

Newsletter

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 3 Pt. 7 Page 244

APRIL 1987

MEETINGS AND REUNIONS

<u>NEW SOUTH WALES</u>	FRIDAY 1ST MAY 1987 BETWEEN NOON & 3.30 P.M.	4TH FLOOR CONFERENCE CENTRE OTC HOUSE, 32 MARTIN PLACE SYDNEY
<u>VICTORIA</u>	FRIDAY 8TH MAY 1987 BETWEEN NOON & 3.30 P.M.	OTC(A) HOUSE, 382 LONSDALE STREET, MELBOURNE
<u>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</u>	THURSDAY 28TH MAY 1987 AT 12 NOON	OTC(A) COAST RADIO STATION McLAREN VALE CONTACT BERT DUDLEY (08) 2986337 FOR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS
<u>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</u>	TUESDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 1987 AT 5.30 PM	OTC'S PERTH OFFICE 22 ST. GEORGES TERRACE PERTH
<u>QUEENSLAND</u>	TUESDAY 19TH MAY 1987 BETWEEN NOON AND 3.00 PM	OTC'S BRISBANE OFFICE 380 QUEEN ST. BRISBANE

INTERSTATE MEMBERS AND VISITORS WILL BE WELCOMED AT THESE FUNCTIONS, BUT PRIOR ADVICE OF INTENTION TO ATTEND WOULD BE APPRECIATED BY THE ORGANISERS, NOT ONLY FOR CATERING PURPOSES, BUT TO GET CONFIRMATION OF TIMES AND VENUES.



FEATURE STORY OF THE MONTH.

VOLCANIC ERUPTION AT RABAU.

We are indebted to Mr. H.S. (Jack) Burgess for the the following story which was printed in THE RABAU TIMES on Friday, June 4th, 1937. The 28th May this year marks the 50th Anniversary of the volcanic eruption at Rabaul, and has a special meaning to Jack, as he was on duty there at the time. The bravery of the A.W.A. communications staff who carried out their duties are reminiscent of War-time conditions and another tribute to wireless operators everywhere. However, to appreciate this fact the story must be told, so I make no apologies for reprinting it in the NEWSLETTER as a tribute to the A.W.A. staff who were there at the time.

Jack has also supplied us with copies of two letters, one from the Prime Minister's office, and the other from the "Herald" office which appear at the end of the article. Read on.

No. 633

Friday, June 4, 1937

Gratis

OUR VOLCANIC ISSUE

We owe our subscribers and advertisers an apology this week for being unable - owing to force of circumstances - to publish our usual issue. It is only due to the great kindness and courtesy of the Catholic Mission at Vunapope that we are able to issue this small sheet and right here we wish to record the wonderful work done by the Mission all through this harrowing period and congratulate His Lordship Bishop Vesters, and his untiring staff, on the excellent organisation and display of Christian spirit.

At this particular moment we refrain from commenting on the possibilities of the future. Even the most usually serene individual is suffering from the reaction of nervous strain, after the happenings of the past few days, and his outlook has become distorted and abnormal. Whether the capital of the Territory is to remain at Rabaul or be removed to some other locality is not a question to be finalised at this juncture. Both the volcanoes and our mental state must be allowed to cool off. In a month or so - perhaps more - we can the better decide such a momentous question.

We must remember this: Rabaul, the Garden City, has disappeared and there only remains an ugly mud-covered town. It is this drastic change which is so liable to affect our judgment and make of us pessimists. There has been no physical panic, but a certain amount of mental panic.

Chins up and carry on!

Let hasty decisions be avoided.

THE ERUPTION

After a succession of severe earth tremors which commenced on Friday May 28 residents of Rabaul were first aware of any untoward circumstances when word came through that the home of Mr. and Mrs. Furter at Keravia had been demolished and Mrs. Furter had a narrow escape from being pinned beneath a falling wardrobe.

The Keravia district has always been noted for the severity of earth tremors ostensibly due to a geological fault which runs across Blanche Bay to the Matupi crater. It is in the area that Vulcan Island is situated that island which "came up in a night" 59 years ago, and was most appropriately named.

Saturday morning brought no cessation of quakes; they were still being registered unofficially at the rate of about one every two minutes; some of them with a duration of half a minute to a minute and a half. On the Island of Matupi it is recorded that numerous cracks in the earth had occurred across the main roadway.

It was reported that two small islands had made their appearance in close proximity to Vulcan Island and curious residents during Saturday afternoon visited the site. One party consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Chinnery and Mr. G. H. Murray actually cruised close to these newly-formed islands when, during their inspection, they noticed the gradual rising out of the water of huge boulders, hardly had this occurred when the whole area of water became agitated and their launch hit the bottom and shortly afterwards a column of smoke and rocks was precipitated upwards. The party made a hurried escape towards the shore and fortunately missed this first outburst from Vulcan.

Rabaul residents were first aware of the eruption at approximately 4.25 p.m. on Saturday. Nearly everyone rushed to the waterfront and be held there a spectacle so colossal that it left the spectators spell-bound. From Vulcan Island there arose a huge column of white clouds, rolling skywards, in undulating folds, impregnated with rocks and pumice. At frequent intervals loud explosions were heard followed immediately by dark brown volumes of smoke.

The wind was from the South-east but fortunately very moderate, with the result that the cloud reached upwards and drifted but slowly to the North-west. The waters of the harbour were disturbed, rising and receding but at this time with no suggestion of a tidal wave.

As the outbreak continued with renewed intensity residents became apprehensive for their safety. There was the immediate danger of the town being enveloped in a suffocating cloud of smoke and the possibility of a tidal wave. Motor cars were put into commission without delay, suit cases hastily packed with a few urgent necessities and residents departed for Namanula and the North Coast district, most of them with the idea that it was perhaps a matter of only vacating the town for a day or so.

The first "black cloud" swept over the town about 5 p.m. depositing a fine pumice ash. This was accompanied by an ever-recurring series of explosions, loud peals of thunder and vivid flashes of forked lightning. Branches of trees becoming weighted down with the pumice crashed to the ground affecting light and telephone connections.

The sun went down on a scene of desolation in a town sheeted beneath a panoply of grey dust. The night grew fearsome with deafening detonations as each fresh explosion occurred; thunder pealed continuously; forked lightning lit the sky, for a second or two, enabling spectators to visualise the huge smoke column rising ever upwards; ball lightning pricked the blackness for a few seconds, like intermittent Northern Lights in colder climes. Long streams of natives made up the Rataval Hill for security of the North Coast.

Here it must be recorded the valuable work of Pug Noble who remained constantly at the telephone exchange and kept the operators at their posts. It was not his task, but he did a job of work which made for the preservation of more confidence and line to Namanula was kept open throughout the night.

At approximately 8 p.m. - approximately because in the reign of terror watches were forgotten - a tidal wave occurred which wrought damage along the water front. Small craft were lifted high and dry; buildings demolished and wharves swept away. It is reported that the rise was 9 ft. above the normal.

Rabaul at night presented a town lying beneath a cover of snow-pumice snow - streets were blocked with fallen trees and branches; where traffic would pass deep wheel tracks of cars furrowed the highways. Here and there the street lights pierced the darkness and great credit is due to Jack Barrie for his untiring efforts in maintaining the service - especially the Namanula circuit. The bars of hotels were closed down; every residence was in darkness. Homes were deserted; the floors thick with pumice ash, the furniture covered with the same grey coating. Tea tables, with cups and saucers, appeared Pompeian, left in the hurried departure for safety.

Namanula Hospital was the Mecca of half the refugees and here the work done by the hospital staff and their able and willing volunteers will never be forgotten by the two hundred odd people who were cared for during Saturday night and Sunday morning. Tea and refreshments were always available throughout the night; enquiries for missing relatives given the promptest attention and nothing was left undone which could have been done by Matron McKinnon and her helpers. Fortunately no serious accidents occurred to residents; many sufferers from dirt-infested eyes were treated and sedatives administered to those suffering from shock and nervous prostration. But on the whole Rabaul behaved itself admirably and accepted the nerve-racking ordeal with a stoicism worthy of mention.

Sunday morning brought no cessation in the volcano's activities. They were more intense if anything and early in the morning a meeting was convened by Judge Phillips at the Police Station when principal business men combined with officials in reviewing the situation and deciding on what action should be taken for the safety of the residents. It was agreed that residents should be advised to evacuate the town and arrangements made for all available shops to assemble off Nodup where embarkation would take place.

Namanula was cleared of all refugees and the Nodup waterfront became filled with Europeans, Asiatics and native employees. Here they waited for the arrival of sea transport. The U.S. vessel "Golden Bear" was the first on the scene and some delay occurred in lowering the boats, the "Induna Star", the "Muruk", "Kwong Chow" and the "Nereus" all arrived on the scene, the latter, under the captaincy of Mr. Jackson, making a very fine dash past the dense smoke clouds of the volcano for the open sea.

The business of embarking was slow; fortunately the wind was favourable and Nodup was not affected from the smoke clouds and the assorted assembly proved most patient. Discipline amongst the ranks of the natives was most marked. There was not the slightest indication of panic at any time. The majority of the European women boarded the "Induna Star" and the "Golden bear" and these vessels had orders to disembark their passengers at Kokopo.

At approximately 1.30 p.m., after the European women and patients from Namanula Hospital had embarked, a loud explosion, followed by dense clouds of black smoke, rising from behind the Mount Mother, heralded the fact that another volcano had broken out in the vicinity of the Matupi crater.

This made the situation more serious as the dust from the clouds would fall more directly on the township. It was at this juncture that the "Montoro" hove in sight and the good old ship was most welcome as she came along at full speed with life-boats over the side and the Master (Captain Mitchie) is to be congratulated for the prompt manner in which he quickly got into action and took on board the remaining Europeans and over 5000 natives; men, women and children (to say nothing of dogs, baskets or a couple of cockatoos!). The original number of natives had been greatly increased by the late afternoon owing to Matupi natives evacuating their island after the crater eruption. By sundown the last boatload was on board and the "Montoro" steamed out for Kokopo. It was on this vessel that many had the first meal for the day and the ship's staff worked with a will which was greatly appreciated by the tired nerve-racked refugees.

On Sunday evening the "Golden Bear" and the fleet of schooners arrived off Kokopo where every preparation was made by the Catholic Mission to receive the refugees and patients from Namanula.

The "Montoro" arrived during the evening and stood off until the morning when the work of disembarking was commenced.

Shortly after the arrival of the "Montoro" a meeting was held on board, convened by District Officer Waugh and official arrangements made for quartering, rations and the general supervision of details. All local stores were commandeered; officials deputed to their various duties and some organisation brought to bear on the situation which was a serious one.

At 12.30 p.m. a Guinea airways engined plane flew over the town, with Pilot Turner bringing His Honour the Administrator and Mr. C. R. Field (Director of Public Works) from Lae, where they departed at 3.35 a.m. after circling the town once a perfect landing was made on the new drome at Taliligap.

On his arrive His Honour decided immediately to proceed to Rabaul by the "Induna Star" which left at 2.20 p.m.

The task of billeting and rationing the evacuated people was no light one and too much credit cannot be given to the Catholic Mission of Vunapope where the majority of the refugees were given shelter and cared for with every comfort. The organisation of the Mission was marvellous and will long be remembered. The work of allocating European, Asiatic and native refugees to their various areas was carried on through the day; all neighbouring plantations became homes of refuge and the willing spirit with which everyone worked was one of the outstanding features of the situation.

Throughout the day and night small groups stood on the beach or wharves watching the huge clouds of steam, smoke and dust being hurled upwards to 10,000 feet. Rumours became general from time to time; Mount Mother had broken out; Toma had followed suit; Rabaul was a mass of buried buildings and the North Coast a shambles.

Plantations have suffered severely on the North Coast as palm fronds have been weighted down so much by the falling dust that thousands of palms stand with only the centre spathe pointing upwards. It is impossible to estimate the damage done to Plantations yet, but it is far greater than that done to Rabaul.

A CIRCULAR DESPATCH

Issued by the Administrator

On June 1 His Honour the Administrator issued a circular despatch in which it was stated that Rabaul would be untenable for many weeks, that the water supply had become polluted and no sanitation arrangements are at present possible. "The present bad situation", continued the despatch, "will be intensified when rain comes as the roofs of all houses are thickly covered with volcanic dust which will become thick mud directly it becomes a web. Under the circumstances it is necessary to restrict the number of persons that may be permitted to visit Rabaul. Only those officials on duty and others with urgent business to attend to will be permitted to proceed from Kokopo and land at Nodup. It is essential that written authority be first obtained. To assist the staff at Kokopo every request for permission to visit Rabaul should set out clearly the applicants name, and the purpose of his visit. Arrangements should be made for a limited number of messengers to proceed to Rabaul to collect essential requirements on behalf of a number of friends. The public can assist greatly in this respect by organising among themselves as to who is to be a messenger and the persons for whom he is to collect. Heavy articles, other than cases etc., containing essential clothing requirements may not be removed. The roads, at present are fit for traffic only from Nodup to Burns Philp Garage - beyond that the roads are strewn with fallen branches so that the collection of more than a limited number of essential requirements is not at present possible. In every way we will hasten the work of clearing the debris but of course some little time must elapse. It is extremely desirable that at the very first opportunity as many women and children as possible proceed to Australia.

A complete patrol system of Rabaul has been organised by the superintendent of Police and every endeavour is being made to protect houses and their contents. A cursory examination of residences shows that they are affected only by the dust covering. The contents of houses are in no way affected and any anxiety in this respect may be allayed".

In conclusion the Administrator stated: "On my arrival at Kokopo from Lae on the afternoon of Monday I was greatly relieved to observe the stoic calm with which the residents of Rabaul and district were accepting the unfortunate situation that has been forced upon them. The reports made to me on my arrival in Rabaul of the wonderful conduct of the whole population during the times of stress on Saturday and Sunday were extremely gratifying and the manner in which the evacuation to Kokopo was carried out speaks volumes, not only in respect of the organisers, but in respect of each individual resident."

"A state of emergency continues to exist and the Administration has taken control of all essential services. I earnestly request each resident to do all in his power to assist those officials and others who have been given duties to perform. It is realised that discipline becomes irksome, but it must be realised also that a definite form of control is essential.

"I look forward with the greatest confidence to a continuance of the wholehearted support that has been so apparent during the past few days and we hope to proceed with the job of making Rabaul again livable as speedily as possible."

MESSAGES FROM SOUTH

The following message has been received by the Administrator from His Excellency the Governor-General:

"Deeply regret to hear of damage and anxiety caused by Volcanic eruption Rabaul district. Sincerely hope no loss of life."

And the following radio received from Colonel T.W. White, Acting Minister in charge of the Territory:

"Government greatly admires behaviour Phillips and his officers. - Wireless men and others at Rabaul including native police who have displayed remarkable fortitude in trying ordeal. Government also greatly appreciates splendid work done by Waugh and McMullen. Administrative staff and volunteers Kokopo, at the same time it notes the fine spirit and behaviour which has characterised all sections of the population."

RABAU RE-VISITED

The tropical beauty of Rabaul has been wiped out in a night. Looking down on Chinatown from Namanula Road is to gaze on a town of grey be-daubed houses with dark brown roofs; lifeless, with ribbons of muddy roads dividing the homes.

The most impressive feature of the town is its appalling ugliness and its uniform drabness; the sight of a bit of colour brings joyous relief. I saw a twisted black mass of twigs and stem of a hibiscus bush and underneath - half hidden - the welcome colour of a red flower. It said: All is not dead. In some parts the ubiquitous kunai grass has already forced its way through the mantle of grey mud.

Namanula street is a long dark grey road with two lighter coloured narrow wheel tracks made by the busy lorries carrying rations from the stores to the Nodup beach for transshipment to the evacuation camp at Kokopo. Nearly every street and avenue was blocked by fallen branches of trees; in many places long detours had to be made by cars because of one or two branches across the road. In time these will be cleared, but at present only regular routes are used. I drove as far as the Wireless station and I was told cars could proceed as far as the new wharf.

The roofs are covered with about an inch of grey mud - the volcanic ash hardened by the rain; in some places it is already peeling off under the sun's heat.

The buildings of the town are intact, with the exception of one where the roof has collapsed.

The harbour from the old wharf was a beautiful blue expanse of water, with a brown strip of pumice near the Beehives and then beyond towards Vulcan Island that was nothing but a pall of smoke and steam and falling dust. The "Desikoko" was anchored in the Bay on the morning of my visit, the only craft in sight; later she passed the new formed crater and made around to Nodup, so the channel was open.

The police station was one of the few busy parts of the town and from here both European and native members of the Force set out on their never-ending task of protecting property, caring for unattended pets, checking off stores and preventing unauthorised persons landing. Each and every one of them is doing a good job of work under most trying conditions. Another busy centre - about "kaikai" time - is the Rabaul Hotel where Mrs. Bignell still holds the fort and provides for the inner man of those few Europeans employed on essential services. She greeted me with a happy smile and assured me that all was well. Her guests were high in their praise of all she had done right through the piece, and it must have made their stay in the grey city brighter to have her cheery presence to greet them at meal time.

Central administration was also a point of activity. Cars came dashing along - anybody's car - except the owner's - drew up by the steps and a dusty figure passed into the office of the khaki-Administrator who was closely watching events. The one other busy point was the Wireless office where communication was being sought with the outside world.

Rabaul without its beauty of foliage and symmetrical avenues is indeed a sorry sight as it lies there like some maimed and ugly monster writhing beneath the curse of an unkind nature. But the birds still chirp from the dust-covered roofs and the greenness of the trees will come back again.

LOCAL AND GENERAL

The P.H.D. notifies the public that it is dangerous to drink water not previously boiled; also advises that quinine should be taken, and garbage should not be thrown into the sea, but be buried or held until arrangements made to collect it.

Following radio from Sydney: - "Australia shocked at Rabaul's calamity. Delighted apparently no fatalities. Information scanty. Prospective losses and trade interference has caused carpenters and Electric's shares to ease Copra sun-dried £15-15-0 Smoked £15-2-6. Rabaul £16-15-0. The Swimming baths are open for use near the District Office. Permission may be obtained from the District office for mails to proceed to Rabaul to obtain personal effects. Parties up to forty persons may embark at 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. returning the same day. We hear: That Burns Philp will carry on business at Kokopo for the next few months. Bulk store business and shipping at Ralum; retail business at Kokopo and shipping booking office at Kokopo. Messrs. W.R. Carpenter are establishing headquarters at the Timbur depot.

The "Montoro" is due Kokopo June 9, the "Malaita" June 6, leaves Sydney June 5.

Observations taken of the new Keravia crater on Wednesday show it to be 600 ft. high 1600 ft. across the mouth of the crater and 3400 ft. at the base.

The telephone service in Rabaul is still functioning. It is impossible to obtain some numbers, (but that is nothing new!). The Electric power was cut off in Rabaul on Monday last. Jack Barrie did a fine job to maintain the service so long.

Both the Commonwealth and N.S.W. Banks have transferred their records from Rabaul to Kokopo, we understand, as a temporary measure at least.

H. S. Burgess Esq.
c/o A.W.A. Ltd.,
Rabaul New Guinea

Commonwealth of Australia
Prime Minister
Canberra, 26th November, 1937

Dear Sir,

The reports received by the Commonwealth Government at the time of the volcanic disturbance that occurred at Rabaul on 29th May, 1937, and subsequent days indicated that all sections of the inhabitants of the town displayed a fine spirit of fortitude in a trying ordeal, and your Administrator was then asked to promulgate a message from the Commonwealth Government to learn that the fullest support was given on the occasion of the disaster to Rabaul.

From the fuller reports that have since been submitted to the Commonwealth Government, it is possible more accurately to assess the value of the services performed by individuals in the community, and those reports disclose that the services you rendered were of a very meritorious nature, and of considerable value in the time of crisis.

On behalf of the Commonwealth Government, I therefore wish to convey to you its thanks and appreciation for the sterling services you have given to the Territory in this emergency.

Yours faithfully,

Minister in Charge
of Territories

HERALD OFFICE
SYDNEY
June 4th 1937

L. A. Hooke Esq.
General Manager
Amalgamated Wireless (Aust.) Ltd.
SYDNEY

Dear Mr. Hooke,

The splendid help and co-operation of your organisation in maintaining communication with Rabaul and with our special aeroplanes during the recent volcanic disaster command not only our thanks but our warm admiration. Your own willing help was typical of the many kindnesses we owe you, and I should like to express to you our great indebtedness to Mr. W. G. Clarke. I know of no one who affords us more willing and efficient help on all occasions and in all emergencies than he does, and I feel that he must be an invaluable officer in your great organisation.

Great credit also accrues to A.W.A. for the wonderful courage, endurance and capacity that have been displayed by your operators at Rabaul. Our own indebtedness to them for the handling of the lengthy messages that have come to us is very great, and, in small token of our appreciation, it would give us much satisfaction if you could kindly have the value of the enclosed cheque sent to them with our cordial congratulations and thanks.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) A. H. Stuart

1436 SG Burgess Rabaul 7.30 pm 30th May 1937

Please accept my sincere thanks and congratulations on the work Alexander Sturgeon and you are doing stop. It is very much appreciated stop. We are proud of you; well done.

Hooke

Overseas Telecommunications Veterans' Association (W.A.)

Secretary:
D.B. Walker
11 Flinders Avenue
Hillarys W.A. 6025
Ph: (09)4018242

MINUTES OF TWELFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 18.11.86

Held in the OTC Perth city office, 22 St. George's Terrace, Perth.

The meeting was declared open by the President, Fred James, at 1805. There were 30 Veterans present, including OTC's Managing Director, Mr. George Maltby, who was attending as an honoured guest.

W.A. veterans included Jim Bairstow, Colin Benporath, Ron Cocker, John coles, Paul Cooper, Jim Devlin, John Eales, Heb Farrar, Barry Johnstone, Ted Kemp, Des Kinnersley, Max Miller, Derek Moore, Brian Morrell, Norm Odgers Jim O'Toole, Rod Pernich, Ellis Smellie, Pat Sykes, Gerry Tacey, Jack Thomas, Trig Trigwell, Derek Walker and Tom Weaver.

Apologies had been received from Tom Bryant, Arthur Hadden, Dick Hickinbotham, Doug Lancaster, Barry O'Keefe, George Rogers, Alex Robertson and Harry Rumble.

The Minutes of the Eleventh Annual General Meeting having been circulated it was moved by Tony Hanson, seconded John Frazier that they be accepted as a true and correct record. The motion was moved and carried.

Correspondence received included fraternal greetings from Alan Arndt, OTVA(NSW) Secretary and Charles Carthew, OTVA (Aust) General Secretary, with telephoned greetings from George Rowe in Adelaide.

Reports: It was moved Derek Moore, seconded Tony Hanson that the Hon. Secretary/Treasurer's Financial Statement and Report be received and endorsed. The motion was moved and carried.

Election of Officers: The President declared the positions of President and Secretary/Treasurer open for nominations. Jim O'Toole nominated Ron Cocker as President; however this was declined and Ron Cocker nominated Fred James, seconded Jim O'Toole; there being no further nominations, Fred James was re-elected to the position of President. Norm Johnstone nominated Derek Walker as Secretary/Treasurer; this was seconded by Colin Benporath; there being no further nominations Derek Walker was re-elected to the position of Secretary/Treasurer.

General Business: The Treasurer announced that meal fees for further Veterans' Reunions would have to be increased to help cover costs. After some discussion it was decided to increase the meal fee to \$8 as from next year. On behalf of Des Kinnersley, Manager P.I.T.C., the President extended an invitation to all veterans who had not yet visited the Perth International telecommunications centre to do so. The next reunion will be held at OTC's Perth office, 22 St. George's terrace, on Tuesday 24th November, 1987.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1815 hours.

Signed as a true and correct record.

D. B. WALKER

FROM OUR WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COUSINS

DEREK WALKER, President of the Western Australian branch of the OTVA writes; Veterans who once worked at the Beam Relay and Coast Radio Station at Bassendean, as it was always known, will be pleased to know that the site has not entirely lost all connection with the world of telecommunications now that it's a new housing estate.

Two years ago the City of Bayswater's Town clerk wrote to Perth Radio asking if we could provide a list of names and terms synonymous with overseas telecommunications for use as street names in the subdivision of the former OTC site.

I did a bit of research and sent them a list of about 30 names and terms with brief explanations and promptly forgot about it. (When there was no acknowledgement I thought they'd probably thought better of it and decided on the usual practice of using worthy ex-town councillors' names instead).

But no - just recently I was down that way and was intrigued to see that the two main streets into the subdivision are Wheatstone and Telestar Drives. A tour around the area revealed Marconi Drive, Hertz Street, Solas Street, Jenvey Way, Cable Place and Beam Street.

It will be interesting to see if they get around to some of the more esoteric names I gave them, like De Forrest, MacLurchan, and Balsillie!!

ROASTING OR BOASTING

When I was a student at the Homebush Boys' Junior High School, our English teacher Mr. Nelson (appropriately nick-named One-One-One by us all and sundry), asked a random question of our class, "What is a sexagenarian?" Selected from a group of those who had raised their hands, I answered, "A dirty old man, sir."

Of course I knew the correct answer! One-One-One ordinarily would have laughed, but instead I was given three of the best across each hand. How was I to know that it was his 60th birthday that day.

What reminded me of this painful memory was a little note I received from BERT DUDLEY, who happens to be Secretary of the South Australian branch of the O.T.V.A. He wrote

"I notice in your November NEWSLETTER that at your 30th Annual General Meeting a motion was passed to reduce the number of waitresses in attendance at your meeting to be held on 28th November, 1986 in order to reduce the cost of the function. You boys must be really old over there in the Big Smoke. Here in Adelaide, if we had the numbers of members to hold our meetings at a venue where we would be catered for, the motion would have read "To seduce the number of waitresses and to hell with the expense". Maybe it's due to our better climate.

Checking up on my spy file I note that H. E. DUDLEY was born on 7th September, 1917.

My goodness! Have you been into the raw hamburger again, Bert?

VALE . HARRY KEITH BURBURY

Harry was born on 21st January, 1897 and joined A.W.A. on 1st June, 1914. He was trained at the Marconi School, Sydney, and from June 1914 to June 1920 served on the Marine staff on the RMS MAKURA, RMS MARAMA, NIAGARA, MAHENO, MAITAI KAPUNDA, SS LOONGANA, PATEENA, SOUTH AFRICA, KATOOMBA, YANKALILLA, COOMA, BUNDARRA.

From June 1920 until July 1925 he served as Instructor and Superintendent of the Marconi School in Melbourne including a term at the A.W.A. experimental station at KOO-WEE-RUP (Vic).

From August 1925 to October 1928 he was the Radio Postmaster at Wave Hill in the Northern Territory.

From 1929 to 1941 he was Radio Inspector in the P.M.G.'s department in Sydney. From 1941 to 1947 he was Superintendent Radio Branch P.M.G.'s Dept. Hobart. From 1947 to 1957 he served as Superintendent radio Branch Adelaide, finally retiring on 25th January 1957 at the age of 60.

He died on Saturday, 29th November, 1986.

The above information was obtained from the Particulars of Service sheet available to all veterans and is kept for historical purposes only. Too often we get the news of one of our members well-known throughout the industry, but of whom we have no details. It was refreshing to get Harry's info sheet, and I urge all of you who have not already done so to obtain the Particulars of Service sheet from our Secretary soonest.

To Harry's family and friends our deepest sympathy.

THE LAPEROUSE CABLE STATION

Further to the article in the last NEWSLETTER, it has been ascertained that the building still standing and described as the Cable station, was in fact, the staff quarters.

When the original cable was laid in 1876, the shore end came in at Frenchman's Bay and the initial station, in comparison to the standard of cable stations, was a temporary building. It was approximately half a mile from the abovementioned site of staff quarters.

The temporary station was in use until 1901, when the two cables then in use were transferred to a new landing site at the other end of Frenchman's Bay and a new permanent station built. It was quite an imposing building of 2 storeys with huge arched doorways and a round corner, giving a tower appearance.

The station was closed on 8th April, 1917, when the cables were picked up by the Cable Ship "PAT" and transferred to the present landing at Bondi. Those serving at Laperouse at the time of closure were W.R. Symons, R.B. Browning, J.G. Lawrie, C.H. Moore, E.L. Johnson, F.B. Anderson, H.K. Cooper, E.C. Lugton, T.F. Morony, W.A. Huxtable, B.D. Nixon, H.H. Moss, H.H. Muhlan, A.D. Gregory, E.L. Huxtable, A. McPhee, L.G. Gleeson, C.H. Douglas. Members of the Canine Staff were Anzac, Kelpie and Bobs.

CONTINUING THE ELLIS SMELLIE STORY

On the 4th August 1921, Ellis married an Astrographical Assistant he had met over the phone, when she, at the Observatory, switched over the clock to send time signals through the radio transmitter, direct from the observatory to the ships at sea. They had two children, Barbara and Donald. Donald needed medical care and was left with an aunt at Perth and the two-year old Barbara went with them to Darwin. On the ship he met Harry Oates who was going to Darwin as an operator under Ellis. Harry made a great fuss of Barbara and was almost a part of the family. The boys at Broome came down and we circled the pubs. Next morning, Harry surprised Ellis by saying that he had not known that Ellis was connected with the coastal radio service at all. Now he had decided to "know" Ellis till the ship arrived in Darwin. In Darwin, Harry would not sit near Ellis in a picture theatre or drink in the same section of a hotel where Ellis was. Harry was the son of a miner, the boss was a b-----d and should be treated as such. Harry was an excellent watchkeeper but very prickly in minor matters.

Soon after Ellis took charge of the wireless station, there was a shortage in the staff. Ellis called the boys together to decide if they would keep the station open 24 hours a day, or close it on the midnight to 6 a.m. shift as had been done before. The voting went to keep it open, but Harry Oates did not vote saying it had all been pre-arranged, but he then sent a long telegram to our Union in Sydney objecting to everything that had been decided. Toombs, the Union Secretary took this telegram to Mr. Hooke for a discussion.

About 3 months later, a small ship, The Huddersfield, was being got ready for a trip to Boorooloola to rescue 2 white women reported there amongst the aboriginies. This canard was spread by two Russians, Serinikoff and his offsider Zakarow. It is a long story.

They had started Elcho Island oil search. Although no hole had been started at Elcho Is. such good reports of the progress of a non-existant hole had been reported that the thing to do was to own Elcho Is. shares. When Elcho Is. faded out it was turned into the Beaucaut Bay Company and a contract entered into for a mail run from Darwin to Boorooloola. Sir George Pearce, the Federal Minister for the Northern Territory was given 1000 shares in the company, Smallhorn, his secretary was given 500 shares, and Pearce's wife, 500 shares. The Beaucaut Bay Company purchased the ship Huddersfield in Sydney. although it only did 5 knots in the Sydney Harbour, instead of the 9 knots of the contract, necessary to handle the tides, the Huddersfield made its slow way up to Darwin. The engine was taken out and put on deck. The Southern papers were full of the story of the two women being in Arnham Land and the Huddersfield was engaged to go to Boorooloola and rescue them. Local civilians were sworn in as policemen for the job.

Harry Oates came to Ellis, saying he would like to go on the trip and suggesting Ellis put a radio set aboard and he would join the ship as a radio operator. Ellis arranged this with Mr. Storey, the Administrator's Secretary. The Administrator was Mr. Urquart, an ex-policeman and Storey was the son of a once Premier of N.S.W. Ellis owned a suitable ham radio set which he had bought from a friend, and a small engine was available. Serinikoff would not allow the radio operator to have complete control of the job but insisted it should be linked with the main engine. This would allow him to have control.

Serinkoff did all he could to stop that radio set going aboard. For a generator, Ellis and the engineer in charge of the Government Electric Supply Plant, took one generator from that building down to the ship. Next day, he got a letter from the Solicitor Mallam, charging him with the theft of the generator. The Baukaut Bay Company had leased that plant from the government and Ellis had stolen it from The Baukaut Bay Company. One morning, Ellis found all the wires of that generator reversed. He told this to a rough, tough local lad, now a special policeman. This Darwinite grabbed hold of Serinikoff, took him to the rail of the ship and told him if he did anything more like this he would be thrown overboard. If ever there was a look of murder in anyone's face, it was on Serinikoff's face at that time. Ellis then moved to separate Mallam from the Baukaut Bay Company. This was done by Ellis writing out a full report of what had taken place up to date with the suggestion that the Huddersfield was to be wrecked. He paid Mallam £3 to get his advice if this was slander. The following day it was all Ellis could do not to laugh out loud when Mr. King, a school teacher and also secretary for the Baukaut Bay Company, said that Mallam had stopped acting on their behalf. Ellis had no more trouble, belt-drove the generator from the main engine and installed the set. But he was now stymied. Harry Oates, quite rightly had made a condition of his going that the set be tested. Serinikoff would not allow the test. Ellis and Harry, being told "you will get your test soon", stayed aboard the ship all one night. About dawn, Ellis felt something was wrong. He got up to find that the ship was being cast off. He and Harry did a pier head jump from the moving ship as it left Port. Now Sir George Pearce got into the act. He had Ellis shifted out of Darwin. This was done under another canard that he had organized Darwin to put the Administrator aboard a ship going South as had been done to the Administrator, Mr. Gilruth some years ago.

The basis of this rumour was that Ellis had about 20 lads and men at his home every week teaching them morse, building amateur radio sets etc. He could have mobilised these lads for the purpose. Ellis welcomed the transfer as he had left one son in Perth with his wife's sister and made no effort to clear his name.

The Southern newspapers demanded that an operator be put aboard the ship. The Baukaut Bay Co. consented, took Harry Oates in a launch, but instead of taking him to the Huddersfield, marooned him on Elcho Is. After some time, he was taken to the Huddersfield. The wireless operator on the light house ship Llewyn told Ellis that the Llewyn was sent from Darwin in search of the missing Huddersfield. They passed just out of sight as the Huddersfield was returning, but Serinikoff would not allow Harry Oates to answer the calls from Llewyn. Some years later, the Huddersfield was blown up as a menace to shipping in the Darwin harbour. A sidelight to this was that Macdonald, a policeman who was a neighbour of Ellis, had mules ready to go to Boorooloola overland at a day's notice. It would take him a week to get there and a week to return. He had relief maps of Arnham Land at his disposal. So far as Ellis knows, he was never ordered to take the journey.

The two women in Arnham Land were supposed to have come from a wrecked ship down Bourketown way. It was in the Norwest season and the dingy they were reported to have rode about 200 hundred miles in would have had to face strong head winds all the way. A ludicrous idea!

Ellis was very sad to have to bank up the radio school he supervised, he visited the parents of all the boys with money in his hands to refund the money they had all paid. But not one parent took the money they had been so pleased to know where their boys were.

Ellis with his wife and daughter Barbara, aged two, went all the way from Darwin to Perth by sea. In Sydney a savage brawl took place between Ellis and Toombs about his showing of Oates's telegram to Hooke. Another brawl in Melbourne between Ellis and George Western, the Melbourne Manager. This resulted in the word going out that "Smellie would never again be in charge of a station". But this was forgotten when he was transferred from Perth to Esperance to relieve Frank Bridges, the officer in charge, for holidays. He next went in charge of Geraldton and was there for four happy years. It was about this time when the first class tickets were made second class. But Ellis did not have to sit for the examination to regain his first class ticket. It was handed to him under the rule that anyone in charge of a continuous wave station for over two years should be exempt from the examination. As this had happened to him before, his original first class ticket, having been handed to him because he had been in the job for a year before the tickets were brought in, he did not ever sit for an examination. Ellis hated leaving Geraldton but found life in Broome to be very good indeed. After some months in the Continental Hotel, he lived in an inland mission house alongside the church. One memorable experience was a cyclone which sank a lot of pearling luggers. At one time, over 300 men were missing, and the Koolinda went searching. An amusing incident was that the landlines being down, he accepted a message at a time when the post office was open for a Captain Gregory at Broome who was then in Wyndham, regarding the search. Whydham telephoned Captain Gregory and a reply was received in 10 minutes. This would have taken 2 days had the message been handed in at the post office. A "please explain" came from Melbourne post office, demanding to know why a message had been accepted at the radio station when the post office was open. It finished by Ellis being told never to do it again, even though it was about the rescue of those missing men. About 140 lost their lives. Ellis was told this was because the Japanese divers, all fatalists, cut the mast and waited for the end, when the lugger rolled over. Had a white man been aboard he would hve sailed the boat to a safe harbour.

Ellis, who perspired freely, regretted leaving Broome for Melbourne. He liked the tropics. His wife did not perspire, had a bad time in the tropics and welcomed the move. Ellis thought that he would have £2 per week above his income. This meant no car to get by.

It was during his stay in Melbourne that Ellis was a one man delegation for a rise in wages. Fred Davies, Bill Bertram and one other, spoke for the beam. It took them a long time to read out their four and five page, foolscap submissions from the far end of the room, sitting in hard chairs. But Ellis asked permission to take the big leather arm chair from the Melbourne Manager, George Apperly, a Kiwi. This placed Ellis close to Lionel Hooke, the top man in A.W.A. Nearly all of his tale of woe is as written previously here. Mr. Hookes' reply was "I will submit the highest rise I can get past the Directors. You four men come to Sydney in 3 weeks time to finalize things". Bill Stevenson and Ellis had a drink in a pub. There Bill told Ellis no-one was going to Sydney. He had heard all Ellis had said and he would take over from now. Ellis replied, "Hooke has never given anything to the Union. He

has never denied justice to the men. Unless we go over to Sydney we will get nothing." Bill stood his ground. Realizing his case was lost, and five other things harmful to him having taken place (one was an S.O.S. which could get him into trouble). This was the last straw, and he went into a nervous collapse, with 3 months off duty and 2 years to get over it. Ellis had had only a fortnight to prepare his case. He was working 7 days a week, 8 hours a day and was weary from lack of sleep. He had argued with his family and put himself into Mount St., Evans hospital. He put himself under a world famous psychiatrist, Dr. Reg Ellery who paid him a compliment. After a few evening visits of up to 1 hour, Ellis said to Ellery, "Say mate, I've no money to pay you for all these visits". The reply was "they are all free. After a day in the office, I find it most relaxing to come and have a chat with you." Ellis asked Hooke, then in Sydney, for a radio while he was in hospital. But Appely delayed supplying it. When Hooke heard of this the radio soon came, and once again the word went out from Appely that Ellis would never again be in charge of a station. This did not matter much as he was already on officer-in-charge's salary, having been twice in charge of stations in the tropics which entitled him to the higher salary. There was no officer in charge at Melbourne Radio, it was under the Beam superintendent.

After O.T.C. took over the coastal radio from Amalgamated Wireless they made Ellis earn his officer-in-charge's salary by transferring him to Thursday Is. It was a very different place to what it had been forty years before. His wife did not come up till he had been there for fifteen months, and she stayed only nine months before returning South. The tropics did not suit her at all. The radio station consisted of two separate buildings. Each were three rooms 20' X 10'. After installation of the electric power from the town, the building used for the engines was now empty and had been converted into a residence. This residence suited Ellis perfectly. But while his wife was with him they shared the residence built for an operator and now occupied by Bill Sawyer whose wife was not with him. Ellis spent three very happy years there and was then transferred to Hobart in Tasmania.

After three years at Hobart he asked for and was given a transfer to Adelaide. On his retirement he spent the next eleven years as radio operator on thirtytwo different ships. Among these were two tugs. One went to the rescue of an oil tanker broken down about 100 miles off Gabo Island towards New Zealand. With another tug, the tanker was towed into Sydney Harbour. The second tug went to the rescue of the Greek Ship Yolanda which had just rounded Cape Ottway bound west. It was towed back to Melbourne. On six occasions Ellis spent short periods on the pilot ship Wyuna at the Melbourne Heads. Two were oil drilling rigs. The oil drilling rig Discoverer II, with Ellis aboard, travelled from Bass Strait to New Plymouth in New Zealand. A year or so later Ellis flew over to join the same ship when it left for the Phillipine Islands. But a fight with a third mate, a no hoper who had joined the ship for the voyage, caused him to be sacked in Townsville. This turned out to be fortunate as he was desperately needed in Melbourne, because of the illness of his sister. His last ship was another oil rig, The Navigator, located near Indonesia. Here Ellis spent 3 months, and although offered the job on a permanent basis, he did not return as he did not want to leave his wife alone anymore.

Marconi experimented with apparatus which was being used by others. A receiver used for the study of lightning and another man's transmitter. His addition was to use an elevated aerial for transmission and, reception. His only patent of his own was "I coupled my tank circuit to the aerial". Each word of this was worth millions of dollars to the Marconi company which owned that patent. The key word was coupled. The Telefunken and the Valsillie systems used direct connections from the tank circuit to the aerial. This is capacity coupling. The Marconi company used two coils of wire a short distance apart. This was inductive coupling. To achieve this the oscillations in the tank circuit were reduced to two or three in the Telefunken and to one in the Valsillie systems. The Telefunken "quenched gap" was a series of disks with thin mica between them. The Valsillie system used high pressure air blast to blow out the spark. This allowed the oscillations in the aerial to continue till they faded out.

The Poulson arc system also used direct coupling to the aerial and probably was never challenged by Marconi. It was suitable for very large power.

Ellis wrote a story for publication about his trip on the Norwegian ship, Truth, which carried super phosphate from Christmas Island to Hobart and Melbourne. His day on Christmas Island was most instructive. The manager of the radio station there, who had a variety of sets, the same as Ellis had done in Darwin, showed him around the island. Malays took over the ship at sunrise, berthed it, loaded it and whether fully loaded or not, sent it off at 5 p.m. Extremely deep water close in shore makes a wide wharf impossible and the phosphate is loaded by a cantilever. Ships can only be loaded in calm weather and some have waited a month or more for calm weather, steaming out to sea for the night and back next morning. The Malays live in kampongs, large family groups together, and work the phosphate. But the article was not accepted for publication.

About one year before Ellis stopped working on board the ships, he was at home for some months with a heart attack which did him no permanent harm and he got his job back.

(TO BE CONTINUED)
FINAL PART NEXT NEWSLETTER

OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS' ASSOCIATION (N.S.W.)

MINUTES OF 30TH ANNUAL VETERAN'S REUNION (N.S.W. BRANCH)

This years annual reunion was held in the 4th Floor Conference Centre, OTC(A) House on Friday, 28th November, 1986 where a total of 106 members, guests and visitors were in attendance and had a very enjoyable evening.

The Secretary read apologies from OTC(A) Commissioners Mr. Bob Sommervaille, Jack Curtis, and Mrs. Rhonda McIver. Apologies were also received from Keith Vincent, Manager Cairns, Keith McCredde, Manager Moree, and Graham Gosewinkle, General Manager of AUSSAT.

After reading seasons greetings from all of our Branch Presidents and National Secretary Charles Carthew, the Secretary introduced our NSW Branch President, Gordon Cupit, to officially open the evenings proceedings by welcoming members and their visitors.

President Gordon then welcomed our guests; Mr. Brax Horricks, President of our S.A. Branch; Mr. Graham Darley, General Manager, Business Operations OTC(A); Mr. Tim Harricks, General Manager, Human Resources OTC(A); Phil McGolrick, Josie Smith, and Frank Gillan (Norfolk Island). A special welcome was also extended to new members Jeff Hinwood and Bill Darby.

There were no members on the sick list that we are aware of tonight. President Gordon mentioned that our secretary has had a very positive response from our members who are looking forward to attending our first "Daylight Meeting", for the AGM next May.

Our special guest, President Brax Horricks from s.A., thanked those responsible for making this visit possible, and told us an interesting story of how he had to request company permission to marry Rita, his wife even though he was all of 28 years of age at the time!

The secretary, Alan Arndt advised that while in Adelaide last week, he had the privilege of representing the M.D. of OTC(A) at the S.A. Branch's Annual reunion meeting where George Rowe, asked to be remembered to John Lee, Ray Peacock and Joe Collister here tonight.

President Gordon then called on the M.D. of OTC(A) Mr. George Maltby, to say a few words. Mr. Maltby said that OTC(A) has come a long way in its first 40 years which was highlighted by the attainment of \$100 million pre-tax profit last financial year 1985-1986. He went on to ask all present here tonight, to try and save any memorabilia they feel is worth keeping when we make the move early next year from Martin Place to the new OTC HOUSE, presently being constructed on the corner of Elizabeth and Bathurst Streets, Sydney. In the past, far too many precious items of our history have been indiscriminantly disposed of, and are now sadly missed.

There being no further business, president Gordon thanked Mr. Maltby and OTC(A) for their continuous generosity and support of our association over the years. He then invited all members, visitors and guests, to enjoy themselves here tonight, and have a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

The Overseas Telecommunications Commission (Australia)

12th December, 1985

Dear Veteran,

I am sure you will be delighted to learn that prior to the impending move to a new OTC(A) Head office Building the opportunity will be taken to catalogue our archives and make them the foundation for a permanent collection comprising archives, memorabilia and items of communications equipment associated with overseas telecommunications.

Also, with the increased awareness of our history that the Bi-Centenary will encourage, OTC(A) will be seeking to restore, preserve and display our historic communications equipment in our public areas and possibly also in Museums.

Professional assistance will be sought to ensure that both our archives and our historic equipment are properly researched, restored, documented and displayed, and it is hoped that a permanent collection can be established within the new Building and made available for public viewing and research.

John Phillips, Executive Engineer, Cable and Telephone Engineering Branch (Telephone (02) 230-5420) has offered to co-ordinate the task of establishing a permanent collection and of locating and cataloguing interesting historical items or mementos held by Veterans, their families or friends. Shortly I expect to announce a part-time position to assist in this work.

John would therefore like to hear from any of you who may have such items in their possession and would also appreciate any offer to loan, donate, or bequeath them to OTC(A) for inclusion in the collection or in Museum displays. Offers of assistance in any other area (e.g. restoration, maintaining, cataloguing, etc.) would also be welcome.

John is also assembling written material on Australia's international communications for chapters of various books that have been commissioned by learned societies as their Bi-Centennial contribution. He, or a member of his editorial team, may therefore be contacting some of you for reminiscences of your technological achievements.

The valuable and essential work of previous voluntary custodians of OTC(A)'s archives, in particular that of the late John Walker, can now be finally recognised through the establishment of permanent facilities that all might enjoy. Your support in this venture will go a long way towards ensuring its success.

Yours sincerely,

(GEORGE MALTBY)

PEOPLE, PLACES, BITS & PIECES, HERE & THERE

FINANCIAL REPORTS from the State Branches seems to indicate that our Veterans' branches are in a healthy position, and membership is increasing. This is a healthy sign and shows that as we get older we tend to hold on to the old values with people with whom we have a common bond in the Communications Family.

Good to see veteran GEORGE MALTBY and his good wife, MARY, in the midst of Veteran groups. George, of course, being a younger member of the veterans, is still working.

THELMA UWINS and CONNIE WAITE are still around and keep in touch with their Victorian confreres.

To those of you who have not read LAWRENCE DURRANT'S book, "Seawatchers", I recommend you do so. The book is good reading and a credit to its author.

DES WOODS, one of our Sydney veterans, and his wife IRENE, have cause for celebration on receiving the news of the arrival of a granddaughter, JASMINE, recently. His daughter, mother of the infant (her first) lives on Lord Howe Island and Des and Irene couldn't get over there quick enough with tape measure and weights so as to record the vital statistics. Nice to have the good news for a change, isn't it?

GRACE McENTYRE has supplied us with some information on her late husband, ALEX. Alex left the sea where he served on one of the iron ore ships, to transfer to Albury aeradio station in December, 1938. Albury was one of the earliest Aeradio Stations of the time. It was there that Alex and Grace were married in 1939. About six months later the station closed and he transferred to Essendon. He was there for about a year then to Cloncurry, Charleville and Holdsworth Direction Finding for short periods. He then served three years at Mascot after which he went to the old Flying Boat Base at Rose Bay. His final move was to Mascot, interspersed with relieving duties at Broken Hill, Wagga and Dubbo.

On his retirement from Mascot in April 1970, Alex was awarded the Imperial Service Medal.

Thanks, Grace.

IT'S A SMALL WORLD DEPARTMENT

Blue Easterling tells us:

"The coincidences of this Telecommunications game never cease to surprise me.

I asked Ray Wood to acknowledge receipt through a neighbour at St. Hubert's Island. His name is Sel Weston and he lives close by. Sel is a licensed radio ham. Before I joined OTC we were both bank tellers at the same branch.

Sel left the bank about a year after I did. He studied for a diploma in Radio Engineering and opened his own business, Weston Electronics Pty. Ltd. making two-way taxi radios, SABA TV sets under license, small ship radios and the like. Eventually he was bought out by Jacobi Mitchell.

Sel was a Signals Officer in the RAAF during WW2 and is a cobbler of another of the same ilk, Don Hopper who lives up in the mountains about 18km from me. Likewise a ham, Don bobs up on the OTC amateur net. (He went to sea after WW2 and finished up with his Master's ticket, marine surveyor, master navigator and marine engineer).

Like a spider's web, isn't it? Funny how everyone knows everyone else by some means or other.

Changing the subject, I was saddened to read in the Herald of the death of old Jack Doggett in his 91st year. A gentleman to his fingertips. Also saw a notice for Mrs. Mabel Barnfield, widow of the late HARRY BARNFIELD who died about 1955. He was in the SOR (?) and was at Laperouse when I returned from VII in 1954. He was a heart case but never showed any fear of his condition; like Jack he was a quiet gentleman.

KEEPING TOUCH.

A few snippets from CHARLES CARTHEW.

A few years ago PHIL GEEVES came out home, and there interviewed a number of vintage veterans, namely, FRED DAVIS, CLIVE PURVIS, JACK FINCH, ELLIS SMELLIE, CHARLIE GREEN. Knowing Phil the tapes made on that occasion must be around somewhere and will contain memorabilia plus.

CHARLIE MARTIN "Ashgarth", Tilbury Green Halstean N. Essex 009 4RJ, England, an old friend and colleague of Vin Duignan keeps in touch and enjoys reading our NEWSLETTER. We have been friends over the years.

I received an early Christmas card from Harold and Katherine LeQuesne, two of our Canadian Friends over the years.

My deepest sympathy is extended to Mrs. Edwards Nee Jean Constable, of A.W.A., on the sad passing of husband Ted at the age of 91 years. Jean was private secretary to Sir Ernest Fiske and a keen worker in the early days at O.T.V.A. (Vic).

SENDING 'EM PACKING

Dave Rogers, Information Centre Officer, has made approximately six hundred people very happy over the last four years.

As any of those six hundred would probably tell you, he's a great travel advisor and has the knack of organising inexpensive, hassle-free holidays no matter where you want to go.

Dave began with OTC twenty years ago, firstly in the CRS and then in Administration. When the Commission purchased their first batch of computers Dave was one of the original six chosen to become programmers.

How does that fit with organising holidays? It all began years ago when he was a member of the merchant navy assigned to 'long voyages' - trips of over eighteen months duration. During that time he travelled around the world 'about three times' and had a wonderful time doing it. Later, talking to people around the Commission he was astounded to find that many people who travelled overseas for their holidays didn't really enjoy themselves as much as they should. He realised their main problem was lack of foreknowledge and planning.

So, four years ago under the auspices of the Social and Sports Club, he became an intermediary for people planning holidays.

He was able to advise on the best seasons to visit certain places, on the pitfalls they may encounter and, through a contact in the travel business, coordinate their travel arrangements for more competitive prices. In short, he became for the staff an independent travel advisor who was able to arrange what they wanted without railroading them into set deals that may not suit.

Three years ago he decided to enrol in the Travel Consultants course at the Sydney technical College 'to improve the standard of his service'. The standard may not have improved (it sounds like it was already quite high) but the service certainly grew.

It became too large to manage during his lunch hour so he now operates from home in the evenings.

In November last year Dave completed his course, and last month graduated with a credit pass in the top five of his year. He is now a Certificated Travel Consultant.

"I will continue the same service to the Social & Sports Club, Veterans and therefore the staff," says Dave. "People are now coming back for their third and fourth holidays through me so they must be happy with arrangements. I've had people travelling from Adelaide, Melbourne, Rockhampton and even Guam as well as from Sydney which gives me contact with quite a few OTC people I wouldn't normally meet."

VETERAN CABLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION
AUCKLAND

The Annual General Meeting and Reunion of the above was held at 11.30 am on 28th Nov. 1986 at the Parnell Rose Gardens Lounge.

Present: Tom Condon, Ray Connolly, Peter Cowlshaw, Bill Craig, Oliver Crossley, Denis Erson, Huia Evetts, Harry Fox, Les Gladding, Kelvyn Healy, Huia Jacobs, Alan Miller, Mike Milne, Colin Nielsen, Frank Blakely, Jack Potter, Bob Martin, Ken Rea, Fred Studman, John Todd, John Walker.

Chairman Bill Craig opened the Meeting and members stood in silence briefly remembering those passed on during the past year: Rod Gordon, ex Auckland retired on Vancouver Island, Arthur Black and Bob Wright, Australia.

Apologies and Greetings were received from the following: Horace McCoy, Richard Michaels, Michael Fulton, Norman Jones, Bruce Sutherland, Russell Rockley, Len Sedman, Dick Fray, Brian Wallace, David Thompson, Alan McCullough & Tom Atkins.

The Chairman spoke briefly on past events and the Secretary recommended the continuance of sending Xmas cards to our twenty staff widows living in Auckland.

The Minutes of the previous A.G.M. together with the financial statement was read and approved.

Correspondence and Newsletters from Australia and Canada together with C&W publications "Zodiac" and "Recorder" from London were acknowledged. Many expressions of thanks from our widows for Xmas cards sent last year showed they appreciated being remembered.

The following officers were re-elected unopposed:

Chairman: Bill Craig
Hon. Secty. Tres: Fred Studman
Hon. Auditor: Tom Condon

The Meeting was followed by a smorgasbord luncheon in the restaurant and further exchange of news and experiences continued for another hour.

It was pleasing to see all present looking fit and well despite the fact that approximately half of them are well past the 80 years mark and including several members who have been hospitalised during the current year.

F. C. Studman
Hon. Secty.

FROM THE "LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD"

As can be seen from the preceding page the Veteran Cablemen's Association held their annual reunion, but unfortunately without Bill Craig who had to be rushed into Auckland Hospital on the evening of 6th October. Bill is progressing well, however, and should be back on deck with us before long.

According to a recent N.Z.P.O. Newsletter, a new cable linking N.Z. with Australia will be laid within the next five years at an estimated cost of 1.5 billion dollars. This fibre optic cable will have a capacity of 57,000 simultaneous telephone conversations, or a mixture of telephone, data, facsimile and sound programs including TV. A far cry from the old type slow cable we coped with in the nineteenthcenties.

A recent copy of "Recorder" magazine from C&W London mentions the passing away of Rod Gordon, an Aucklanders who spent most of his working days in Canada and, until recently, was retired on Vancouver Island.

Robert Bruce Scott, also retired in Victoria B.C., has just written another book relating to the history of Bamfield, our one time terminal station on Vancouver Island. Bill Craig has a copy if anyone is interested in reading it.

Others who have been on the sick list in the past few months are Hugh Evetts, Tom Condon and "Jake" Jacobs but they have recovered well. Not so fortunate is Tom Atkins who is still in hospital as the result of several minor strokes.

Harry Fox is in hospital again with the same old knee trouble which still requires considerable medication.

The only major casualty has been the loss of one of our widows, Mrs. Ohlson, who was aged 88 years.

Our thanks to Fred Studman, Hon. secretary of the V.C.A. Auckland who provided the news.

CREDITS

As reigning Editor of the O.T.V.A. NEWSLETTER I wish to acknowledge the contributions of the following veterans and at the same time tender my thanks for their interest.

JACK BURGESS
"BLUE" EASTERLING
GORDON CUPIT
BRAX HORROCKS
"TRANSIT"

GEORGE MALTBY
DEREK WALKER
CHARLES CARTHEW
ELLIS SMELLIE
ME

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH OF THE O.T.V.A.

We held our 1986 Christmas meeting at the home of Brax Horrocks, Unley Park on the afternoon of November 20th.

Those present were George Rowe, Ron ward, Ken Collett, Ken Springbett, Eric Symes, Hugh Taylor, Max Lang, Keith Parker, Fred Reeve, Alan Arndt, Bert Dudley and Brax Horrocks.

Apologies were received from Cliff Birks and Claud Whitford. Cliff, who is now 96 keeps quite remarkably well, but his sight and hearing are so poor that he feels he shouldn't come along. Claud, who had a slight stroke a little over a year ago was not well enough to attend.

The President, Brax Horrocks said appropriate words of warm welcome to Alan Arndt, Secretary of the Veterans in Sydney, who had come all the way to Adelaide to be with us.

Alan Arndt brought fraternal good wishes from George Maltby, Managing Director of OTC, and from Gordon Cupit who is now the President of the NSW Veterans. We also had greetings from Charles Carthew, Bruce Sutherland and Pat Sykes.

Fred Reeve, who is manager of the Coastal Radio at McLaren Vale, suggested that we hold our winter meeting down there so that he can show us over the station. We were very pleased to accept his invitation for the afternoon of the fourth Thursday in May. Our Secretary, Bert Dudley is in charge of the travelling arrangements so anyone who can attend is requested that he phone Bert on 298 6337 any time before that date.

Brax Horrocks

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CORRECTIONS, APOLOGIES, AND SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

In our November 1986 NEWSLETTER, ^{he came into O.T.C. in the mid 50s} page 30, we mistakenly named ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~son~~ ^{son} of the late Alex McEntyre as Gladys, when it is, in fact, Grace. To you Grace, our apologies, but our sincere condolences still stand.

CONLIFF O'DONNELL spent most of his time in the Beam Accounts section where he held a fairly senior position. For a short period, either in the early war years, or just after, he was a despatch clerk with Gordon in the Beam. He was in the Commonwealth Military Forces for many years prior to the war, serving in the 17th Battalion as a Bandmaster. Prior to his retirement he grew indoor plants and set up a plant replacement business in the city which he operated during the weekend and nights. He developed this further on his retirement, and the last I heard of him was that he had an extensive gladiola bulb growing and exporting business. Con had not been to a Veterans function for many years.

With regard KEITH WILMOT - he came into O.T.C. in the mid 50s as Senior Draftsman from A.W.A. works. Keith became almost a professional committee-man, and managed to get onto most committees which handles staff matters. He was a most benevolent man, and took an interest in O.T.C., attending most functions.

My personal thanks to you, Gordon, for supplying the above information. Once again though, I wish to stress on Veterans that there is a Particulars of Service sheet available from the Secretary on which a thumb-nail sketch of your life span can be recorded for posterity. It is just a historical notation, and will not be used to blackmail you on any underhand dealings. Please avail yourselves of the facility if you have not already done so. A check with the Secretary will put you straight if one on yourself exists.

VALE

JOHN (JACK) DOGGETT passed away on 10th October, 1986 in his 90th year. His son Kevin, who grew up at Pennant Hills Radio Station, where his father worked in "the early days", advised us of his father's sad passing.

Jack was a Marconi veteran who started work with the Post Office before going to sea.

After the war he joined A.W.A./O.T.C. as a technician, doing installation work at various C.R.S. stations. He was stationed in Darwin when the Japanese invasion took place.

C.E.N. "Peg" PEGLER died on 26th October, 1986, aged 80 years. He retired from O.T.C.A. in 1969. Further particulars are sought from those Veterans who knew him.

RETURN THANKS

CHARLES CARTHEW writes

Permit me to express, through the NEWSLETTER, my grateful thanks and sincere appreciation of each O.T.V.A. State Branch Secretary for sending me a report of the A.G.M. and Reunion with the names of Veterans who were present, together with copies of the Financial statements - by thus keeping together in overcoming the "growing old" factor, and the distance problem, keeping in mind that "We pass this way but once."

Correspondence over the years from Veterans in N.Z., U.S.A., Canada, and from colleagues here in Australia illustrates the emphasis on family, with our reminiscences of days gone by.

THE BEAM WIRELESS PICTUREGRAM SERVICE

By JACK BURGESS

The Beam Wireless Picturegram Service to and from London was inaugurated in October 1934, and to San Francisco in August 1942. The service to Canada opened in November, 1943.

Before the outbreak of war 354 picturegrams were handled. Between July 1944 and February 1945 the total jumped to 1,387, and up to the end of March 1945 the total number of copies of picturegrams distributed throughout Australia and New Zealand to the Press and other agencies totalled 19,206.

The system by which these picturegrams were transmitted and received is amazingly comprehensible to the non-scientific. It is effected by the scanning of a picture by a rotating spot of light at the transmitting end, and recorded by a rotating spot of light at the receiving end. This may seem to be an over-simplification of the description of a process that requires such elaborate equipment.

It is the perfect synchronisation at each end that is so difficult to attain. The picture is transmitted in the form of fine lines spaced at approximately 100th of an inch apart, each part of the line varying in tone with the light and shade of the picture being transmitted.

At the transmitting end, the picture is wrapped around a cylinder in which there is a narrow slot, and then moved automatically from left to right across the slot. In the hollow cylinder exactly behind the slot is a rotating spot of light -- a tiny mechanical eye, looking outwards at the picture. An electric motor causes the eye to revolve inside the slot and at the same time the picture moves across the slot at the rate of 100th of an inch for each revolution of the rotating spot of light. By this means the whole picture surface is scanned in lines 100th inch apart.

At the receiving end a reverse process takes place, and the film on which the rotating eye has retraced the picture is subsequently developed and printed in the usual manner.

In 1948 the picturegram service made big news when the picture of Rimfire winning the Melbourne Cup was flashed from Melbourne to Sydney in time for the picture to appear in the Last Race edition of the Sydney "Daily Mirror". The service was being operated by O.T.C. at that time pending the opening of facilities by the Post Office section of the PostMaster General's Department, and the inclusion of the pictures in the Sydney papers came about only by planned timing on behalf of both the Sydney and Melbourne staffs. On duty at the Melbourne picturegram studio were Messrs. G. Chilton and G. Russell; at Sydney, Mr. H. Burgess. Here is the story as the clock told it.

3.32 p.m. Melbourne Cup starters leave on their two mile journey.
3.35 p.m. Rimfire wins in a dramatic finish with Dark Marne.
3.40 p.m. Photographer leaves Flemington racecourse on a dash back to "Daily Mirror" Melbourne office.
3.48 p.m. Photographer reaches office.
4.00 p.m. Dry and captioned picture lodged at O.T.C. Melbourne.
4.01 p.m. Melbourne advises Sydney that the picture is on hand.
4.04 p.m. Picture on drum. Synchronising.
4.05 p.m. Transmission commenced.
4.16 p.m. Transmission completed.
4.22 p.m. Transmission of "Sun" picture commenced.
4.24 p.m. ~~Negative of "Mirror" picture handed, in tin of hypo, to representative in Sydney.~~
4.27 p.m. Negative arrives at "Mirror" office.
4.29 p.m. Chief photographer hands print taken form to negative to Process Department for production of block.
5.25 p.m. "Daily Mirror" Last Race Edition "hits the streets" with picture of the finish of the Melbourne Cup one hour 50 minutes after the race.

Jack has also included a picture of the actual finish as it was recorded on that day, but as this may not reproduce very well on our copying machine it may not be clear enough. However, the information relating to the actual time taken shows that, for those days, it was a pretty good effort on everyone's part to do the job.

Letters of commendation were sent from the Chief Superintendent Radio Services (Mr. George Apperley) to the O.T.C. staff concerned, and letters of appreciation from the "Mirror" and "Sun" were received by O.T.C.

NEWS FROM THE GARDEN STATE, VICTORIA

CHARLIE GREEN has bundled in to tell us that he is still well, and now a resident of Mornington.

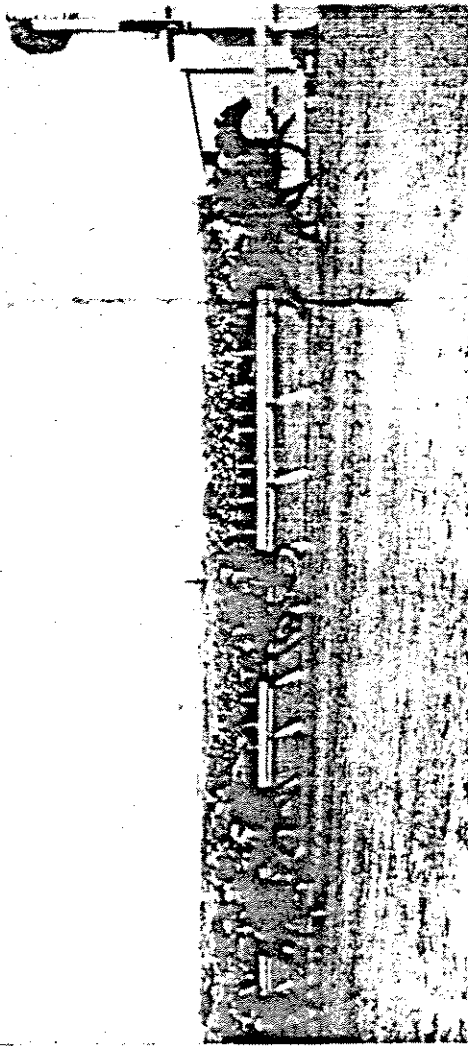
EILEEN TRACEY, widow of our late colleague, Matt, is still living in the old home at Preston, and is now surrounded by a park. Other houses in that area were bull-dozed down but Eileen and her neighbours on both sides adopted the "Stayput" attitude, refusing to let their homes be destroyed, and quite rightly, too.

RIMFIRE—AND PICTUREGRAMS

made news on Melbourne Cup Day

A picturegram service between Sydney and Melbourne is being operated by O.T.C. for the Postmaster-General's Department, pending completion of the Post Office facilities. The Sydney evening newspapers, the "Sun" and "Mirror," were quick to appreciate its value at Melbourne Cup time. The inclusion of pictures taken in Melbourne after 3.30 p.m. in editions to be sold in Sydney on the same afternoon entailed, however, a degree of planned timing and staff co-operation which reflects credit on all concerned. On duty at the Melbourne picturegram studio were Messrs. G. Chilton and G. Russell, at Sydney, Mr. H. Burgess.

Here is the story of the "Mirror's" picture as the clock told it.



Block by courtesy of the Sydney "Daily Mirror."

This picture of Rimfire winning the 1948 Melbourne Cup in record time was being sold with late editions of the Sydney "Daily Mirror" one hour 50 minutes after it was taken.

3.32 p.m.—Melbourne Cup starters leave on their two-mile journey.

3.35 p.m. (approx.)—Rimfire wins in dramatic finish with Dark Marne.

3.40 p.m.—Photographer leaves Flemington racecourse on dash back to "Daily Mirror" Melbourne office.

3.48 p.m.—Photographer reaches office.

4.00 p.m.—Dry and captioned picture lodged at O.T.C., Melbourne.

4.01 p.m.—Melbourne advises Sydney picture on hand.

4.04 p.m.—Picture on drum. Synchronising.

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4.29 p.m.—Chief Photographer hands print taken from negative to Process Department for production of block.

5.25 p.m.—"Daily Mirror" Last Race Edition "hits the streets" with picture of the finish of the Melbourne Cup one hour 50 minutes after the race.

Three of our members, TED TURNER, DOUG BATTEN, and FRANK PATRICK have all improved in health, we are glad to report.

The 30th Annual Reunion brought together a good muster of forth veterans, and it was great to see so many ladies present.

CHRISTMAS CARDS CAME FROM ALL OVER - GOOD TO HEAR FROM OUR OVERSEAS "FAMILIES".

FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE

On the sad passing of his wife, A.W.A. Chief Engineer, CLIFF CUTLER, sold his home and took a unit at the Royal freemason Homes, Melbourne. The unit was only a small one and could not accomodate his A.W.A. World Wide Radiola cabinet which had been presented to him on his retirement.

Cliff asked Charles and Vi Carthew to keep it in their home to ensure its care and safety. After consultation with Cliff, Charles decided to write to Mr. John Hooke with the suggestion that the Radiola be placed in the A.W.A. museum for the benefit of posterity and in remembrance of Cliff.

The following reply was sent to Charles by Mr. John Hooke.

Mr. C. Carthew,
7 Lantana Street,
CLAYTON VIC. 3168

Dear Mr. Carthew,

Thank you for arranging the return of the AWA Radiola presented to Mr. Cutler. The radio is being taken to the Ashfield plant where it will be a valuable addition to Company history. I'm sure Mr. Cutler would approve.

Mr. Silcock has mentioned to me how impressed he was by your commitment to the Overseas Telecommunications Veterans' Association (Australia) and your recollections of the earlier days of AWA. Our company's tradition reflects the high standards of excellence and service established by people like you and your contemporaries.

I wish you and your wife the best of health and continuing fulfilment in your retirement. Again, thank you,

Yours sincerely,

(J. A. L. Hooke)

OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

VICTORIAN BRANCH

30TH REUNION

Friday

14.11.86

Our dual celebration of the Vets' 30th Reunion and that of O.T.C.'s 40th year of service was a huge success.

The attendance was 53 with 21 apologies received. We were delighted to welcome Commissioner Len and Mrs Hingley who came down to joint us on this occasion.

Our thanks must go to Melbourne Manager Jim Robinson and Commissioner Jack Curtis for making the Manager's Suite and Boardroom available for this function, it certainly is a delightful venue.

The Committee, in its wisdom, invited our ladies to attend and their presence was much appreciated. It was wonderful to see Vi Carthew having a good chat to so many of the friends she has not seen for sometime.

We were happy to see George and Winifred Fraser - now retired and living in Essendon - naturally our thoughts went back to the great times we had at Rockbank - the parties and barbecues we all enjoyed so much.

At the conclusion of the evening President Arthur Green passed a vote of thanks to the ladies and to Sam Bright and his stewards for their assistance with the catering. He reminded all that the Annual General Meeting would be held at O.T.C. House on Friday May 8th from noon until 3.30 p.m.

We look forward to seeing you all.

Guye Russell
Hon. Sec.

4 Pareora Avenue,
E. Brunswick. 3057
380. 5249

SICKIES

We have quite a number of Melbourne Vets on the sick list. A visit or phone call could work wonders - Ted Turner, Eddie Trezise, Arthur Ross, Frank Patrick, Jean Constable (Edwards), Sep Harvey and Phil Little who some time back suffered heart trouble but now he is looking forward to a chit chat to catch up on the latest gossip.

HOW ABOUT IT FELLAS?

The Doctor.

The Queensland Veterans held their 1986 reunion on Wednesday, 5th November, at Brisbane Radio. There were 30 present including George and Mary Maltby, Jim and Beryl Banks, Eric Cramp, Blue Easterling, Wim Elbertse, Laz and Joanna Eliou, Kevin and Vi Hiscock, Jock and Jean Kellie, Dean Laws, John Marshall, Alan and Barbara Rees, Glen and Pat Searle, Jack and Lisa Silcock, Vince Sim and friends, plus Dick and Margaret Westwood - our hosts - and Mike Guyler, newly at Brisbane office.

Apologies were read out from president Alan Jones, Wilf Atkin, Frank Bond, Les Doubleday, Pat Gray, Sid Gill, Alf Goeby, Lou Heggie, Rowley Lane, John Norris, Keith Vincent and Bob Webster. Letters were also read from Charles Carthew and Bob Hooper. We hope to have Bob back in sunny Queensland before the next AGM.

The carport at VIB was splendidly bedecked with Gladioli and tropical plants thanks to VIB's hardworking gardener, Ron, who donated them to the ladies as they left, there was a steady hubbub of conversation accompanied by the noise of steady chomping of the excellent smorgasbord and the occasional clink of a glass of XXXX.

A number of EX CRS vets were seen to be holding court in the operating room, regaling those unfortunates on duty with tales of how it should be done.

George Maltby brought those present up to date on the healthy status of OTC and its demanding but exciting future and advocated the policy of "Management by Walking About". The Queensland vets will be delighted if it enables him to attend future meetings.

A thoroughly enjoyable day was had by all.

"IS DAT YOU, ROSEBUD,"

The merger of the A.W.A. Beam Wireless Service and the Australian content of Cable & Wireless into the newly-formed government instrumentality, The Overseas Telecommunications Commission (A'asia) caused a certain amount of concern to the operating staffs of both companies. Remember, as private companies they had been fiercely competitive and each group had a strong pride in the respective operating abilities.

By and large the transition was a fairly smooth one, but a few of the semi-executives found that their powers had been severley curtailed, and some of them didn't like it.

One of these worthies was the then Superintendent of C & W, the late Herbert J. Hutchison, or "Hutch" as he was familiarly known. Hutch had enormous powers under the private company system. He could hire and fire, promote or demote, transfer or return, advance or retard an officer's career, rape loot, pillage (well not quite that). What I am trying to impress on you is that he was a pretty powerful influence - a good friend, but a bad enemy.

The formation of O.T.C.(A). guaranteed officers within the service conditions no less favourable than those pertaining within the Public Service. No longer could an officer be fired on the spot. He now had a right of appeal before a Disciplinary Appeals Board comprising a Chairman, a Commission representative, and an Officer's representative.

Similarly, if an officer held the view that he was being by-passed because he was not popular with the selecting officer or head of his department and was as efficient as a junior provisional promotee he could appeal before the Promotions Appeals Board where he had representation similar to the Disciplinary Appeals Board. Also, his working conditions were determined between the Administration and his the union, in this case the Professional Radio Employees' Institute, and any conditions considered unfair by staff may be adjusted by mutual agreement between both parties.

All this was alien to Hutch, and I could understand his resentment in no longer being in full control. At this time I was Vice President of the Institute and a Governing Councillor representing the Traffic Section which meant that I was sought out to be union rep. in staff/managerial consultations. Being the formative years of the Commission these meetings were many and varied.

At first Hutch treated us in a genial manner until such times as representations resulted in changes of which he did not personally approve, whereupon our debates became increasingly more tight-lipped and less benign. It got to the stage where there was nothing we wouldn't do for Hutch and nothing he wouldn't do for us - which was the sum total of what we did for each other. Our relationship changed from one of guarded tolerance, finally blossoming into a mongoose/cobra friendship.

Unlike Gaul, the camp divided into roughly two camps; the pro-Hutchers and the anti-Hutchers. Members of each group were readily identifiable according to the adjective or adverb immediately preceding his name.

From this point I intend to go off at a tangent by bringing on the scene what may appear to be irrelevancies but which do have a bearing on the overall story. I crave your patience.

Around this time, over on the North American continent, (Canada, I think, but I could be wrong), a black gentleman emerged upon the scene proclaiming himself the Black Messiah. He went by the name of Father Divine, and was accompanied by a band of devotees known as Archangels and Rosebuds. He took unto himself a wife, a white female Rosebud whose name escapes me. Now it so happened that one of the most common expressions used by the anti-Hutchers was a noun indicating someone born out of wedlock, immediately preceded by an adjectival colour applied to the good Father, so it was not inappropriate when one of our wags dubbed Hutcher as Father Divine. The name stuck.

Meanwhile, back in good ole Aussie, tragedy struck. The Public Service Arbitrator, a bloke called Castieaux, did the right things by the plebes and granted an increase of 2 1/2 times the skill margin which pertained in 1939 to all artisans and others above the basic wage. His argument was that the skill margin had been eroded away by post-war inflation and it was only right that it be restored. The workers went wild, because at this time there was no appeal against the Arbitrator's decision which was binding on both parties. Our Prime Minister of the day, one "Pig-iron" Bob Menzies had a fit, but recovered in time to rush a Bill through the parliament which gave provision for appeals against such decisions. I think that Bob realised the dint it would make in his consolidated revenue if a wage increase of government employees in such magnitude was granted. It would certainly have affected the amount of money which had been set aside for politicians' overseas trips. The Public Service Board exercised its new right of appeal and was successful in having the marginal increase reduced from 2 1/2 to 1 1/2 the 1939 level.

A state of gloom fell over the land.

But that wasn't all. Our Union, P.R.E.I. had had before the Arbitrator an extensive Log of Claims on the Commission, and his verdict was released not on the heels of the previous disaster. Instead of getting a substantial rise which we thought was justified, he reduced us to the level of the Post Office telegraphist, which meant a cut in salary of Aust. 2 £ per annum. The air was electric. Resentment was rife. The expression of the day was surliness. Even O.T.C.(A) was horrified. They had been prepared to grant an increase of around A 48 £ per annum on the base grade, and the last thing they wanted was industrial trouble. Frantically they worked to rectify the position with the knowledge that a mutiny from the lower deck at this stage would make Captain Bligh's turn-out look like a hippies' Festival of Love.

Strangely enough, it was Hutch who unwittingly supplied a touch of comic relief just when it was needed.

O.T.C.(A) turn out a slick little publication called "TRANSIT". It provided news relating to staff activities, movement, Commission plans, and items of general interest within the communication field. And it came to pass that right in the middle of this schemozzle (Australians overseas please translate) that the current issue came out containing a black and white picture of Hutch, radiating hapiness, holding a telephone in his hot little hand, and under which appeared the caption

"MR. H.J. HUTCHISON, OUR NEWLY APPOINTED TRAFFIC MANAGER".

He'd been promoted.

I think my mind must have snapped. Everything went blurred, but finally the blood returned to the brain. An idea began to form in my mind.

The main chink in Hutch's armour was that he could not stand ridicule or any form of indignity affecting him personally. That was the key. Selecting a black lead pencil, and using an old razor blade, I scraped the graphite into a fine dust until I had a small heap. Using the tip of my index finger, I rubbed the black graphite into Hutch's face and hands, being careful not to touch the area around his eyes and mouth. By the time I was satisfied Hutch was a look-alike for the late and great Al Jolson. Cutting the picture from the magazine, I pasted it over another piece of paper on which I had prepared the caption:

"IS DAT YOU, ROSEBUD? AH'SE JUST BEEN ELEVATED
WID REDROSPECK. AH DONE TOLE YOU DAT CASTIEAUX
WAS A WHITE MAN."

Using a bit of sticky tape, I taped it on a pillar in a conspicuous section of the Operating Room and awaited results. One of the pro-Hutchers found it first and before long a group of the boys were having a chuckle at Hutch's expense. A short phone call to Hutch's new ivory tower on the floor above by a pro, and in he burst through the bat-wing doors. Having digested the poster his eyes moved slowly around the room pausing on each possible perpetrator, but once he spotted me the gleam in his eyes showed that his search was over. He moved across to my circuit, and waving his hand in the general direction of the offending article said "I see someone has painted me alot blacker than I really am." A slight pause, and then he continued, "I don't mind them painting me black, so long as they don't paint me red."

With that he sauntered off, but I recorded a mental ZAP to his message. Hutch firmly believed that anyone who involved himself in any Union was a "pinkie", just short of being a Commo, even if the man has fought for King and Country.

Ah well, Hutch is no longer with us having departed this planet some time ago, but I used to enjoy our verbal clashes, because though short on humour, he was big on wit. I have a sneaking feeling, though, that any enjoyment derived from our meetings was distinctly one-sided.

And that's a great pity.

Editors Note

OTC's Archivist Mr. John Phillips, wishes to thank Mrs. Gray for donating her deceased husband Harold's, Morse Keys and Headphones to the OTC Archives, as well as allowing him to photocopy a complete record of Harold's official papers since he started in Radio during the 1920's.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

This year celebrates the 60th anniversary of the opening of the International Beam Wireless Service. This was a major breakthrough in wireless communications, and was the first real challenge to the cable service. Charles Carthew gave us a good account of the commencement of the Beam in the last NEWSLETTER, and it is interesting to note that Doug Wood is the sole survivor of that special band sent to the U.K. for training.

However, there are others of our members who joined the Beam in the initial days.

The Beam remained the major method of Australia's overseas telephone and telegraph communications until the advent of the coaxial cable in 1963. At that time we saw the winding down of facilities at Doonside, Bringelly, Fiskeville, Rockbank, Applecross, Bassendean, Cottesloe and Southport.

It is said that this anniversary also coincides with the demise of the Telegraph Operating Rooms and to those members of the Traffic Branch who are affected, we wish them well for the future. Some will be retiring, others will go to other industries, and the remainder transferred to other duties in O.T.C.(A).

Good luck, one and all.

VALE

RON SMITH, an ex A.W.A. member advises that M.J. (Murray) Johnson passed away on 27th November, 1986.

Perhaps someone out there knew Murray, and if so I would appreciate a sketch of his background in communications.

OTC'S ARCHIVAL SEARCH

As the Bicentenary of Australia approaches, OTC has realised the importance of its history and the history of telecommunications in Australia. So we've set up an Archives Unit.

We're after anything and everything that may be of historical value - photos, trophies, personal diaries, tapes, maps, reports and equipment.

As an OTC Veteran you may have something of historical significance which you'd like to donate, offer on loan, or bequeath to OTC. If so please call Bill James, on (02) 218-4954.

OTC has a fascinating and colourful history, one that must be kept for future generations. Help us to preserve OTC's past.

0319L

