) Dianne was featured and this story shows that she is extremely keen and happy. Having completed the OTC training course there is no doubt that she will also be very competent. Good luck Dianne, and keep up tradition.

#### FANNING ISLAND

A year or so ago Harold Williams advised that a Mr Lester Gaynor of Boston Massachusetts was writing a book on Xmas and Fanning Islands. Lester Gaynor tells of this story related to him by Clifton Smith, an artillery officer on Xmas in the late 43's.

Cliff sailed for Xmas in October 1943 on USAIT "Comet", a rebuilt coastal steamer. There were 4 cabins forward on deck. One was occupied by a man named Garrett identified as Manager of Fanning Island. The Comet sailed from Honolulu. Since Cliff was the only army officer aboard along with some troops, he was permanent officer-of-the-day. As such he looked in on Garrett's cabin a day out of Honolulu and saw him suffering from sea sickness. So he went in to help him out and talk to him. Cliff noticed several cigar boxes on a shelf in the cabin with what looked like cigar coupons in them. He looked further and Garrett then enlightened him that this was Fanning Island scrip. No supply vessels had called at Fanning Island since hostilities began and supplies together with bank notes had run out.

Without money to pay the labourers, mutiny was threatened. Garrett had therefore obtained permission, sailed to Honolulu and had the scrip printed by the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. The scrip was in pound notes bearing the legend "Fanning Island currency, redeemable at the cessation of hostilities". They were printed in green ink. Garrett was on his way back



to Fanning with the scrip.

Cliff would like to obtain one scrip note if it can be had. Any person able to oblige please contact him, Clifton Smith, Farm Street, Sherborn, Massachusetts, USA, 01770.

(Editors Note: The Editor would also like one of these for the OTC Museum and historical archives.)

#### A RECENT PAGE FROM THAT DIARY

That second week in hospital was not without humour. One of the other patients in a four bed ward had a phone installed at \$1.50 per day and when the paper boy arrived he bought every issue with a racing page. Discarding the news the other sections the form guide alone attracted his concentrated attention and once assured of the winning horse in each race it was the natural thing to contact the bookie!

Then out came the transistor radio with an ear listening attachment and no amount of close watching would divulge whether our punter won or lost. This daily routine became really fascinating especially so because our fellow patient was recovering from surgery!

Came the morning of his release and, when fully dressed, he nonchalantly rang a friend and made an appointment at a golf course 19th hole to "down a noggin or two"! Asked by a nurse about transport came the casual reply quote, "Oh I drove my car in - guess it is still out there...cheerio!" unquote.

Exit a comparatively young man with a philosophy all his own - quite a character!

#### PERTH - RADIO MUSEUM

From veteran Les Owen, in Perth, is a press report on the opening of Wireless Hill, Melville, as a museum featuring a collection of radio equipment ranging from the early bush treddle wireless, American space equipment and miscellaneous gear.

The museum has been arranged around themes to include the history of Wireless Hill, radio and shipping, aviation, war, broadcasting, space exploration and the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

The City of Melville believes the museum will be unique in Australia and add to the growing popularity of Wireless Hill as a mini Kings Park for the people living south of Swan River. The Hill was vested in the City of Melville about ten years ago as an "A" Class Reserve.

Mast anchor blocks used when the Hill was an important communications link have been turned into viewing towers. Playgrounds and barbeques have been built making the Hill a favourite spot for families and picnics. Wild-flower lovers have been visiting the area for years and, in season, can spot donkey orchids, native wisteria and other plants.

For many the museums' assortment of antique wirelesses in their dignified timber cabinets will conjure up memories of the days when radio was the focal point of the familys' social activity.

The 1930's were the golden years of radio and one of the men largely responsible for the prolific success was the late Bryn Samuel, Manager of W.A. Broadcasters for 28 years. During his career Bryn Samuel became Manager of 6ML and assumed duties of general announcer, sports commentator covering wrestling, boxing, tennis and cricket. He helped introduce the now famous cricket descriptions of presumably "live Test Matches" (via cable and Beam Wireless messages!) and simulated sound effects like tapping a pencil against a desk to imitate bat striking ball!

A contemporary of Bryn Samuel was Alwyn Kurts, better known today as a television actor, who started and made popular the community Radio Singing Variety Shows. Later, Alwyn Kurts became a war correspondent.

Another personality, John Luke, ran a childrens' show for 22 years and conducted talent programmes and other projects like "Housewives Choice". On one occasion he played a request number entitled "The Talk of the Town" but the lady who asked for what was then a popular and bright little tune took umbrage and reckoned John had told her friends she was the talk of the town!

The late John Juan of 6WF often recalled another "On Air" incident. Immediately following his "Morning Story" a clergyman regularly came to the studio to conduct a small religious session. Unfortunately the man in question had a habit of tapping the glass window and entering despite a red "on air" light. The frequent interruptions were tolerated until John lost patience and bewildered listeners were to hear an apparently strange twist to the story being told when he exclaimed "Sir! It amazes me that a red light can have such an irresistible attraction for a man of your cloth!"

#### CANADIAN COLLEAGUES

Hal Le Quesne, Vice President, Teleglobe Canada Quarter Century Club has forwarded a list of names and addresses of their members. Anyone wishing to renew old friendships contact Gordon Cupit or Charles Carthew.

#### RETIREMENT PLANNING

In previous Newsletters we have referred to planning for retirement, to the attendance at planning seminars, and advice on retirement to our members. An important item often neglected is the effect on the wife, who up to retirement has been the boss and organiser in the home, has had to make her own daytime interests and amusements and has been left to her own devices. She must also be fully prepared for the day when

her partner is suddenly thrust upon her and therefore included in her previously somewhat independent daytime life.

Members must ensure on retirement that they do not unduly intrude on this independence and on planning for retirement wives must be given full consideration and encouraged to participate in the planning programme.

### THE GREAT EASTERN

A couple of years ago in the Newsletter a number of pertinent and interesting facts were included on the steamer "Great Eastern". Since that time the following further facts have arisen:

The "Great Eastern" was the largest vessel built since Noahs Ark and at that time was considered the equivalent of 5 major hotels.

The "Great Eastern" had 2 power plants; one being paddles and the other a screw with the engines delivering 11,000 horse power. The paddles were 58 ft. in diameter and the screw was 24 ft. No vessel before or since has ever had a propeller this size. The "Great Eastern" had a displacement of 22,500 tons as against 18,000 of Noahs Ark. By the way it is claimed that the Ark was 515 ft. long and 86 ft. beam. There was not another ship greater in size than the "Great Eastern" until the "Lusitania" which was built 50 years later.

The "Great Eastern" was originally built as a luxury passenger ship with the capacity to carry enormous loads of coal for fuel and also large quantities of cargo. Throughout 30 odd years of life, for various reasons its voyages were full of drama and sadly not a financial success. It was sold numerous times normally to pay debts.

The decision for the "Great Eastern" to lay cables was a major turning point in its life and its huge bulk, stability in rough weather, and its manoeuvrability made it ideal for this task. To enable the cable tanks to be installed one of the 5 funnels was removed and some of the engines. One of the cable tanks was so large that at a later stage of the ships career a concert was held in the tank with 1000 persons in attendance.

### IDENTITY

Some years ago we impressed on our members that it is important to carry identification on them in case of illness and accident. This is again stressed and the information should contain name and address, phone number, name and address of next-of-kin, name and address of doctor and, if possible, other such things as blood group and any allergies. These precautions are so essential and would save a lot of worry not only to the injured person but to their families, in the event of accident or sudden illness.

### SPARKERS OF RENOWN

Did you know that Cardinal Gilroy signed on as a PMG Messenger and was trained as a Telegraphist. During World War 1 he was released from the PMG's Department without pay to join the transport service where he served as a junior operator on the naval transport "Bulla". The Bulla was a captured German cargo vessel and was used in transporting the Australian Lighthorse to Alexandria and Sikhs to Gallipolli. At the conclusion of this service he rejoined the PMG's Department.

### T.A.D. NEEDS MORE VOLUNTARY HELP

Many O.T. veterans have the sorts of skills needed by Technical Aid for the Disabled (T.A.D.) to provide specialised equipment and information for the rehabilitation of disabled people.

This voluntary organisation would welcome help in designing and adapting equipment to meet special needs.

Since TAD was founded in 1975, requests have increased by about 70 per cent a year for specialised assistance for people disabled by car accidents, strokes, arthritis, limb amputation, congenital defects, multiple sclerosis and other physical handicaps.

It has been estimated that about 70,000 Australians need special aid to help overcome physical disabilities. In 1979, for example, TAD completed 388 projects and answered 400 requests for information. The wide variety of projects included such items as special eating aids; typing sticks; children's hand-propelled tricycles; modification of wheel chairs; communication aids for people unable to talk; standing frames, adaption of household equipment to encourage and assist self-help.

Such aids reflect TAD's primary aim - to enable handicapped people to overcome their physical disabilities with specially designed equipment, so that they have the opportunity to develop their functions, skill and knowledge and can be integrated into the community.

TAD, which was initiated by a group of NSW engineers and now also operates in Victoria and South Australia, has four main aims:

- . To advise disabled people and those interested in their welfare on the solution of rehabilitation equipment problems.
- . To design, construct, install and maintain aids for disabled people where a commercial product or service is not available.
- . To collect and provide information relating to aids.
- . To assist in finding funds or materials for aids in cases of hardship.

TAD's membership, both men and women, consists of three main categories: Technical - engineers, technicians, electricians, craftsmen and handymen. Non-technical - to assist in administrative work, public speaking, public relations, photography, technical writing.

Subscribing - by offering financial support.

A technical member should expect, from time to time, to be offered a project, usually in his own locality. Members should only accept work that can be completed in a reasonable time and do, of course, have the option of refusal.

Those with the time to spare will find very rewarding work in helping disabled adults and children overcome the isolation and inactivity caused by disabilities.

TAD is non-profit making, non-denominational and non-political. It is registered in NSW as a charity and as a co-operative society.

Further information may be obtained from the co-ordinator, George Winston, at the TAD registered office, 600 Victoria Road, Ryde NSW 2112. Phone (02) 808 2022, or having a talk to OTC Engineer Eric Bachmann.

#### SINKING OF THE EMDEN

An article appeared late last year in the Adelaide Sunday Mail titled "The Day We Sank the Emden". This article was written from information given to the journalist by South Australian Veteran George Rowe. George and the Cocos Cable Station are mentioned in the article and the following is an extract from the story.

Emden had wrought havoc in the Indian Ocean. She had sailed from Tsingtao through the Sumatra Channel, had sunk nine ships, bombarded Madras, had sunk another 10 ships near ceylon and sailed into Penang to sink more ships.

But a decision to destroy the cable station on Direction Island in the Cocos proved her undoing.

It was good enough idea. Australia and South Africa would be cut off from the telegraph link.

The alertness of the Cable and Wireless Company staff, however, foiled the plan of Emden's captain Karl von Mueller.

These men who chose to serve on remote islands and outposts of Empire to relay telegraph traffic along the undersea cables were a colorful breed.

Satellite and radio have put them out of business, stilled their busy morse keys.

The men keep in touch today through their Overseas Telecommunications Veterans' Association.

Just now the association is calling for relics and mementoes of what were challenging and triumphant times. Old cable and wireless men have been asked to dig into their cupboards and collections for items suitable for a museum.

That is how George Rowe, 69, of Hale St, Everard Park, came to brush up on the Emden battle.

He was on Cocos 20 years ago and got together papers and pictures of the Emden and a ceremony 19 years ago to commemorate the Sydney's victory and the baptism of fire it afforded for 60 boys.

They were from the Tingara, original RAN training ship, and the Tingara Old Boys Association went back to unveil the plaque on November 9, 1960.

Mr Rowe was there.

The books and papers he turned up this past week tell of the Cocos naval battle and the raid on the cable and wireless station.

Emden was waiting off Direction Island for a coal ship, Buresk, while a landing party went in to destroy the signal station.

In charge of it was Lieut Commander Hellmuth von Muecke.

Von Mueller had opted for a landing party rather than stand off and shell the island because he did not see need for unnecessary bloodshed.

He thought a ship on the way towards the island was at least 250 miles away because of the strength of its radio signals in messages to the island.

It was Sydney, cunningly broadcasting at reduced strength from only 50 miles away.

Von Muecke's cable cutting was in progress from 6 am. His team blew up the radio mast, but not before the staff had got off two signals ..... "SOS Emden here" by radio and by cable.

Emden jammed the radio signals soon after they started, but Von Mueller did not worry much because he thought he would have a half-day start on whatever ship it was steaming toward the island.

Smoke on the horizon was thought to be the Buresk with its load of coal.

But it was Sydney, 5400 tonnes, racing at 25 knots to answer the dramatic SOS.

At 9.15 am, Captain von Mueller saw the approaching ship change course and take on a different appearance. It was a warship with the white ensign streaming, the red cross of St George plain to see.

His gunners hit the fire control room of the Sydney on its fourth salvo and smashed the automatic aiming devices.

Captain Glossop of the Sydney kept just out of range of Emden's guns and throughout the morning cut the German ship to pieces.

Von Mueller saw his ship shattered, his officers and gunners killed around him. At 11.15 am he decided to run her aground on the reef at Keeling Island.

Von Mueller knew he would lose all his men below decks if the Emden sank, so he chose the reef.

Sydney dashed off to sink the Buresk.

On Direction Island the German landing party and the cable station people watched together the sea battle.

The 42 officers and men under Von Muecke didn't wait around though. They took a schooner from the harbour and in a six-month trek that reads like a thriller, got home to Germany.

A further article on the exploits of the Emden at Cocos appeared in "Sparks", the book of the Wireless Pioneers of America, and taken from "Electricity" a London publication dated 1921 is worth reporting:-

#### THE WIRELESS STATION AT COCOS

Recent light shed on the circumstances immediately preceding the destruction of the German raiding cruiser EMDEN, Captain Muller, at the Cocos, or Keeling Islands, show that a "heathen Chinese" had a good deal to do with the luring of the wily, though very much overrated, Hun Captain, to his doom when he landed his party to destroy the all-important wireless station there, on that 9th of November, 1914. The station is on Direction Island, the most northly of the southern Keelings. A boatload of Germans was sent from the EMDEN to destroy the station, and after landing they commandeered a Chinaman to lead the way, which he did by a circuitous route, having in the interim "given the tip" to a countryman to get there first, which he did, with the happy result that just in the nick of time the operator got through a message which was picked up by H.M.A.S. SYDNEY and the MELBOURNE. "Strange warship off entrance," it read, and "full speed ahead," was the order to the cruiser and the fate of the EMDEN was settled. Her party had lost a valuable hour in blowing up the wireless station and cutting the cable--the dummy one--for the genuine cable was never touched; the staff having

rigged up a decoy cable. The Huns overlooked the fact that there was a duplicate set of instruments very cleverly concealed, with which the service was restored shortly after the raider fled to his doom. The Chinaman, who was a servant of the Cable Company, was suitably rewarded.

#### BOOK WANTED

The Archivist of the C&W Museum and Archives Mr Peter Travers-Laney is anxious to obtain a copy of "The Avesha: A Great Adventure" by Hellmuth von Mucke, which tells the story of the famous "Emden" raid.

Mr Travers-Laney would be grateful to receive a copy either to buy or as a donation to the archives.

Any member who could help should contact Gordon Cupit, OTC, Box 7000 GPO, Sydney.

#### PIONEERS

A recent letter received by the Trustees of the OTC Pension Scheme from Bob Chambers in connection with his father Walter Chambers paints a picture of one who was very proud of his father.

Dear Sir,

I have to inform you that Mrs Margaret Ann Chambers, lately of Rowethorpe, Bentley, W.A. died on August 19, 1979.

Mrs Chambers - my mother - was the widow of Walter Alfred Chambers, a pioneer in Australian radio, who joined AWA from the P.M.G. Dept. in Queensland early in the century and served as an operator at Thursday Island, Pt. Moresby and Australian coastal stations.

He was in charge of the building of the first radio station at Broome, at the 12-mile, about 1912, and when this station became operative he intercepted and reported signals which helped trace the German raider Emden before it was defeated and beached at Cocos Island in the Great War.

During the war, coastal stations were taken over by the Royal Australian Navy and as an operator Wally Chambers was enlisted as a Chief Petty Officer as probably other operators were.

With AWA, later OTC, Dad served at Esperance (VIE) in the early 1920's, then Geraldton, then Darwin from 1926 to 1929 and then Perth radio at Applecross and then Esperance again, working long watches with Frank Bridges and, I think, Mr Ouvrier during the World War.



Early in this war period he received reports of mines seen by ships along Australia's south coast and linked these sightings to the movement of Japanese merchant ships into Australian ports and reported his deductions to Navy Board.

After Japan entered the war, these earlier mine-laying activities were confirmed.

Late in 1942, Dad became very ill, was rushed to hospital in Perth and found to have encephalitis, then a very rare disease in southern Australia. Despite specialist prognosis to the contrary, he recovered, though the disease left him a little mentally slower.

His last years in the service were at Applecross and then Beechboro, when VIP was transferred to the new station there.

Morse radio in the years of his service were comparatively primitive and demanded a lot of concentration and fine twiddling of condensers to pick up weak and elusive signals, often through severe static. Many years of this affected his hearing and he retired, partially deaf, in the 1950's.

He lived in retirement in Como, W.A. until his death in November 1968. His wife was also a Queenslander - Margaret Ann Williams from Cairns - and they were married in 1920 at Albany, in W.A. Dad still in Naval uniform. Children are myself, Bob Chambers, born at Esperance and my brother, Stan Chambers, born at Darwin four years later in 1926.

Dad's years of radio service represented a participation in Australian history during a significant period. Tropical service was arduous pioneering in nature. He was floodbound at Wyndham for a fortnight and lived on damper, jam and goanna. He saw Hinkler arrive at Darwin on his historic first England-Australia flight. He was Officer-in-Charge at Darwin when lightning struck and set fire to that station's oregon mast, tinder dry after years of tropical heat. I think that mast was 180 feet, set and guyed to concrete blocks. A timber radio mast of that size is almost unimaginable today.

Names of fellow operators I can remember from those days are Chown (that's how it was pronounced) Chapman, O.I.C. at V.I.P. Applecross in the 1930's. Hardy (at VIP in the 1930's) McGowan, who was at Darwin in the 1920's and resigned from VIP to go into business, Perry, operator on the State Shipping Service vessel Kybra, of long service on the W.A. coast.

My brother and I would like the trustees to accept our very sincere thanks for the gifts and contact maintained throughout the later years of our parent's lives - a link they very much appreciated. In 1969, the Trustees presented Mrs Chambers with an AWA Telstar 17in. portable television set. After only one repair in a decade this set is still working well and we have given it to a pioneer W.A. Farmer Charlie Overheu -

a friend of my mothers - who is now 97, living at Bentley. It is the only set of four he has found of any use to him, handicapped as he is, with total deafness and the use of only one eye. Charlie Overheu is a legend in W.A. farming and a fine man. His calibre is reflected in his brother who was the 90-year-old who tackled a bank robber in Melbourne about two years ago.

Perhaps some mention in the OTC magazine - which I have not seen for many years, would be appreciated.

Again our thanks and appreciation to the Trustees.

#### KNOW YOUR COLLEAGUES

There are a number of our members who have had very interesting, adventurous and unusual lives and we would like to get their stories in the Newsletter so that they are retained for posterity. Unfortunately the present day communications people do not have the opportunities as was the case with the pioneers and you never know but in time your life could become a story for TV or the films as is the case of Australias historical and Americas western greats. Therefore put pen to paper and send your life story to Gordon Cupit, OTC(A), G.P.O. Box 7000, Sydney.

In addition we are still waiting for stories of the activities of Veterans in retirement. The lack of response has been most disappointing.

For this edition of the Newsletter we have Jack Burgess' story.

#### JACK BURGESS

I was born at Wellington, N.S.W., 8th May, 1905, and was christened in the Salvation Army faith, of which my parents were close followers.

My memory of Wellington is almost nil, as the family moved when I was rather young to Burruga, a copper producing district in the middle west, east of Bathurst, where my father was an engine driver hauling copper ore and mullock from deep down in the earth.

My only memory of Burruga was the first sight I ever had of snow.

The copper field of Burruga did not last long and the family moved to a silver mining town of Yerranderie when I was between four/five years old.

Yerranderie is only 40 miles south of Camden on the upper reaches of the Burragorang Valley - this valley is now part of the Warragamba dam.

In those days our only means of transport to Camden was by a four horse coach which took all day to do the trip, with a horse change half way down the Burragorang Valley.

Hauling the Silver/Lead ore from Yerranderie to Camden was performed by large horse drawn drays consisting of twelve horses hauling about 8 tons of ore and taking 4 days to do a one way trip.

My schooling days were spent at the local school and I retired from School at 13 years of age after obtaining a bursary, which unfortunately I was unable to make use of due to large family and financial difficulties. Instead I took a position with the local store as bookkeeper and local rouse about. I spent 5 years in this job, but during the last year or two took up a correspondence course on radio with Amalgamated Wireless.

I then left the store job to come to Sydney to take up the practical part of the course and work in the factory.

In 1925 I passed all my examinations and was sent out to sea to demonstrate to Red Funnel Trawling company the wonders of radio communication, using a telephone to call their office in town and to keep them informed of the catch and whether we were to come in or stay out. If the catch was good and demand good we would come in, if on the other hand the catch was poor and the market down we stayed out.

I was paid 3 pound per week for the job, but could earn another 2 pound a week if I helped clean the fish. Needless to say I did no fish cleaning, my stomach just couldn't take it, so after two trips, in both cases we trawled in the vicinity of Eden, I asked for a transfer which the company accepted and I found myself transferred from the trawler Burramull of 200 tons to the Largs Bay of 15,000, travelling from Australian ports to England and carrying about 900 passengers. I remained on the Largs Bay for two years, the only item of interest was the wireless staff of 3 had to look all around the globe and collect press and publish a newspaper called the Wireless Press. This in turn meant we had to find a newspaper boy to sell papers around the deck which was sold for three pence a copy. Sydney radio did transmit a wireless press message twice daily for our paper, but we generally lost Sydney at the entrance to the Red Sea.

At the end of the voyage a souvenir copy which, in addition to the news report, covered all deck sports, dancing, boxing, etc and matters of interest to the passengers. This paper was sold for a shilling a copy, of which the paper boy and I received one penny a copy. So with about 1000 copies sold of the Souvenir he did not do so badly. He also received a halfpenny for the daily copies.

After leaving the Largs Bay I served on another 17 ships, covering about 9 years, mostly on passenger ships to the far East. On Xmas eve 1934 I swallowed the anchor and left the s/s Taiping at Sydney on transfer to Sydney radio.

Two events in my life happened whilst at Sydney Radio, the first event happened whilst on duty one Sunday in 1937 when an American Cruiser called me up on its radio (it was not an S.O.S.) and asked that I urgently get

in touch with the police department and request urgent assistance to pick up people who were in the water and drowning as a result of the pleasure launch Rodney capsizing while following the cruiser down the harbour, bidding farewell to crew members who they had met while the cruiser was in Sydney on a goodwill mission.

The second event concerned Kingsford Smith and his plane the Southern Cross. The Southern Cross was carrying the first Australia/New Zealand air mail letters in May 1935 when it blew one of its three engines across the Tasman sea at the point of no return, but return it did to Mascot after a most trying time for all concerned. The first distress message was received at approximately 6 a.m. and radio communication was maintained until the plane touched down in the early afternoon.

Shortly after the Southern Cross episode I sought transfer to the Island Radio Service and was transferred to Rabaul, which was for a period of 9 months which eventually extended to two years, covering absence of normal staff who were taking long service leave. The reason for my transfer was the big money the New Guinea boys were getting and I was anxious to get some as I had just met Daph and wanted to buy a house.

The only event to happen to me in New Guinea was the volcano eruption when Vulcan and Matapui blew their top, most of the A.W.A. staff with families evacuated the town for the mountains at Kokopo about 25 miles from Rabaul along a good road, two of the boys joined two ships which were in the harbour and made for the open sea.

I remained on the job with a young fellow who had only arrived in Rabaul a short time previously. We were able to get on the air and regain contact with Australia, using emergency power from a Ruston Hornby Diesel engine. This event happened on Saturday night, 27th May, 1937, and at lunch on the next day, 28th May, at the New Guinea Club the total residents left in Rabaul number about 8. At this luncheon I was told by the acting Administrator I was to raid any of the local stores and take whatever I wanted to keep the radio contact with Australia open.

After a fortnight the craters died down. I received warm congratulations from AWA and recommendations from the Commonwealth Government for the work Mr Alexander and I did. The staff returned, also the town people, and the following month I returned to Sydney with four months leave and a marriage in front of me.

On my return to Sydney I went back to my old job in Sydney Radio.

When the war came along and the arrival of the American force in Australia there were prospects of me and a crew of radio men following McArthur and his force back to Manila, providing radio communication back to Australia and the world. But this did not eventuate as single men were given the nod and I found myself at the receiving end of this circuit.

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Shortly the powers that be in AWA thought my services would be better served to the Government if I joined the Beam Wireless Service with fast automatic wireless circuits throughout the world. This I did, practically for the rest of my working life. During this period there were times when I was called on to do other jobs and then returning to the Beam Service.

Some of these jobs were:- Demonstrating the reception and transmission of pictures by radio telegraph at the Sydney Royal Show. Prior to this I was in charge of the Sydney end of the Overseas Picturegram Terminal for two years, 1947/1948. The service was quite a novelty then for the newspapers who were picture hungry, covering such events as the wedding of Princess Elizabeth, the London Olympic Games, Don Bradman's successful cricket tour of England, the wedding of Rita Hayworth to Aly Khan. Some time after this I was again involved in picturegrams and Princess Elizabeth. This was the coronation. Due to the time lag of 2 hours between Perth and Sydney it was found that two hours would be additional picturegram time using AWA Perth facilities, and Perth post office was received direct by Sydney. I spent a very nice ten days in Perth assisting and directing staff at the post office, Applecross Transmitting station and Bassedean Receiving station.

Officiating at the International Chess Championships between Australia and Canada at their Elizabeth Street Club, the moves of the players who were located in Montreal and Sydney were made by the Beam Wireless Service. One party would make a move and the move was radioed to the distant station who would in return make a move and this routine was continued until the end of the game.

The first Melbourne Cup result was first transmitted from Melbourne/Sydney using land line facilities and AWA equipment. The pictures of Rimfire winning the cup was in the Sydney newspapers approximately half an hour after the race was run. The picture was taken by the cameras and the development process was made in a vehicle on the way from the racecourse to the AWA transmitting point in Melbourne's Queen Street. The picture was ready for transmission when the vehicle reached the City.

Back in Sydney the Government had amalgamated all overseas telegraph services, Beam Wireless, Pacific Cable Board and the Eastern Australian Cable Company became the Overseas Telecommunications Commission. About this time I was appointed "Control Officer" controlling all incoming and outgoing channels throughout the world, this involved Telegraph, Telephone, Telex and maritime services.

My time was coming to a close. I was back in the Sydney Operating Room as Supervisor with a very large staff of men and women and later on when the new office and staff were accommodated under one roof in OTC House in Martin Place I was promoted to the position of Shift Controller, which I held until I retired on 7th May, 1970.

It was shortly after I retired that I received my second recommendation from the Australian Government, this time it was the Imperial Service Medal which I received from the State Governor before a large gathering at Government House at the end of 1970. Daph was one spectator of this large crowd.

Finally there is the Brush Park Bowling Club. It is a source of enjoyment to me these days to know that I was one of the large group of foundation members who helped to make the club what it is to-day. Although I never won a tournament I came pretty close on a couple of occasions.

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Bill Craig, President of the Auckland Cablemen's Association had a trip last year which embraced Fiji, Hawaii, Canada, UK and Malaysia.

At Suva he had a talk with some members of the Fiji Rugby Union and found that they were establishing a Museum of old rugby relics. They were pleased to receive an old FRU cap from the 1916 cable service team, the year they won the competition. Unfortunately there is no European Rugby Union Team in Suva at the moment. He missed Bob Wright who was away cruising at the time.

While in Honolulu, Bill made enquiries about a passage to Fanning Island but the small plane was already at the island. However he also ascertained that it was unable to take passengers. As the "Bank" line of steamers do not now call at the island there are tentative plans for an air service from Tuvalu. Whilst in Honolulu he spent a most interesting day with Mrs Marion Kelly in the Bishop Museum. Marion is a descendant of the Greig family. Charles Bennie was a great help to Bill with advice and accommodation.

After a week on Vancouver Island including a little salmon fishing with Dave Smith, Bill met up with Jack Woodall, Chris Thomas, Bill Fowlie and Gerald Martin. In Halifax he attended a reunion of the 1921 Wanderers Rugby Team.

In London Bill had lunch with Charles Halsted and his charming wife, at New Zealand House. Later in Singapore contact was made with C. Donough and David Low, survivors of the cable staff in Singapore during the Japanese occupation.

"THE COASTAL STATION THAT WAS" by Tom Bryant

Reading the very interesting item by Tom Hughes i.e. "The Coastal Station That Almost Never Was", makes me recall one incident (amongst many others) that occurred at Geraldton VIN between 1950/1965.

I arrived in Australia in 1950 under the Ex Servicemens' Scheme and was met off the ship by Brian Morrell who had been alerted by a mutual Australian friend who was working in the UK. I went to Applecross VIP almost immediately, and was there, as far as I recall only about two to three weeks, most of that time being spent with Phil Priestley giving me a refresher course on the sounder. I stayed at the King Leopold Hotel Bicton whilst in Perth. My wife and children came out to Australia a year afterwards.

What I am going to expound about occurred in early 1950. Upon the death of Freddie Christmas, I was suddenly informed by Mr William Chapman who was OIC of VIP at the time, that I had to leave VIP immediately for Geraldton, I received my bus ticket and was sent on my way forthwith.

I arrived in Geraldton between 6 pm and 7 pm and it was getting dark. I was like a fish out of water, however I managed to get accommodation at the Victoria Hotel ("Mac" the Hotelier was still there in 1978 though the place has been "facelifted"). I then started to grope my way in the half darkened streets and after asking various "Locals" finally arrived in Francis Street, and entered the radio station around 8 pm and met "Wolfie" and his wife who had apparently brought some food along, as it appeared Wolfie was considering staying on until the morning as the then acting OIC, Johnny Grant was ill in bed, he, Wolfie was hoping that the relief, that was me, would at least arrive in the morning. After the necessary mutual introductions, and being entirely ignorant of the set up, I intimated I would return to the Hotel for the night but "Oh No" Wolfie had really got the "wind up" and insisted to show me all over the Station, apparently expecting me to know the whole box of tricks (and it was certainly a box of tricks as time went on) within minutes, as he had by now apparently decided I had officially come to close the station and take over at 7 am in the morning, I did my utmost to follow the instructions how to open up, start the transmitters, operate the receivers, plus the sounder, the telephones, the motors etc etc adinfinitum, finally I managed to "Break Loose" and after Wolfie had shut the station and handed me the keys, I accompanied him and his wife to their house, where I was left "for dead".

I wended my way back to Marine Terrace and the Hotel - it was then too late to obtain a meal and after a few beers and pleading with the night porter to call me at 6 am, I finally turned in, tired, hungry and miserable.

Morning came and as there was no breakfast at that time of 6 am - however I managed to scrounge a cup of tea after being called, I finally proceeded to the Station, unlocked the doors and arrived "in state", in charge of the LOT - you can guess what my innermost thoughts were. Following the "Great Man's" instructions, some of which I had managed to remember - I switched on everything in sight, without blowing the place up - in seconds the Sounder was going mad, the phone then started ringing and on top of all this the "Charon" was calling me with an urgent ETA message - I told the ship to

hold off, and then rang the Post Office and pleaded with the telegraphist Tom McAtee (who became a very good drinking friend of mine) to slow down as I was not yet able to receive that speed on the sounder, he was then good enough to pass any traffic to and from for the rest of the morning by telephone (incidentally as time went on the sounder became no problem to me) - I cleared the "Charon" and also the "Kybra", being in a state of tripedation all the time, small ships then came up and I began a "battle" with the broken lingo of various local Italian Crayfish Skippers plus Sharkbay snapper boats, during all this time a lady who lived opposite came over about something reference her husband and one of the crayfish boats, during which I managed to persuade her to bring me some sandwiches and a drink, which she very kindly did and would not accept any payment for same. To say the least I was rather in an exhausted state of mind when "Wolfie" arrived to relieve me midday, late, which I found out later was his usual "Norm". After I hand lunch at the hotel, I went round to see Johnny Grant in bed at his house, incidentally as the year went by his wife and my wife Ivy became very close friends, and so did I and Johnny, but that was the future and not the present. Continuing - Johnnys wife took me to the Patients Bedside, where I was not actually greeted as "a long lost friend", after glaring at me he told me to proceed, after I had told Johnny my pitiful tale, he gave me another sarcastic look and just said another "Bloody Pom", he was not at all concerned at my plight and said he would be back shortly. Within a day or so we were again fully staffed.

"Wolfie" eventually retired, then Johnny Grant went to VIE, then dear old "Sago" came, we buried him in the local cemetery, then Ted McDonald came as temporary OIC until he went to VIA and then came my turn as OIC finally being transferred to Broome VIO. However, during all these changes, many incidents occurred, some amusing and some not so amusing, which I would like to recall in future "Newsletters" if I am allowed to, before my memories become too dim. By the way "Wolfie" became a good mate and we often had a few drinks together.

In closing I like to mention two things. One day I asked Johnny Grant was "Wolfie" an Englishman he replied with the words "No Way" he got his "plum in the Mouth" when working with the old school tie Pommie Wallahs at the cable station in Darwin for some years. The other thing was when "Ponto" took over VIP, we people in VIN regarded "Ponto" as something of an "OGRE" often with fear and trembling when his remarks were transmitted, that in his opinion we had slipped up on some job, maybe some were unjustified, but no doubt some were fully justified and it certainly made us keep on our toes - I often have a good laugh about it all and no doubt "Ponto" does also.

I must sincerely apologise, one thing I forgot to mention during my "Grand Opening" of VIN on the fatal day - I missed sending my opening signal to VIP, and I was told off about it in no uncertain terms by Friend Priestly in "high speed" morse? I didn't recall if "Wolfie" had told me about that most essential ritual at the rising of the morning sun.

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Owing to the size of this newsletter, the serialised Cocos Story by Harold Baker is being held over to the next newsletter.