



# NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 PT. 5

OCTOBER 1980

## GENERAL SECRETARY

As required by the Constitution, the position of General Secretary of the Overseas Telecommunications Veterans' Association (Australia) is required to be declared vacant each year and nominations are therefore called for the vacancy for 1981-82.

Nominations close 1st February, 1981, and should be addressed to Charles Carthew, 7 Lantana Street, Clayton, 3168.

The present General Secretary, Charles Carthew, has indicated his willingness to continue in office for a further twelve months.

## CONGRATULATIONS

### To Charles Carthew

All State Associations have advised that the nomination of Charles Carthew as General Secretary has been confirmed. Congratulations Charles on your re-election for 1980-81 and for such a good and dedicated job done over the years.

### To Philip Geeves

We appear to be congratulating Philip Geeves, New South Wales President, as a matter of form. In the Queens' Birthday Honours List, Philip was honoured with a medal of the Order of Australia. Another achievement is a column in the Sydney Morning Herald on Thursdays entitled "Geeves on Thursday". The column has an historical flavour and the public are asked to submit historical questions as is the case with his show with "Caroline Jones" on ABC. Our heartiest congratulations Philip for your most deserved honour.

### To Dick Christoffersen

For his new job as Secretary to the INMARSAT Organisation based in London.

### To OTC (Management & Staff)

For the recent decision giving them ownership of the new National Satellite System ahead of Telecom. Also the kind and gratifying remarks made by the Minister in his interview with the media.

To George Rowe

On winning a two-bowls Singles Championship in his local district. The competition involved a number of Clubs and therefore a pretty good effort by George. The prize was a 43 piece Grosvenor cutlery set.

To George Morrison

On the honour of receiving the special Masonic medallion for 50 years' service in that organisation.

To Randy Payne

On his selection to act in the position of Assistant General Manager (International) with OTC. He took up this position following the retirement of Edgar Harcourt.

VARIATION TO CONSTITUTION

It was brought up at the New South Wales Annual General Meeting that the requirement under the Constitution for seven members of Committees, is insufficient for a large Branch like New South Wales and too many for the smaller associations. It was therefore decided to prepare a Notice of Motion for next year's Annual General Meetings that an Amendment be made to the Constitution under the heading of Committees that it should read "up to 12 members" instead of "a total of seven members".

Such an amendment would allow the New South Wales Association to have 12 members (the minimum required to have enough workers to successfully handle its large functions) and other smaller Associations to operate with only one or two, as necessary.

SYDNEY REUNION

The Sydney Reunion will be held on Friday, 28th November, 1980. The venue will be the OTC Staff Cafeteria in Hosking Place. The function will officially start at 6.00 p.m. but doors will be open for the early birds from 5.00 p.m. Interstate visitors are cordially invited but a phone call to Gordon Cupit, Sydney 230-5840 would be appreciated. The Vice President of the Teleglobe Canada Quarter Century Club, Hal LeQuesne and his wife Katherine will be in Sydney on that date and have advised that they will attend. PCB members particularly take note. It is to Hal we owe thanks for suggesting that wives be invited to reunions.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN REUNION

The South Australian Reunion will be held on Thursday, 27th November, 1980. The venue will be the Public Service Club commencing at 7.30 p.m. Interstate and overseas visitors welcome but Bert Dudley (Adelaide 228-2867) or Brax Horrocks (Adelaide 71-7528) would appreciate prior advice.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN REUNION

The Western Australian Association will be holding their Annual Reunion on Tuesday, 25th November commencing at 5 p.m. The usual venue is the Imperial Hotel, Wellington Street, Perth. The Reunion is being organised by Secretary Brian Morrell who would appreciate all those coming to ring him on Perth 2741274 (Area Code 09). Interstate Vets in Perth at that time will be welcome.

VICTORIAN REUNION

The 24th Annual Reunion of the Victorian Association will be held in the Amenities Room, OTC House, Lonsdale Street on Friday, 14th November, 1980. Overseas and interstate visitors are welcome. Please contact Charles Carthew on Melbourne 544-2514 (Area code 03) to advise attendance or apology.

QUEENSLAND ANNUAL REUNION

At going to press a firm date had not been set for the Queensland Reunion to be held in Brisbane. However it should be held in either late October or early November. Contact Jim Banks on Brisbane 221-6250 (Area code 07).

OVERLAND TELEGRAPH

A very good book titled "The End of Silence" written by Peter Taylor should hit the bookstands in the next couple of weeks. It is a most interesting and enlightening book on the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line from Adelaide meeting up with the cable which was laid into Darwin in 1871. Mr. Taylor has done a great deal of research into all aspects of the Overland Telegraph which has resulted in a very good publication - a must for any good library.

VICTORIAN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Victorian Association held their 23rd Annual General Meeting at OTC House, Melbourne on the 30th May, 1980. Those in attendance were:

Audrey Bright, Pearl Peat, J. R. Hunter, W. H. Shea, R. T. Taylor, E. Trezise, F. Patrick, C. Allison, A. W. Green, N. Stubbs, E. G. Russell, D. Humphries, Jack Curtis, R. Lovett, C. W. Carthew, D. Chambers, Noreen Gosney, L. Foley, W. Bentley, June Springett, C. Benson, J. Kennedy, J. Jordan, R. D. Gault, J. Gowans, A. Arndt, Ian Reed, Sir Albert Chadwick, Shirley Alexander, A. Vagg, E. Turner, S. Harvey, S. Bright, R. Hall, J. Robinson, J. Cornish, K. Stockdale, L. Shepherd, R. Lane, D. Crabtree, J. T. Cooper, J. Birch & F. Ash.

Allan Vagg was elected as President, Bill Shea, Viv Molineux, Les Foley and Noreen Gosney and Bill Bentley as Committee. Charles Carthew once again was re-elected as Secretary and Dennis Chambers took over as Treasurer from Jack McGrory. Unfortunately Jack has not been in good health lately and was compelled to retire from the position of Treasurer after 5 years in office.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINTER MEETING

The South Australian Association held their winter meeting at the Public Service Club on 22nd May. The venue by the courtesy of Ken Collett. Those in attendance were:

Geoff Cox, Ken Collett, Fred Reeve, Ralph Matthews, Claude Whitford, Harold Oates, Dick Evans, Ken Springbet, Cliff Birks, Charles Smith, Graham Little, Hugh Taylor, Keith Parker & Brax Horrocks.

We were indeed pleased to have with us Gordon Cupit and John Walker from Sydney and were particularly interested in what they told us on new developments in communications, also regarding John's particular work in Archives and

Records. Apologies for absence were received from Keith Cox, Bert Dudley, Rocky Gordon, Max Lang, Norm MacKay, George Rowe, Jerrold Shaw and Ron Ward.

SYDNEY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Sydney Annual General Meeting was held on 2nd May, 1980 with the following in attendance:

Jack Sheath, Gordon Cupit, Bill Luke, Jack Burgess, Charles Carthew, Charles Raecke, John Hodgson, John Toland, Margaret Dobson, Joe Collister, Jack Whittaker, Dick Osborn, Bert Waugh, Claude Dalley, George Broadbent, Bob Fisher, Eileen Haran, Elsie Thornley, Trevor Thatcher, Jack Hansson, Horrie McInnes, Philip Geeves, Alf Ricketts, Geoff Day, Ces Watson, Jack Chant, Keith Wilmot, Mick Wood, Nell Donoghue, Orm Cooper, Len Vella, Barry Henson, Derek Hallam, Bill Day, Bill Chant, Noel Martin, Joe Hawkins, Ron Knightley, Keith Burbury, Annette Taylor, Fred Doolette, Ron Turnbull, Norm Harris, Max Dwyer, Ray Baty, Edgar Harcourt, Harry Cook, George Schulze, Ron Beecham, Roy Doohan, Bernie White, Randy Payne, George Maltby, Lou Brown, Audrey Keenan, Doug Temperley, Barry Stockbridge, Eric Norris, Alan Ritchie, Cyril Manning, Joe Patiniott, Alex Cilia, Gareth Thompson, Tony Ebert, Arthur Purtill, Tom Hughes, Len Rourke, Harry Stone, John Lee, John Creswick, Bill Schmidt, Roy Branson, Murray Hill, Charles Maiden, Bruce Collett & Joe Holmes.

All the previous year's office bearers were unanimously re-elected. The meeting was followed by the usual get-together over some eats and liquid refreshments with the usual sometimes embellished stories of the old days.

QUEENSLAND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Queensland meeting was held in Brisbane on the 7th May with:

Jim Banks, Eric Cramp, John Clendinning, Les Doubleday, Alan Jones, John Marshall, Denis Moorhouse, John Norris, John Ponsonby, Vince Sim, Harry Sutherland and Bob Webster, together with NSW Veterans George Maltby, Bill Jenvey and Gareth Thompson.

The present office bearers, President - George Scott;  
Secretary - Jim Banks;  
Treasurer - John Norris;  
Auditor - Alan Jones

were once again re-elected.

It was a privilege to welcome NSW Veterans George Maltby, Bill Jenvey and Gareth Thompson.

Les Doubleday came down from Rockhampton for the meeting and returned via Bribie Island where he participated in some fishing with Eric Cramp.

It was found that Ponto has lost none of his zest to tell good stories whilst Vince Sim looked the picture of health, an inspiration to any serving member contemplating retirement. George Maltby addressed the meeting on behalf of OTC General Manager Bill Schmidt and confirmed Management's ongoing support for the Veterans' Associations.

NOT SO WELL THESE DAYS

Once again we unfortunately have to report a number of our members who have been on the sick list and to these and to all others who have been sick and we have not heard about, we wish a speedy and complete recovery. Those that we know about are:

Dennis Humphries, Frank Dunstall, Al Boord, Hedley Tyler, Jack McGrory, Doug Batten, Jean Buchan, Eric Willington, Doris Brown, Ced Dale, Phil Chapman, Bill Jenvey, Rocky Gordon, Elsie Doohan, Murray Hill, Bede Heffernan, Jack Cornish & Ron Roger.

MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL RECORDS

Thanks to the following members who have forwarded documents, equipment and other material for our museum and historical records:

Jack Turnbull, Cec Watson, Claude Dalley, Arthur Black, Cliff Birks, Harold Oates, Jack Burgess, Rocky Gordon, Claude Waite, Jean Heathershaw, Noel Martin, Matt Jobson, George Schulze, Bill Jenvey, Bill Luke, Cec Bardwell, Bill Craig (N.Z.), Ron McDonald & Des Woods.

HERE AND THERE, NEAR AND FAR

By happy co-incidence Veteran John Mulholland one time General Manager of OTC met Marjorie Reed, both residents of the Church of England Retirement Village, 28 Castle Hill Road, Castle Hill, NSW. John lives in the Kilvinton complex and Marjorie in Blue Gums. Marjorie was John's Secretary in AWA in Melbourne in 1922.

Although the respective units were in close proximity neither knew of their being neighbours and no doubt there will be many more regular meetings.

The meeting brought surprise and spontaneous happiness to both. John Mulholland will be 90 next year and Vets and colleagues Australiawide will be sure to remember to send greetings on that memorable occasion, 19th April, 1981.

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Congratulations to Charles and Vi Carthew on their Golden Wedding celebrated at the end of June.

\* \* \* \* \*

Guye and Jean Russell also Allan and Hilda Vagg travelled to the U.K. and Europe and so missed the Melbourne winter.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Melbourne veteran decided to make a metal detector and later gave a demonstration on a near-by beach to try out his handiwork. Much to his surprise dozens of beer can opener tops were located plus a bunch of keys, the former typical Australian landmarks and the latter a welcome relief to the owner searching nearby.

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Veteran Roley Lane yet another car accident victim. A side-on collision left Roley badly shaken but otherwise unhurt.....the car a write-off.

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Frank McCay has now moved from the "WASA WASA" Nursing Home to the closer "Mon Repose" Nursing Home, Palmerston Street, Mosman Park, W.A. 6012. Visiting hours are any time within reason. Frank has now given up the demon drink and smoking but does appreciate a few sweets. Brian Morrell has been regularly visiting Frank and looking after his needs and would appreciate any of Frank's old friends visiting Frank.

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Fred McNulty serving on the "Australian Pioneer" finds little time at home with the quick turn around by the modern vessels.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bill Jenvey who recently suffered a slight stroke whilst visiting his son in Brisbane, decided to sell out his waterfront property at Nellingen on the NSW South Coast and take up residence at Sunny Noosa Heads where his son has recently moved. It is with pleasure that we report that Bill is practically recovered from his stroke and is one of the first on the air at the regular Sunday Veteran ham hookups.

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Many of our Melbourne members took the northern track during the winter to escape the southern cold. These included Eddie Turner, Vin Duignan, Jack Cornish and Audrey & Sam Bright.

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Sorry to hear that Alex Stewart involved in yet another veteran motor car accident. Luckily Alex was only confined to bed for several days following the accident.

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Recently Charles Carthew visited Mrs. Len Ternes at her home in Balwyn. At 80, Mrs. Ternes is still active and has her time fully occupied with 11 grandchildren.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bill Jenvey tells of the fox shooting expedition at Fiskville in which Percy Day, Geoff Warner, Jack Miles and himself took part. Such excursions were a regular part of the recreation in Melbourne when Fiskville/Rockbank were in their hey-day. This small story should stir up some memories for other members of their out-of-office activities. One particularly is Claude Dalley who was a very active outdoor young man in Canada in the early 1920's.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rocky Gordon living in Mannum on the Murray River reports that his arthritis is getting much worse and he is finding writing practically impossible. Anyone expecting letters from Rocky will unfortunately now be disappointed. He tells me that he recently purchased an Australian Terrier pup which, getting into many mischievous habits, is costing him plenty. One saving factor is that she likes her beer and so Rocky has a drinking partner.

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Claude Dalley advises that the Minister for Defence has taken up his case re war service in the Fijian Volunteer Defence Force in World War 2 and he has now received a communication from the commander of the Fiji Royal Military Forces which states:

"This is to confirm that ex-sergeant C. R. Dalley was enlisted into the Fijian Defence Force on 7th February, 1941 and was discharged on the 23rd March, 1942."

Claude says that the Volunteer Defence Force was discharged when New Zealand troops arrived and took over their duties.

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Jock Cowie recently in Sydney looking extremely well after his holiday in Alaska. Jock is very enthusiastic about that country and particularly the huge oil pipeline project.

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With the co-operation of Manager Jim Robinson, Charles Carthew has upgraded the visits to the sick, disabled and widows and his efforts have been most rewarding and appreciated. Our Association owes a lot to Charles for his activities and devotion to the Associations over the last 24 years. This has only been made possible with the help of Mrs. Carthew. Our thanks to both.

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VALE

W. J. Stubbs

John Stubbs who had been living on the Gold Coast passed away in May. Like so many of our cable pioneers, John joined PCB as a probationary operator in 1919 at Auckland. Three years later he transferred to Fanning Island as a fully fledged operator and in 1924 on completion of his tropical term returned to Auckland where he remained until 1929. This was followed by another 3 year period at Fanning Island as a watchkeeper. Whilst on his second tour at Fanning, John showed promise as an Engineer and was returned to Auckland to take up a position as Assistant Engineer. He followed this with 2 years in the same capacity at Norfolk Island.

In 1938 John was sent to Sydney for an engineer refresher course and after a year was sent to Suva as Assistant Engineer. After 2 years at Suva he was back to Auckland as Engineer/Supervisor for 4 years and in 1945 transferred to Cocos Island as Deputy Manager/Engineer.

1948 saw John in Adelaide as General Supervisor and 6 months later he was promoted as Manager Norfolk Island where he remained until 1952. The next 10 years John served as Manager at Suva, Southport, Cottesloe (twice) and Cocos. 1962 John was promoted to Traffic Superintendent in Sydney and on numerous occasions he acted as Assistant Traffic Manager until his retirement in 1967.

John's retirement years at Surfers Paradise were marred by illnesses of both himself and his wife.

#### Alf McMurray

Alf died in July at Pittsworth near Toowoomba. He was in his 90's and served for many years with British cable companies. At one time he was posted to Adelaide where he was employed largely in an accounts/administrative role. Alf served in the services in both world wars, the second war with the Australian Army in a non-combatant role because of his age. He made enough money from astute real estate dealings to purchase a substantial farm in the Darling Downs which over the last 3 years has been run by his son. Alf's wife died a couple of years ago after over 60 years of married life together.

#### Charles Sandell

Although unable to take an active part and to come to Veterans' meetings, Charles Sandell who has been living for many years at Esperance has kept in touch with the Editor. It is regretted to inform members that he passed away in Esperance early in May at the age of 93 years. Charles was a communicator of many years standing and was the last surviving member of the Sir Douglas Mawson Antarctic expedition from 1911 to 1914.

#### Fred St. Julian

Fred served for 44 years on the Pacific Cable chain, the majority of his time being at Bamfield. On retirement as Supervisor, operating area Montreal, he decided to come to Australia and brought Dickson Hawkins with him. Dickson only came for a visit and their attendance at one of the Sydney Veterans' Reunions was a memorable occasion in that ex-instructor Sid Zuber met some of his old trainees whom he has not seen for 40 years, Fred and Dickson included. Fred unfortunately suffered a heart attack last year resulting in him being fitted with a pacemaker. He passed away in May whilst watching the Queen's visit on TV.

#### George Flynn

Our colleague George, passed away in June at the age of 82. He commenced with AWA in 1921 and served most of his working life on the transmitting stations at Doonside and Pennant Hills. He retired from OTC in May 1963.

George was always well known for his activities as a member of the PREI Council and served his fellows very well in this sphere. He was always conspicuous with his leather attache case with chrome AWA insignia.

In 1928 George was a member of the McRobertson's mammoth around Australia expedition. It was sponsored by the late Sir MacPherson-Robertson and was the longest and best equipped undertaking of its kind ever attempted. The expedition consisted of two 4-ton 6-wheeled lorries and a utility. George was listed as the wireless expert.



On retirement George took up residence at Bundeena where with his wife he undertook a great deal of community activity. As hobbies, George became an avid gardener, and also went boating and skindiving. His wife took on pottery and many of her pieces are around the district.

Bill Bearup

Bill passed away in June at the age of 82. He initially started in communications in 1916 with the Marine Service of AWA and served at sea for five years. He then joined the shore staff as a broadcaster and researcher where in 1921 he took up duty at the experimental station at Kooweerup in Victoria and later spent a year in the UK where he experimented with Marconi Company Engineers on long distance radio circuits between Australia/UK/USA. He returned from the UK in 1923 and joined the Broadcasting Company of Australia and was appointed Studio Manager of 3LO. In 1929 he became that station's General Manager and retained that post until the ABC was formed in 1932. In the ABC he initially held the post of Federal Superintendant and in 1937 was promoted to Acting General Manager from 1937 to 1945. For the last 16 years before retirement in 1962, Bill served in London as the ABC's representative. Bill considered himself too young to retire at 65 and obtained a position with the Macquarie Broadcasting Network and was given the position of Chairman of SDN, the network's Adelaide radio station. He retired for the second time in 1976. Bill was awarded the OBE for his services to radio.

Claude Waite

Veteran Claude Waite passed away 22nd July after a long illness. He was aged 84 years.

Our late highly esteemed colleague began his career in the GPO Adelaide ....joined AWA Ltd. Marine Service....later transferred to Coastal Radio....and from there to the Beam Wireless in Melbourne....subsequently the Fiskville Transmitting Station at Ballan.

During the 2nd World War Claude was attached to the Beam Wireless unit at General Macarthur's headquarters, Brisbane.

In 1971 Claude and Connie received an invitation to the opening in Christchurch, N.Z., of the "Waite" Wing of the museum by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip. During the visit they were given VIP treatment meeting the Royal couple. Claude visited his old school "Christ College" and addressed the boys. Incidentally, Claude's parents came from Yorkshire to Sydney his father having been appointed to the position of Director of the Sydney Museum. Later, he was appointed Director of the Christchurch Museum. He was a well known scientist having accompanied Mawson on a South Pole expedition. Whilst in New Zealand he collected and assembled the skeleton of a large whale which is now famous and exhibited in the Christchurch Museum.

Alby Thornton

Eastern Extension veteran Alby Thornton passed away suddenly 29th June at the age of 71 years. He had been attached to the Collins Gate staff, Melbourne.

The ranks of Eastern personnel located in Melbourne are gradually thinning and old colleagues mourn their loss.

Eddy Saunders

Veteran Eddy Saunders passed away 2nd August aged 66 years. Eddy joined the Beam Wireless Technical Section, Melbourne in 1929.... transferred to OTC(A) 1947....retired due to illness 1963. A foundation member of OTVA (Vic.), Eddy attended early reunion functions but lately had stopped coming along due to ill health. Eddy was always at hand when gear in the operating room needed attention and his workmanship was ever dependable. Unfortunately Eddy never really recovered from a motor-bike accident.

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Our sympathy to Wal Zihrul and Viv Molineux on the loss of their life partners. Also to Edgar Harcourt on the passing of his daughter Kaye.

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From Auckland we have been informed of the passing of Bob Marchant. Bob was recently featured in the Newsletter on his Doubtless Bay Cable Station.

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From London the passing of Henry Eggers in July. Henry will be remembered by Australians mainly for his participation and leadership in international conferences.

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D. L. Bernstein passed away early in May aged 72. Lee helped OTVA (Vic.) in the early days with his colourful posters advertising our meetings, greeting cards, etc....he was most generous with his time and talent as a commercial artist.

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We regret to report the death of the widows of Ray Harris, Tufty Baker & Roy Weston.

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Arthur Black advises that he read in the Pacific Islands Monthly that Bill Frew, who many knew at Fanning Island, was recently drowned when washed out by the outgoing tide at Fanning.

TO PASTUREPhil Chapman

Phil recently retired from the service of the Commission where he held the position of Manager (Coast Radio). In such a role Phil was responsible for the whole of the activities of the Coast Radio Service and has been heavily involved in international maritime communication planning, not only for the normal running of this service but also attending overseas conferences and for the recent introduction of maritime satellites. Just prior to his retirement, he took a leading role in the Australian Delegation to the Radio Conference held in Geneva which lasted for six weeks.

Phil joined the AWA Messenger service late in 1932 and the following year was promoted to office boy in the Purchasing Department of AWA. This was

followed by various clerical positions. In his spare time Phil studied with the Marconi School of Wireless and in 1937 gained his first class Marine Operators Certificate. Phil then saw service at Darwin (during air raids), Esperance, Perth followed in 1943 by two years in the Wartime Marine Service. He was subsequently posted as Manager King Island for three years, one year at La Perouse followed by six years as Manager Rabaul. In 1954 Phil undertook technical duties at Bringelly and Doonside followed by terms back in the Coast Service as Manager at Townsville, Perth and Sydney. In 1965 Phil was selected as the first Manager at the new cable station at Guam where his diplomacy and personality created a good image for the Commission and its people in that locality. In 1967 Phil was promoted to Superintendant Coast Radio Service, a position subsequently redesignated as Manager.

In his own right Phil would no doubt be the most knowledgeable character on the Marine and Coast Radio Services in Australia.

At a Commission luncheon on 28th August, OTC Chairman Bob Somervaille presented Phil with a gold watch as a mark of esteem for his 47 years in the service. Phil will spend his retirement at Point Clare which is situated in Brisbane Waters near Gosford.

Edgar Harcourt

Joined the Commission as Senior Research Officer on 10th November 1947. First editor of staff magazine "Transit". Prior to joining the Commission Edgar served as a wireless navigator in the Transport Command of the RAAF, and during the latter part of the war served in the Duke of Gloucester's flight.

At cessation of hostilities, Edgar attended Melbourne University where he obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree with Honours. Subsequently also he obtained his Master's Degree.

In OTC he was promoted to Secretary in 1953, Assistant to General Manager (International Arrangements) in 1959, Director International Arrangements in 1962 and Assistant General Manager (International) in 1968. He was awarded the OBE in the New Year's Honours 1978.

During the last 25 years Edgar has attended numerous international conferences and taken a leading role as a member of the Australian delegations. He is considered an expert in this particular and important sphere of international negotiations, and his opinions are readily accepted and considered valuable by the delegates of all other nations.

Ray Carragher

Ray Carragher commenced as a Beam Boy in February 1936 and as usual with the Messengers was transferred to higher duties at the age of 16. He was allotted clerical duties and served in the Beam Accounts Section. He was one of those selected for transfer to OTC where he subsequently served in the Customer Accounts Section and later for many years in the Expenditure Section. He headed the Pensions Group in the Accounts area and became an expert in that particular field. He is well known and appreciated by many of our members for the help he has given. Unfortunately Ray has not been well for many years and in May it was decided that he should retire on the grounds of invalidity. We all wish him better health in retirement.

Pat Gray

Pat Gray joined OTC in 1953 in the Coastal Radio Service, his first posting being Townsville. Pat later served at Rockhampton (twice), Rabaul, Willis Island (2 terms), Sydney, Nauru, Darwin and finally Perth. In Pat's

first 20 years with the Commission he only spent two in the capital city. Pat was Officer-in-Charge of Perthradio when the Perth stations were reorganised and took the brunt of the responsibility of the transfer to and settling in at Gnangarra. Unfortunately Pat has not been so well of late and has been retired on the grounds of invalidity.

#### Jack Cornish

Jack recently retired due to ill health after serving 40 years in the Melbourne Operating Room. He joined AWA in 1940 as a Telegraphist in MOR and transferred to OTC on the takeover. Jack was promoted to Senior Telegraphist in 1963 and to his present position of Shift Controller in 1974.

#### REUNIONS

A comment in a recent letter from the General Secretary to the Editor gives room for thought:

"The problem confronting us now is to make the young veterans realise that our reunion functions are not "smoke nights" but a means of bringing the young and the old together - to move about and mix and to learn something about retirement and loneliness and to reminisc - to have an incentive to attend - to be sociable - and above all to keep in touch with the sick and the infirm at least by telephone or better still to make a personal visit."

#### RETIREMENT PLANNING

As advised in previous Newsletters, leading Stockbrokers Randall & Co., conduct seminars on investing on retirement. The next seminar in Sydney is 3rd November, 1980 and in Melbourne on the 17th November, 1980. Those wishing to attend should ring Sydney 241-3941 and Melbourne 62-0611.

Those in retirement or those about to retire who have not taken the opportunity of attending one of these seminars are encouraged to do so as they are quite enlightening. There is no charge to attend the seminar and those wishing to fill in a card have the opportunity of using a number of Randall's services free of charge. They also are placed on a distribution list for regular newsletter on Investments Suitable for People in Retirement.

#### VISITORS WELCOME

Don McMillan's widow has been located in the Scottish Hospital Nursing Home, Brown Street, Paddington. She is located on the 2nd floor, has all her faculties and would appreciate a visit from any of Don's old friends particularly those who served at Rabaul with Don. We were able to supply her with a photograph of Don and of one of the Rabaul houses which pleased her greatly.

#### SLAPS

Amendments were recently made to the OTC Staff Life and Pension Scheme and a number of our members both retired and serving will obtain quite substantial benefits under the new scheme. One of the better aspects of the revised scheme is that members can retire between 60 and 65 without the substantial loss under the surrender value clause of the old scheme.

Our thanks go to the Trustees for their hard work and interest particularly

to Tom Hughes the contributors representative who has spent many long hours on our behalf, not forgetting Jack Hansson and Norm Harris who were so helpful in the early planning stages of the new scheme.

#### THE GREAT EASTERN

The information gathered on the "Great Eastern" seems to be unending and from one of our colleagues in the UK we have the report that the Great Eastern was built at Samuda's Wharf (Isle of Dogs) Millwall, London during the period from 1854-1858.

She was built sideways on to the river and on launching day refused to go. Many hydraulic jacks were made by Messrs. Tangye & Coy but without results so after several attempts the event was abandoned to await the spring tide. No-one ever saw the ship take to the water, opinion was she was never to go but one morning there she was in the river placidly floating at her mooring lines. This was three months after the original attempt to launch.

Some of the Great Eastern's anchor chains were used years later as "drags" at the launching of the Queen Mary.

There were several "Greats" - "Britain", "Western" and "Northern", the latter has laid on a reef outside Zanzibar since 1903 where she went aground returning from a cable repair.

#### JAPANESE INVASION

Following the story of CYRIL URQUHART, Hugh Taylor has forwarded a copy of his report to AWA which relates his escape from Manus when the Japanese invaded.

"I beg to report that at the commencement of hostilities with Japan the following precautions were taken at Manus Radio Station; a weatherproof carrying box was constructed to hold either Type 242 or Type 3A transmitter, Type B receiver, H.T. batteries and aerial gear etc. This was cached at the native village of Tingo, about 8 miles in the interior of Manus, together with two six-volt accumulators, ten gallons of benzine and a box containing spares etc. for effecting any necessary repairs.

The charging engine and stocks of benzine at the station were removed to a small shed some distance away. As the Type 3A transmitter was in use the Type 242 was sent out to the cache and arrangements made for the speedy disconnection of the Type 3A and receiver should time be available to get them away in the event of an air raid. Owing to the possibility of the station boys deserting I decided to take my own receiver (Eddystone Four) as this was much lighter and more economical on batteries than the station receiver, and this I eventually did.

At 7.50 a.m. on 25th January, seven Japanese seaplanes raided Lorengau with so little warning that they were diving to attack as I removed the receiver and I was unable to get the transmitter out. High explosive and anti-personnel bombs were dropped but fortunately the shooting was bad and only the latter type landed near enough to the building to do any damage. The main damage done was to the fibro walls which were badly shattered and to some of the instruments in the office. Considerable damage was done also by machinegun and cannon fire. The raid lasted half an hour.

Although most of the office was wrecked, the transmitter and station receiver were OK and I was able to immediately notify Moresby Radio at the request of the District Officer. I then removed all undamaged gear, codes and confidential documents away from the target area.

At 12.10 p.m. we were again raided by five planes. During this raid a high explosive bomb landed within six feet of the office and blew it completely off the house, several of the mast stays were cut by machinegun fire and the store at the eastern side of the house apparently received a direct hit. This raid lasted forty minutes.

At 1.5 p.m. three planes returned and subjected the whole township and surroundings to intense machinegun and cannon fire for twenty five minutes.

Following this raid the District Officer and the Lieutenant in charge of the section of AIF stationed at Lorengau decided to fire the township and take to the bush as it was expected that a landing might be made early the following morning. The rest of the afternoon I spent gathering up and burning all papers and documents and destroying all undamaged instruments and prime movers. I also burned all codes and secret and confidential General Memos.

As the house was fibro and steel no great damage was done by the fire except to the flooring, most of which was destroyed. The mast was dropped to the ground also.

Except for that part of the verandah near the office and a part at the back where the cement base of the office steps had fallen through the roof, the steel framework of the house appeared to be undamaged. The frameworks of the native quarters and engine room were also undamaged though all fibro was badly shattered. One tank was riddled with machinegun fire and the other was missing. The Electrolux refrigerator, which was untouched, I had removed to a small weatherproof shed a few days later on the off chance it might be recoverable at some future date.

In all approximately fifty bombs were dropped in the three raids and one native was killed.

During the afternoon, the AIF destroyed their three portable wireless sets but I was able to save their Briggs Stratton charger as the station Delco charger had been giving trouble.

At 6 p.m. Mr. R. F. Armstrong (Administration Medical Assistant) and I moved out to Tingo with the wireless gear and communication was re-established with Wau and Moresby the following morning. The official callsign was dropped and my christian name used instead. (This practice was adopted throughout the Territory.)

Later in the day the twenty six members of the AIF, the District Officer (Mr. Vertigan) and Patrol Officer (Mr. Hamilton) followed us to Tingo.

At this juncture the lieutenant in charge of the AIF tried to take over control of the wireless station and issued instructions that the transmitter was not to be used without his or the sergeant's permission. I spoke to the District Officer about this, pointing out that the Territory was not yet under military control and also that as the object of the enemy was to destroy the Territory's communications this would be playing into their hands as the official stations were not only concerned with their own messages but with relaying traffic from outpost stations and seeing that there was as little delay as possible in

traffic reaching its destination from the various points of the Territory. I thought the risk of the station being located from the air was very small and it may be of considerable use to others. No further trouble was experienced after this and communications were maintained until April 8th.

On February 2nd, camp was moved further inland to the native village of Bulihat and we remained there until the Japanese landed.

On March 8th planes flew over and appeared to be searching the eastern end of the island. They later dropped a few bombs on Lorengau.

During the whole time we were in the bush a searching watch was kept at various times of the day for any signals from the Rabaul area.

On April 7th a message was received from Pelloluhn (VKJ7) stating that two enemy cruisers and two destroyers had been sighted steering towards Manus and the following morning at 6 a.m. the ships steamed into Lorengau harbour accompanied by a transport. Several planes flew up and down the coast during the day bombing various points. Our patrols later reported that about four to five hundred Japanese had landed.

On the afternoon of the 9th, large enemy patrols were reported to have penetrated to within an hour's walk of Bulihat so it was deemed advisable to leave for a camp in the interior some miles off the track where stores and the emergency wireless gear had been sent some time before. At 7 p.m. that night Messrs. Hamilton & Armstrong and I left with the carriers and the rest of the party followed next morning.

On the morning of the 11th it was decided that as the chances of remaining hidden in the bush for any length of time were very small owing to the possibility of the natives giving us away, it would be better to try and get away in a small ketch we had hidden on the south coast. Owing to this change of plans I was unable to destroy the emergency transmitter and receiver and the station receiver and a private transmitter I had cached at another spot.

We reached the coast on the evening of the 13th but owing to the caution necessary in approaching the ketch (Edith) and also in getting her away it was 2 p.m. the following day before we left the coast. Ten of the party sailed in a large launch and the rest of us in the Edith. Messrs. Armstrong, Hamilton and I kept the watches and I did the navigating, setting a course for Bagabag Island to the north of Madang. Owing to the number of reefs on the south coast of Manus it was necessary for the Edith to anchor for the night at Mbuki Island. Bagabag was reached at 10 a.m. on the 15th.

I took the set ashore here and contacted Moresby to find out if Madang was still in our hands. The Navy advised us to proceed to Bogajim (south of Madang) and make inland to the Upper Ramu.

Leaving Bagabag at 7 p.m. we arrived at Bogajim at 9 a.m. on the 16th, the voyage from Manus having taken 67 hours. Moresby was notified of our arrival on the mainland.

Carriers were engaged at Bogajim and the party started inland at 10 a.m. on the 17th. The track taken was across the Finisterre Range and along the Ramu Valley for three days, then crossing the Bismark Range at an altitude of about

7000 feet we arrived at Upper Ramu at 4 p.m. on the 17th a total distance of 110 miles.

At Upper Ramu I took over operation of their wireless station for a few days until instructions were received to proceed to Mount Hagan (a further 180 miles inland) for evacuation to Australia.

Mr. Penglase, who had just been appointed Military Administrator for the Madang district, asked me to remain and take charge of the wireless services in that district. This I agreed to do but his request to headquarters at Moresby was refused and I left Ramu with a small party for Mount Hagan on May 5th and arrived there on the 16th.

On Monday 18th I flew to Horn Island and sailed from Thursday Island for Cairns the same evening on S.S. Wandana and arrived on the 22nd.

The ship was met by an evacuation officer who refused assistance to any evacuee until an agreement was signed to refund all money which had been, or would be, expended on his behalf. We were then accommodated at hotels until we left for Sydney by train on the following Tuesday.

With regard to the wireless installation I brought from Manus, as this would have been no further use after leaving Ramu I left it at that station for the use of the military administration and a receipt for it is attached hereto. The spare "X" crystal mentioned was the one originally intended for Pak Plantation VKX5 and I gave it into the personal custody of Mr. Penglase."

#### EXILES CLUB

With great regret the Secretary of the Exiles Club in London has advised that in view of the increasing requirements of Cable & Wireless expatriate staff, the Management Committee had reluctantly decided that the Club's accommodation be restricted to bona fide members with priority for expatriates, also that temporary membership is not permitted.

It would appear that they are unable to take prior bookings and any Veterans going to the U.K. would be wise to make alternative accommodation arrangements and on arrival in London contact the Club in the event that they might have a vacancy.

#### OTC STAFF MAGAZINE "TRANSIT"

The OTC historical archives are endeavouring to get two complete sets of "Transit" and would appreciate donation from any members who have the following copies:

1951 Vol 4 No. 3  
1953 Vol 6 No. 1  
Vol 6 No. 2  
Vol 6 No. 4  
1954 Vol 7 No. 4



### HISTORICAL OBELISK

An interesting feature at Point Lonsdale in Victoria is the Marconi Memorial Obelisk which contains the following inscription:

"From this spot on 12th July 1906 the first overseas wireless message from Australia was sent by:

Lord Northcote, Governor General  
Sir R. Talbot, Governor  
Hon. A. Deakin, Prime Minister  
Hon. A. Chapman, Postmaster-General  
Hon. R. A. Crouch, MP for Corio, and  
Marchese G. Marconi"

### FANNING ISLAND CURRENCY

Following the story in the last Newsletter on the Fanning Island currency, Arthur Black forwarded one of the notes for our Museum. Arthur was Manager of Fanning between 1945 and 1947 and states that Ron Garrett's currency was still trickling into the Burns Philp store. Ron was the Manager of the plantation at Fanning and not a Cable Manager. He was awarded an OBE for his services to the American garrison on Fanning. He died some 3 or 4 years ago in New Guinea.

It was also ascertained that Randy Payne, Lou Brown, Noel Chapman, Keith McCredden and Bruce Collett are in possession of these notes. Their particular copies were sent by Bill Frew from Washington and came under special mail covers by Row Boat Mail. The Row Boat Mail happened because of a young couple rowing across the Pacific and carrying a few such special items. Bill Frew happened to serve at Fanning Island plantation at the same time as these cable gentlemen.

### MELBOURNE - COMMUNITY SERVICE

Attention is again drawn to the commendable voluntary efforts of "TOC H" in respect to the free installation of a warning red light in the front window of the home fronting the outside street.

The alarm system is battery operated, neatly wired and regulated by a switch or switches within easy reach preferably in the bedroom and toilet.

In the event of an emergency the conspicuous signal is seen by neighbours ...police and/or ambulance alerted...a community service justified.

A donation helps reimburse obvious expenditure incurred.

### ROAD SAFETY

- Almost 60% of pedestrians killed are over the age of 50.
- Most pedestrians are struck by cars simply because the driver DOES NOT SEE THEM.
- Drivers face visibility problems: \*lights reflecting on wet roads \*wet or fogged-up windscreens \*glare from oncoming cars. Drivers just cannot SEE a pedestrian dressed in DARK clothing.

So, give YOURSELF a chance .... wear light coloured clothing and "BE SEEN BE SAFE".

A QUOTE FROM "THE THIN RED LINES"

In 1944 C&W directors were invited to a General Post Office meeting in connection with the second front. It was pointed out that a fantastic number of words from American correspondents could be expected. One American delegate present at this conference said "you guys don't realise that this is the biggest story since the crucifixion". "Well", came the austere reply, "that was adequately covered by four correspondents".

THAT DIARY ONCE MORE

In 1952 an OTC Training School discussion group was formed in Melbourne meeting through the lunch hour each Wednesday. The attendance continued to improve so AWA Ltd. Management kindly offered the use of their Marconi School with more spacious accommodation. Speakers from the Fire Brigade, Police Dept., Water Supply, Gas & Fuel then, later, business houses brought their own equipment and presented educational documentaries. When changing over from Queen Street Wireless House to OTC House in Lonsdale Street the group continued on with the Amenities Section as the venue. A library was built up. A pleasant memory now.

RETIREMENT PLANNING

It is well worth while to visit retirement villages, now an accepted part of welfare planning.

Ill health and infirmity means a compulsory change in life style and ultimately a decision must be made.

By studying different means of readjustment whilst still enjoying good health is akin to earlier precautions taken in regard to property and life insurance. Retirement planning is well worth while.

LOST MEMBERS

We seem to have mislaid a number of our members whose mail has been returned undelivered due to these members having left their addresses and unfortunately we do not have a forwarding address. Any member who could help would they please contact Gordon Cupit, OTC, G.P.O. Box 7000, Sydney or telephone 230-5840.

Lil McCarthy (Victoria), John Blackley, Gordon Berry,  
Bill Danaher, George (Pat) Riley, Bill Telford and  
Arthur Whittaker all from NSW and also Ron Carter (ex PCB)  
and Col Waters.

COCOS ISLAND WAR YEARS

This is a continuation of the story written by the late Harold Baker, the first part of which appeared in the October 1979 Newsletter.

"It was considered that a possible source of leakage of information was the number of people involved in the packing and loading of stores on to the relief ship at Colombo. Strict measures were taken to plug this leak. All stores packages were to be marked with a single letter only, the date of final

collection of stores was kept a close secret, and to make quite sure, the stores were loaded on to a small ship which left Colombo, not destined for Cocos, but for Trincomalee, on the other side of the Island, where the real relief ship H.M.I.S. Sonavati, was waiting to take on the stores and passengers. And it was for "Trinco" that I left Colombo by train early in March 1943 to join the first relief ship for Cocos of that year. Not that anybody ever even whispered the word "Cocos". The whole operation (and each trip was officially allocated as an "Operation") was No. 1 top hush-hush, the only word ever used for our destination was "James". It had previously been "Graham" and before that "Jones" but in that month it was changed to "James" and "James" it remained for the next year. The value of the use of a cognomen for Cocos is rather open to question. No attempt had ever been made to spread the impression that our activities had ceased there, so for three years thousands of people, who had seen Cocos from ships in peace time, or had read or heard of it, used the word quite innocently and openly because they had never any inkling that there was anything secret about it, or that we were supposed to have ceased functioning there, while those of us who were in the secret that there was a secret went around mumbling "James" or "Brown" or "Jones" into our beards and looking furtively over our shoulders.

H.M.I.S. Sonavati sailed from Trincomalee on 13th March 1943, much to the disgust of the skipper who considered the odds against him were heavy enough without tempting providence to that extent and he took a gloomy view of our immediate future. The little ship was smart and clean but badly overcrowded. Indian troops took up every inch of space on the main decks while their officers and ourselves (Tufty Baker, Frank McCay and Brax Horrocks) were accommodated on the tiny "shade" deck below the bridge. There we slept, ate, dressed and washed, or not, according to whether we could scrounge any fresh water, always an acute problem. The Captain's pessimism was not justified. We had a calm and uneventful voyage down: a very pleasant voyage except for the uneasy feeling after the first few days that we were sailing through enemy controlled waters, headed straight for the Japanese "Co-prosperity Sphere", but there certainly wasn't much use worrying about it. So for four more days we sailed through sparkling but suspect seas and eventually reached "James" with nothing more exciting than a couple of pings on the Asdic and an engine breakdown for two hours.

We found the Cocos staff fit but dry. They had run out of liquid comforts and lost no time in getting the stores ashore and to get a drink before, as they put it, "the rats got at it", but whether they meant the Japs or the incoming staff was not quite clear. It was everybody's one thought to get rid of the ship as soon as possible, which seemed a little ungrateful but was prompted by the thought of what a pretty kettle of fish there would be if the Japs came over and found the ship in the lagoon. Japanese planes had been over since before the new year but the reputation the enemy had built up for the efficiency of its intelligence system had made everybody jittery for the safety of the relief ship. However they didn't come on that occasion and H.M.I.S. slipped away in the comparative security of the dark, leaving us feeling slightly forlorn and a long long way from any friendly soul.

However we soon settled down to normal island and office routine and time slipped by easily enough as it does in these quiet places where every day is the same as many before and after it.

One incident occurred fairly soon after our arrival which made us realise we were not too well organised for quick action. At dusk on one calm evening, our peace was disturbed by an alarm from the infantry unit on our island. By the time the alarm was raised and other people had gone running through the breadth of the island to positions from where they could look out over the open sea, the short tropical dusk had closed in and there was nothing to be seen. However the sentries were insistent that they had seen a ship, one, at least,

was a senior N.C.O. with a reputation for reliability, and there was nothing to it but to accept the report that there was a ship, where no ship should have been, at least not the sort of ship which would do us any good. Nobody got much sleep that night - the small infantry unit was at action stations the whole night and we were busy organising our own plans for dealing with a landing. At first light many eyes were anxiously searching the horizon which mercifully showed nothing more than an unattractive looking waste of grey water.

Whether there was a ship or not we shall never know but it did at least act as good "life boat drill" for us. Our plans in the event of an enemy landing were very simple. We hoped to have enough time to do three things - first of all, and of paramount importance, to send warnings to the authorities at Colombo, secondly to destroy all records, papers and anything else likely to be of value to the enemy and thirdly, to escape. Escape of course, at the very best, meant nothing greater than a journey of five or six miles, to another island, where we might hope to stay hidden in the bush for a short period perhaps a day or two at the most. Our theory was that if the landing was intended for permanent occupation, we would, at least be out of the way at the beginning. The Jap is notoriously at his worst in his treatment of civilian prisoners during the first flush of victory. We felt a faint hope of being treated more reasonably if we were found some time later. Also if the raid was merely a smash and grab affair, and supposing the enemy re-embarked leaving the smouldering ruins of our office behind and the cable heads smashed, we knew that we could go back and if we couldn't have got some sort of communication going in a few hours it wouldn't be for lack of planning. We liked to think that we could be talking to Perth W.A. within 4 hours, and re-establish relay working, at least one way, within 48 hours. This latter figure included building a new office, hence the delay. Perhaps this was shooting a line but we became so highly organised that it was almost a pity that we never had the chance to try.

Six weeks after our arrival, in early May 1943, the Japanese resumed periodical aerial reconnaissance, after an absence of over four months. At first they made monthly visits, within the first ten days of each month, then they became more interested and stepped up their programme to every ten days, almost regularly. We called them the "Tojo Express" (after an article on Wake Island published in the Saturday Evening Post) eventually shortened to "Tojo". Sometimes they used a large flying-boat but mostly they made use of their heavy Navy twin-engined bomber. The reconnaissance procedure varied - occasionally they were obviously in a hurry to get home and not very interested in their job. This meant a routine two or three circles right round the group, then off to the north after a total visit of 20 minutes or so. At other times they were most conscientious, or inquisitive, and would run up and down our island at double tree-top height and banking over as they passed in front of the buildings so that they could look in our doors and windows. And how short-sighted they would have to be not to see every sign of occupancy and suspended activity. The "suspended" part consisted of our leaving the office to run itself while we hid behind coconut trees, within convenient reach of a slit trench in case "Tojo" turned nasty. But to any camera, or to any sharp pair of eyes, there were a dozen obvious signs that the station was a going concern. Two or three times "Tojo" came on washing day and there was our week's washing fluttering gaily in the breeze. The mere fact of seeing our washing flying on any one Monday should have been sufficient indication that here was a British community. There was a school of thought who advocated changing washing day, or having the clothes dried in bits during the week, but the die-hards argued that this savoured of defeatism. Monday had always been washing day and we weren't going to change it for any so-and-so "Tojo". Another time they found us with a launch and lighter working on the moorings of an aircraft-buoy, and on another occasion we had an open cable trench snaking across the island where we had been working feverishly trying to lay a new length of underground cable between their visits.

Nothing we did seemed to impress "Tojo" very much until one day they came out of schedule, only five days after their previous visit, and were rewarded by the sight of a Catalina on one of the aircraft moorings. This shocked them so much that they went away for about 20 minutes, then returned at such a terrific height that they could hardly be seen and dropped a stick of bombs making a most satisfactory series of fountains in the lagoon, but missing the Catalina by some 80 yards. The "Cat" was carrying some distinguished passengers. It was on the Perth-Colombo run, then extremely hush-hush, being run by that fine Australian concern, "Qantas Airways". It was the second occasion on which "Qantas" had stopped off at Cocos, and after "Tojo's" unfriendly reception, likely to be the last for quite a time. The general impression was that Cocos wasn't going to be a healthy place from then on. "Tojo" had caught us out at last - the first time they had managed to find a vessel or aircraft in the lagoon. The distinguished passengers thoroughly enjoyed themselves; they had bathed naked in the glorious clear waters of the lagoon, we had given them the best lunch and coldest beer obtainable and they had been harmlessly bombed. We rounded off their visit by taking them into the office where one of our brighter boys canvassed them to the extent of a GLT each, against eventual repayment in Colombo.

They left us with happy memories of their visit but with rather a gloomy outlook on our immediate future. We felt that the nice game we had played with "Tojo" had been broken up and that they would never trust us again. Nor did we trust them, and it was all hands to the shovel for the next few days while bigger and better holes made their appearance somewhat further away from the office than our previous shelters.

"Tojo's" reaction however was rather surprising. Their visits became more irregular and infrequent and when they did appear it was well to the south or north of the group, right away from our island. Although, apart from throwing coconuts at them, there was nothing much we could do to retaliate. We had expected to be promptly wiped out instead of which they seemed to treat us with the greatest caution. All very puzzling.

If Monday was washing day, Sunday was equally firmly established as curry-tiffin day. When Cable & Wireless Mess was "at home". It was also a favourite fishing day and great was the competition to book the "Daphne" the grand old staff boat, for Sunday morning. The idea was not only to get outside the lagoon and catch something really big but also to come back with it just before lunch time, to have it weighed and measured before an admiring audience and to be able to talk about it all during lunch to an audience rapidly becoming less and less admiring. But of course it was the gigantic monsters which got away which provided most of the fishing conversation. "Wouldn't it break your ruddy heart" was the invariable ending to one of our Australian (Brax Horrocks) enthusiast's stories, so "break your ruddy heart" became the catch-word for all misfortunes small and large, at Cocos then. After curry-tiffin time was singing time and the Mess Room shook with the old songs lustily bellowed by voices strengthened and lubricated. We were lucky for one long period to have two young army officers (Bill May and Ronny Runegal) who both had really good voices. They lived on another island, the only two British officers on that island, but they were able to pass a lot of their time practising singing together, and we reaped the benefit on Sundays.

We also had a naval rating who played the piano splendidly. He brought new life into the old Mess piano and would hold an audience entranced for hours while he dodged from classics to swing.

We were a most democratic community in 1943. There were only four army officers and I was the nearest approach to a Naval Officer. The R.A.A.F. were represented by a Sergeant and an L.A.C. (George Sneyd & Julian Hay). Morale

was high and there was seldom a dull moment. Some cricket gear arrived and this started a great boom in the game. The Indian soldiers joined in this and inter-island matches were arranged and played with enormous keenness. Soccer was always popular - most of our staff were a bit too old for this game but we had one beefy young exponent (Peter Wolfe). He was much of an age with the navy boys, who were mostly keen soccer fans. Their great ambition was to beat the Cocos Malays, who play quite a high standard, but they never succeeded in this. Sailing races, using the Cocos "Dukong" or sailing canoe, were most popular and for those few of us who had golf clubs, there was a comic little 9-hole course on Home Island. This golf course was a constant source of pleasure to me, not only for the chance to hit a golf ball around again but also because I equally enjoyed the sail over and back. I wondered how many golf courses there were in the world to which one normally went by sailing boat.

My usual golfing opponent was my old friend A. R. Elton Young, who had been in the Eastern Extension Company for some years, and was then employed as Secretary to Mr. Clunies-Ross. It was a sad blow to us all when he died suddenly of a heart attack in October 1943. He had been at Cocos for many years and was most popular amongst the natives who felt his loss keenly.

The end of 1943 found us much more confident than we had been nine months before. It was generally considered that the Japs by then had much too much on their hands to be able to think of further southward expansion. They still kept an eye on us but one had the impression that their reconnaissance had become defensive, instead of offensive as previously. But "Tojo" gave us one more nasty moment before my year was up. Our relief ship was due, the first for four months and we were excited at the prospect of mail and fresh food. Her E.T.A. was 0800 hours, but by 1000 hours there was still no sign of the "Sonavati". No "Sonavati" but there was the all too familiar drone of a bomber's engines, sometimes sounding loud and close and sometimes almost lost in the continuous roar of the surf. I remember reading how the Americans at Wake Island were worried by the surf when they listened day after day for the Japanese bombers who spread death and destruction amongst them, and had our visitors been more aggressive we too would have undoubtedly found the sound of the surf a constant worry. But this time we really thought that the fat was in the fire. If the ship was just over the horizon the Japs must have seen her, coming in from the north as they did, and they had either sunk her or would call in such reinforcements to make certain that she would be sunk. So I sent off urgent signals to the Admiral at Colombo and then there was nothing left for us to do but to wait. We had had lots of practice at waiting, but this time it seemed just a bit harder than usual. It wasn't until 36 hours later that we learnt that the "Sonavati" had turned back to Colombo three days earlier. She had met some submarines and dropped all her depth charges and rightly thought she ought to get some more on board before going still deeper into enemy waters. So once again "Tojo" was out of luck - had the "Sonavati" come at her scheduled time they would have found her snugly at anchor and busy off-loading.

And so we kept out of trouble by what seemed to be a series of miracles, and all the while the cables worked steadily, loaded to capacity with messages that were helping to plan the doom in store for Japan. In the words of the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Fleet, the Indian Ocean cable system was of "inestimable value" in the war against Japan. In the early part of 1944 the world held its breath waiting for "D day" in Normandy and we in Cocos knew that the islands were safe from Japanese invasion. They were, unfortunately, not yet safe from Japanese attack from the air. Loss of life and damage was caused by bombing raids later in 1944. Once again the Company's staff and property escaped damage, but that is a story of events after I left the islands and, I hope, will be recorded by an abler pen than mine.

Note: Staff at Cocos at this time were:

<u>Manager:</u>	Tufty Baker
<u>Engineer:</u>	Frank McCay
<u>Watch Engineers:</u>	Bruce Sutherland
	Pat Sykes
	Peter Wolfe
	Brax Horrocks
<u>Outside Engineer:</u>	"Chum" Chumley

"SYDNEY"/"EMDEN" BATTLE

Following our request on behalf of Cable & Wireless for a copy of the book "Ayesha", this book has been donated by Cliff Birks of Adelaide. Fortunately Cable & Wireless have already received a donation of a copy in English and another one in German and Cliff has agreed to donate the book to our historical archives. Cable & Wireless have sent a newspaper clipping on the story which is quoted.

"At six in the morning on November 9, 1914, a landing party under Lieut. von Mucke left the German cruiser Emden in two cutters and a steam launch to destroy the cable and wireless stations on Direction Island, the most northerly of the Cocos Keeling group in the Indian Ocean.

The Emden had been detached from von Spee's South Pacific squadron to act as a commerce raider in Indian waters.

After three successful months she now approached the destruction of the installations on Cocos Keeling.

On her arrival the radio operators on Direction Island managed to get out the message "SOS, Emden here," while von Vucke's landing party were actually entering the little harbour.

This call for help was picked up by an Australian convoy within 55 miles of the island and H.M.S. Sydney was detached to answer the call.

Even while the Germans were blowing up the wireless mast and cutting the cables, the Sydney was tearing south, and by 9.20 a.m. was within sight of the island.

Although the Emden signalled her landing party to return, and the steam launch with the cutters in tow hastened out to rejoin her, the German cruiser was already leaving the anchorage at a speed of 17 knots.

The action between the Emden and the Sydney is a part of naval history. After the surrender of the Emden, Capt. Glossop, of the Sydney, headed for the island to deal with the landing party.

On the way he stopped to rescue a number of Germans clinging to floating wreckage. By the time that he reached Direction Island darkness had fallen and of von Mucke and his men there was no trace.

The Germans in the launch and the cutters had returned to the island, from where they had watched the running fight between their ship and the Sydney. They realised that the Emden was so severely damaged that it was unlikely that she would ever return to pick them up.

This then was the situation of von Mucke and the men under him.

Cast upon a remote and unfriendly island and faced with the imminent arrival of their enemies, they had perhaps a single afternoon in which to make their getaway. It was fortunate for them that the instrument of escape was close at hand - in the anchorage lay a small, white topsail schooner, which they had intended to destroy, but had not in the scurry of their recall to the Emden.

She was the 90ft long schooner Ayesha, launched in 1907 at Stonehouse, Plymouth, from a small shipyard towards the bottom of Cremyll-street - midway between Admiral's Hard and the upper curve of Western King's.

There Fred Hawke and his brother built wooden trawlers, barges, and ketches, and did repairs to coasting craft.

In 1906-7 they built as a speculation a wooden three-masted schooner of 123 tons with square topsail yards on the fore. By this date the small sailing ship was already becoming something of an anomaly, and the new schooner remained for some months without a buyer.

At this point there arrived in Plymouth Mr. J. Clunies Ross, from Cocos Island, in his own brig with a Malay crew. Mr. Clunies Ross was the proprietor of the Cocos Keeling group, with which his family had been long associated, and was popularly known as the "King of the Cocos Islands". He was in England to buy a new ship to carry his copra from Cocos to Batavia.

Mr. Ross saw the Hawke's schooner, decided that she was suitable to his purpose and bought her. He named her Ayesha, after the favourite daughter of the prophet Mohammed (or was it because of Rider Haggard's book of that name published in 1905?)

A figurehead was specially carved to represent a lady in Eastern costume.

After minor alterations to fit her for work in the tropics the Ayesha was towed out of Millbay Docks behind the tug Mildred bound for the Indian Ocean.

The tug took the schooner out to the Eddystone and then the long voyage under sail began.

On her ocean voyage the Ayesha was commanded by Capt. Cundy, of Poiruan, an experienced master in the Newfoundland trade.

Capt. Cundy had accepted the appointment on condition that he could bring his wife with him. Mrs. Cundy had already made the Newfoundland voyage under sail in the winter time, so a trip to the East in a vessel some 90ft. long held no terrors for her.

Capt. Cundy was later killed while in command of a minesweeper in the Great War, but today, at 87, Mrs. Susan Cundy is still remarkably active and delighted to talk about her beloved Ayesha.

She can still recall the storm which drove the schooner in Mount's Bay with weather damage, the fine weather down to Madeira, the tropical storms and partial dismasting off the South African coast, and how her husband and his crew set-to to repair the damage so as to take advantage of the trade winds.

The Ayesha reached Cocos four months after leaving Plymouth - four months on salt and tinned meat.



During this time Mrs. Cundy learned to take her trick at the wheel. Late one afternoon they sighted the islands, hove-to for the night, and in the morning Mr. Ross came out to welcome his new ship and to pilot her through the reefs.

Capt. and Mrs. Cundy remained on Cocos for nearly three years, taking the Ayesha to Batavia every three months with a cargo of copra, and returning with rice and other stores.

A daughter was born on the island to Mrs. Cundy and was named Phyllis Ayesha after the ship.

The crew which had brought the Ayesha out from Plymouth returned to England after the first trip to Batavia, and thereafter Capt. Cundy sailed with a Malay crew. In 1910 the Cundy's said farewell to their tropical home, and leaving the Ayesha at Batavia returned to England by mail boat.

Such was the Ayesha which lay ready for von Mucke's escape, small, but perfectly capable of long ocean passages.

When von Mucke announced his intention of leaving the island in her, English officials at the cable station tried to dissuade him by stating that Ayesha was "old and rotten", but when they realised his determination to sail her away they helped him with provisions and supplies.

Late that same evening the Emden's steam launch towed the Ayesha through the reefs with the German ensign at the masthead.

An official of the cable company wrote: "As the darkening form of the filibustering ship stood out in silhouette against the gorgeous colours of the tropical sunset, she might have formed the frontispiece to one of Robert Louis Stevenson's books, and the last we saw of her was the black smudge of her sails as she cleared the entrance Westward Ho!" The escape had begun.

In his account of the weeks that followed, von Mucke makes much of the alleged unseaworthiness of the little schooner; but as she had been launched only seven years before by a reputable builder, and as she had passed her latest Lloyd's survey at Batavia as recently as March, 1913, this is difficult to understand.

For three weeks the Ayesha with 49 men on board - she had come from England with a crew of five - sailed in the direction of the Dutch East Indies.

Several times she narrowly escaped recognition by British steamers.

The Dutch naval authorities at Padang wished to intern her, and it was only by insisting on her rather doubtful status as a warship of the Imperial German Navy that von Mucke was able to get away.

The cruise of the Ayesha came to an end on December 14 when she met the German s.s. Choising. Von Mucke and his men transferred to the steamer. The Ayesha's figurehead and wheel were removed as souvenirs, and two holes were bored in the schooner's hull, and she sank.

After many adventures, von Mucke and his men returned to Germany via Hodeida, the Hedjaz railway and Constantinople."

#### Editor's Note

It is interesting to note that 3 postage stamps were struck in 1976; one each depicting the "Sydney", "Emden" and "Ayesha".

On reading the article on the Emden sinking at Cocos Island in the last Newsletter, Roy Tully brings to light the fact that Len Thorndike was a Telegraphist on H.M.A.S. Sydney and took part in the epic battle. He recalls that Len told the story that a German shell passed through the bridge of the Sydney and fortunately did not explode. If it had, it would have been a far different result. Len may have related the battle to other veterans, and any stories they could provide would be of value to historians, and of course, interest to fellow veterans.

EXTRACT FROM AN ARTICLE WRITTEN BY "TOLALA" IN PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY - APRIL 1966

Long Time No See

It was only in February I was writing of the pleasure that came my way when old-time New Guinea residents dropped in; had a noggin (or sometimes a cuppa) and a good old yarn about who and where they were.....Came then a few days ago a welcome trio led first by a man, sun-tanned, broken-nosed and dead-pan expression. He called me by name and shook hands; I waved him to a seat and hunted the halls of my memory. And then the penny dropped....Ted Bishton! More sun-tanned than ever he had been in New Guinea (it looked like the tan of Surfer's Paradise). Then followed his charming wife, with Mrs. Harry Dodd, and the party was on.

True, not long before their visit they had been to the Queensland Gold Coast, where they were surprised at the number of old Territorians who were moving into that area from other parts of Australia. The colony was growing so extensively that suggestions had been made to form an off-shoot of the New Guinea Women's Club. Perhaps the name "Paradise" has a certain influence somewhere!

For many years "Bish" was one of the members of the Rabaul Amalgamated Wireless of Australia staff before it became Overseas Telecommunications. There was Jimmy Twycross, Jack Allan, W.R.B. Thomas, "Tommy" Thompson and "Bish". He alone remains.

The AWA personnel were really a species apart in the sociological classification of Territorial cliques. They were neither official nor non-official.

With them rested the secrets - often the destiny of the country; but their lips were sealed. After hours of "greasing", in the hope of breaking down his resistance and eager to obtain information about something - latest form of the favourite of the second race, or perhaps the guts of a forthcoming regulation about mining - the AWA man would smile tolerantly and murmur: "I really couldn't say". And you would know that the only thing to do was to put the cork in the whisky bottle and go to bed.

They had certain privileges these knights of the air waves; they were permitted to have interests outside their job. Several of them obtained valuable plantation properties when the Expro-board Estates went up for tender.

I met a number of them a few days before Christmas, 1920. We were all quarantined in a house at Namanula, Rabaul. Measles had broken out in Rabaul and everyone leaving the town had to spend the usual 14 days isolation to become a "clean skin".

Quarantine was anything but monotonous in that house with those companions - a happy crowd of key-punchers about to spring off to all parts of the Territory. Unfortunately I was transferred to another bungalow after a few days and....well I blotted my copy-book by breaking quarantine. But that is another story.

"Bish" was in Kieta in 1921 when I arrived there on Expro-Board business. And the other day we spoke of the crowd there at the time. There was the Kiap, Harry Cardew, who was later to become the Territory's first Protector of Natives and later Commissioner for Native Affairs. He was the father of Dick Cardew, one of the heroes of the "Z" force in World War II.

There was Medical Officer Carlov and I do believe that it was the interesting work he met up with there that influenced him into becoming one of the foremost tropical diagnosticians in Sydney - if not in Australia. Then there was Mrs. Muriel Peterson, staying with the Cardews on a visit from Faisi, where she had been staying with Clare Scott. As a result of Muriel's visit to Kieta in 1921 her hubby, Charlie, joined the Expro-Board staff, managed Massawa for several years, successfully tendered for Guntershoehe Plantation, where he had a tragic death....

Where are we getting to? We started off with Ted Bishton and now we are burbling on about Charlie Peterson!

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STOP PRESS

Randall & Co. have advised the following timetable of retirement seminars:

"INVESTING ON RETIREMENT"  
SCHEDULE OF RETIREMENT SEMINARS

1981

SYDNEY

23rd February  
4th May  
6th July  
14th September  
9th November

MELBOURNE

2nd March  
11th May  
13th July  
7th September  
16th November

Those interested in attending should contact Randalls direct on Sydney (02)241 3941 or Melbourne (03)62 0611.

