

Newsletter

VOL. 4 PT. 1 PAGE 1 - NOVEMBER 1988

MEETINGS AND REUNIONS

<u>VICTORIA</u>	Friday 11th November, 1988 Commences 5.30 p.m.	OTC House 382 Lonsdale Street Melbourne
<u>QUEENSLAND</u>	Wednesday 16 November, 1988 Commences 12 noon	Maritime Comms. Station Caboolture
<u>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</u>	Thursday 24 November Commences 2.30 p.m.	Maritime Comms. Station McLaren Vale
<u>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</u>	Tuesday 29 November Commences 5.30 p.m.	26 St. Georges Terrace Perth
<u>NEW SOUTH WALES</u>	Friday 2 December 1988 CHRISTMAS REUNION Commences 6 p.m.	15th Floor Conference Room, OTC House 231 Elizabeth Street Sydney

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.



A MESSAGE FROM THE N.S.W. PRESIDENT Gordon Cupit

It was pleasing to see so many old faces at the Annual General Meeting. Also some new faces, and not forgetting those that we had not seen for many years. There is no doubt that having a daylight meeting contributed to the good attendance. Perhaps thought might be given to having a daylight Annual Reunion. There was no one present who came out on the First Fleet, but we did have in attendance five who started work before 1920, namely Charlie Watson (1914), John Creswick (1915), Claude Dalley (1916), John Lee and Charlie Swinney. The record must stand with our old pal, Charlie Raecke, who actually had 60 years service, a feat which I am sure will never be surpassed. They are all cablemen, with Charlie Watson also seeing service in the P.M.G. and A.W.A. Beam Wireless.

I was fortunate to be able to attend Adelaide's Annual General Meeting held at the Adelaide Radio Station McLaren Vale, Fred Reeve being our host. Regretably the numbers down that way are diminishing and only nine members attended the meeting. It was great to see Brax Horrocks who, though being far from well, managed to scrape up the energy to be with his colleagues. Brax, who was at Cocos Island during the war, is donating to the museum and archives a knife made from the steel of the 'EMDEN' and photo albums.

The meeting happened to coincide with the Managing Director's nationwide hookup to discuss the budget, and all were most interested, as they were also with my outline of arrangements for the Centenary Exhibition.

Whilst at Paddington Archives recently, a phone call was received from a gent in Perth referring to the article on the Waratah, which appeared in our last Newsletter. He was seeking addresses of those with information. This we were able to give him. It was ascertained that he had an interest in shipwrecks and was actually in possession of a bottle containing a distress message which was thrown over when the Waratah went down. The Telecom Historical Society in Perth gave him a copy of the article from NEWSLETTER.

March 3rd was a historical day, when Edgar Harcourt's book "Taming of the Tyrant" was launched at O.T.C. House. It is the story of the first one hundred years of Australia's international communications services and highlights the wheeling and dealing, controversy, intrigue, etc. that became part and parcel of international conferences, and particularly to those of telegraph offices, technical areas who often thought or stated that they were the only real money earners of the organisation.

It is an excellent book that offers most interesting, detailed reading, so beg, borrow or steal it, as only you will be the loser if you do not take the opportunity to read it.

Congratulations, Edgar. Your work will be a boon to future researchers, a valuable contribution to posterity, and acknowledges you among the great authors of our time.

THE PHILIP GEEVES MEMORIAL

On 26th April a memorial plaque to the memory of the late Philip Geeves, ex-President of our Association, was unveiled at the Palace Gardens, Sydney Botanical Gardens. Associated with the plaque was the restoration of two statues, "Autumn" and "Spring", together with four urns, all over one hundred years old. The project was arranged by members of the Philip Geeves Memorial Fund and the Management of the Botanical Gardens. This was only fitting as Philip took a great interest in the Gardens.

The statues and urns were placed in position the day before the unveiling, but unfortunately one of the urns was knocked over and broken by vandals. The memorial was unveiled by Lady Fairfax, with Professor Chalmers, Director of the Gardens also speaking. After the function refreshments were served to approximately fifty guests which included Mrs. Geeves, Philip's daughters and grandchildren.

Philip was a noted archivist and historian, especially on early Sydney, and well known for his historical session with Caroline Jones on 2BL, his historical question and answers column in the Sydney Morning Herald, and his TV shows with Dick Smith. In addition he supplied a great deal of archival and museum material to O.T.C.'s historical records.

Our Association and a number of individual members subscribed to the memorial Trust Fund.

ANTARCTICA

Friends of the late Dick Hoseason will be pleased to learn that a bay in Antarctica has been named Hoseason Bay in his memory.

Dick was a young telegraphist in the Sydney Beam Room who was chosen for a term with the Antarctic Division. During an exploration exercise with two other companions, a huge wave washed all three into the sea. One of the party managed to reach the shore. Dick went to the aid of the other man, helped him to high ground, but then another wave washed Dick back into the sea, and Dick not having the strength to reach his companions, was drowned.

(The full story of the incident reflects tragedy and courage on the part of the three men, there being only one survivor. Though I remember most of the details, I would appreciate any copies or records of the event which may be in the possession of Veterans, with the object of reproducing the story in the NEWSLETTER -- (Editor).)

AWA MERCANTILE MARINE AND COSTAL RADIO SERVICE

In the last NEWSLETTER a list of operators serving with AWA appeared. The names of those who later served with O.T.C. are underlined. A number of others should have been marked and if my memory is correct the following should also have been recorded:-

H. Waugh, R.S. Glenn, J. Fuge, L.T. Young, F.L. Scott, C.R. West, G.D. Reynolds, A. Singleton, H.J. Kyle, M.L. Weeks, J.B. Ponsonby, L.E. Ternes, E.H. Smellie, A.S. Hart, E.W. Sievers, W.G. Chapman, N.F. Odgers, J.R. Allinson, F. Ouvrier, J.R. Clifford, J.H. Leverett, E.J. O'Donnell, P.W. Brown, J. Elmore, C.F. Dale, D.B. Fleming, A.A. McCollum, C. Wallace, J. Heavey, J. Peell, R.W. Bailey, F. Marsden, A. Sheppherd, H.W. Barnfield, J. Bassett, H.S. Burgess, R.O. Bettison, A.G. Cox, S. Hamilton, C.R. Stanfield, H.A. Sticpwish, H.E. Oates, G.J. Scott, C.L. Coley, V.E. Stanley, J. Doggett, W.S. Ringrose, A.F. Catford, G.J. Flynn, A.A. Kerr, W.V. Sim, S. Wright, F.G. Forrest, W.W. Jenvey, W.R. Thomas, K. Minogue, W.F. Bardin, L.C. Farnsworth, H.S. Taylor, E.F. Bishton, W.P. Atkin, W.J. Belmings, A.T. Sage, S.G. Boutell, W.J. Stevenson.

ROBERT (BERT) RITCHIE

It is with regret that we have to record the passing of Bert Ritchie, who at the time of his retirement was General Manager of QANTAS.

Some of you will remember Bert and his twin brother, Chris, as messenger boys in the Beam, around about 1929. Bert graduated to the Beam Room whilst Chris went into Accounts in AWA. As a young telegraphist, Bert owned a Fiat tourer which was parked in the back lane whilst he was on night shift. Many a weary messenger slept in Bert's car until called for a run by the Despatch Clerk.

Bert was an ardent hockey player and on a number of occasions was unable to turn up for duty due to injuries. (A dangerous game, hockey). These being the depression years, the boss could stand over the employee, so on instructions from above, Mark Mortimer carpeted Bert and told him that one more injury and his services would be terminated. An astute character, Bert immediately terminated his hockey career, sold his Fiat, bought a Douglas motor cycle, and enrolled in a pilot's course. Those were the days of the Tiger Moth.

Bert subsequently got his "wings" and proceeded to study for a commercial navigator's certificate. On successful completion of this course, there being few such qualified people in Australia, Bert resigned from AWA and started a flying career. He later obtained his Commercial pilot's licence, and the next we heard about Bert was flying DC3 "Biscuit Bombers" in New Guinea during World War II. After the war, Bert got a job with QANTAS Constellation, and flew it to Australia. He later captained jets and finally was promoted to General Manager, QANTAS. One wonders what would have happened to Bert had he kept up Hockey or had a prang on that Douglas.

Chris stayed with AWA for many years, but also joined QANTAS where he progressed through a number of positions to Manager, Fijian Airways, a subsidiary of QANTAS. Unfortunately he developed a heart condition and died some years back.

VALE

Barry King, son of LYDIA KING has advised us of his mother who passed away on 28th August, 1988. Barry also provided us with the time and date of the funeral but it arrived too late for us to attend. I, for one, am sure quite a lot of the old Beamers will also remember Lydia very well, for reasons listed below:-

Lydia King was one of approximately 50 women recruited and trained for duties in A.W.A. Sydney Operating Room shortly after the USA entered World War II early in 1942. The influx of American Servicemen and women produced acute shortage of telegraph staff as it was very difficult to obtain men from the Australian Services.

Fred Jenkins from the Beam Staff, was appointed School Teacher and the subjects were:-

1. Learning to read Undulator message tape and printing the contents of the tape on message forms for the public.
2. Learning the different groups of figures representing the Service Men/Women E.F.M. cheap rate message and decoding these groups into readable sentences.
3. Learning to operate the R.C.A. 4 channel multi-plex transmitter/receiver equipment obtained from USA under lend-lease agreement. two printers of seven unit complex were operated from Sydney with two teleprinter operation controlled by Bell. There were no error detection and the Bell control worked very well. The other two channels were joined in series giving a speed of 104 words a minute in morse and forked to Melbourne operating room by land line.

After the war the girls were not required in the operating room and most of them stayed on in clerical duties etc.,

Our condolences go to Barry and her family.

VALE

CHARLIE HALE who served in quite a few areas within the Commission's service died on 6th June, 1988. Charles was born on 26th February, 1919 and served in the R.A.A.F. in New Guinea during World War II from 1939 to 1946. He also served in the Signals in Rabaul and new Caledonia.

During the period 1946 to 1960 he served as a supervisor in the Department of Civil Aviation in Sydney and Darwin in the technical field. In 1960 he joined O.T.C.A. as a Supervising Technician (Installations) at Doonside, Bringelly, Paddington, Rabaul, Port Moresby and Spring Street. Between the years 1966 to 1971 he was Manager Guam, returned to Head Office 1972 to 1974. 1974 to 1975 saw him as Deputy Manager Broadway when he was off to Guam again as Manager, returning to his position of Deputy Manager, Paddington in 1978.

From that date until his death we have no information as to his activities, but we would appreciate it if anyone has details of that period sending them along to NEWSLETTER.

Our sincerest sympathy goes to his family and friends.

SETTLEMENT TO SATELLITES - O.T.C. CENTENARY EXHIBITION By Gordon Cupit

For those who have been unfortunate enough not to view the O.T.C. Centenary Exhibition, I will endeavour to describe some of the Exhibits. Before doing so, however, I would like to thank all those of our members who have contributed to our historical archives and museum. Both these sources have been of value in making the Exhibition a success. The organisers have put a great deal of effort into planning and staging and are to be congratulated. In addition to equipment and material from OTC sources, equipment and displays have been provided by Cable and Wireless London, KDD Japan, and AT&T USA.

The theme of the Exhibition is "From Settlement to Satellites" and accordingly the first display covers shipping and mails from 1788 to 1872 (opening of first cable). The problems and privations caused by the lack of communications.

The next cabinet contains cable and wheatstone gear around the 1870/80 period.

Other displays contain the following:

Morse Keys and sounder (painted green from the old wartime beam room) hand operated cable punches, - mirror galvanometer - fork relay - siphon recorder - wheatstone and cable code tapes - regenerator - radio equipment used on 1906 Bass Strait first wireless transmission - spark gap transmitter - undulator - aerial switch (circa 1906) - crystal sets, - crystals - domestic receiver mid 20's - coherer 1910 - photos and description opening of Beam - C.O.C.P. No.1 - First Ocean Newspaper - undulator - reperferator - Code books - Message forms - First Pix - First coloured Pix - First domestic TV Receiver - cabinet depicting types of valves through the ages, to transistors micro circuitry, silicon chips. - transmitting valve - travelling wave guide - compac repeater taken from sea bed - display model of Compac amplifier - display model of Optic Fibre repeater (100,000 telephone channels) - prototype of Early Bird Satellites - CRS Console from Thursday Island - ingenious wall displays of OTC services and push button control of routes for various destinations - similar wall display with push buttons showing the relationship and various combinations of cable and satellite circuits - very good 4 hour video of OTC services, stations, staffs etc. - photographic display of OTC family - Army model 12 transceiver - Modern Facsimile machine - demonstration of overseas shopping, news from overseas papers, etc. by means of modern communications and computers, expected to be in operation within the next 5 years. - Video telephone connection from each end of the exhibition - Coastal station hookup via IMMARSAT - Voice controlled in a number of chosen languages to operate a maze video game - phones connected to London, New York and Moscow whereby one picking up phone and dialling is provided with the weather and topical news items from those cities.

Exhibition well worth seeing and my spies tell me it is going to be extended until April 1989, so any country or interstate Vet in Sydney between now and then, trot out to the Basement of the OTC Terminal building, 363 Oxford Street, Paddington, make yourself known to the guides, and I am sure you will get VIP treatment, especially on a Saturday or Sunday when a Veteran will be in attendance.

BEAMERS OF THE THIRTIES

Lying in bed, daydreaming again, I started to think of some of the lads in the Beam Room during the thirties and some of the vehicles they drove and rode. Thought you might like to share my dreams. Do you remember these characters and their machines. Gordon Ramsay and his OAKLAND, Sir Earnest MARMION, Bert Ritchies FIAT subsequently sold to Frank White, the dubious activities in Wilf Atkins FORD, Arthur Wells aristocratic AUSTRA DAIMLER, Stan Bouttel's MORRIS 8/40, John Hector VELO, Ivan Jones LEVIS, Norm Harris TRIUMPH, Jack Radnidge VELO, Ron Godfrey TRIUMPH, Wal Zihrul AJS, Don Kirkwood OK SUPREME, Harry Stone, HARLEY DAVIDSON, VELO, SQUARE 4 ARIEL, Gordon Cupit WARATAH, AJS. Those were the days, and of course not forgetting the nights.

OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS' ASSOCIATION (QUEENSLAND)MINUTES OF THE 13TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held in the OTC Brisbane office on Tuesday 24th May 1988

PRESENT were: President Alan Jones and Colleen, Jim and Beryl Banks, Dennis and Eve Bloudani, Blue Easterling, Laz Eliou, Sid and Eileen Gill, Alf and Heather Goebly, Bob and Margaret Hooper, John Marshall, John and Mildred Norris, Jack and Lisa Silcock, John and Betty Toland, Keith and Sadie Vincent and Dick Westwood.

Also present were visitors: George and Mary Maltby and Ray Baty, all ex Sydney, and Peter Cheleski, new OTC Manager.

President Alan welcomed all present, in particular our visitors and new members Dennis Bloudani and John Toland and congratulated John Norris on his excellent recovery from surgery. He thanked Peter Cheleski for hosting the meeting in the new OTC office.

A minute's silence was then observed for our late colleague Glen Searle, who passed away at Nambour on 5th May.

APPOLOGIES were read from: Wilf Atkin, Charles Carthew, Eric Cramp, Pat Gray, Lou Heggie, Kev Hiscock, Jock Kellie, Roley Lane, Dean Laws, Alan Rees, Vince Sim and Bob Webster. Pat Gray also advised that Les Doubleday was not well in Rockhampton.

MINUTES of the 12th AGM held in Brisbane on 19th May 1987 were read and confirmed. Correspondence all concerned attendance and apologies except for a letter and photographs from Keith Vincent following the 13th Reunion. The Secretary thanked Keith for the latter and tabled an album he had made up of photographs and attendance records since formation of the Association in June 1975.

The Secretary/Treasurer then presented the financial statement which showed a net gain of \$20.44 over the year and a current balance of \$221.12. This was accepted.

President Alan then declared all offices vacant and the following were elected:

President:	Keith Vincent
Secretary/Treasurer:	Jim Banks
Auditor:	John Norris

New President Keith took the chair and on behalf of all members thanked Alan Jones for his efforts over the last three years. He invited George Maltby to address the meeting and George expressed his and OTC's continued support for the Veterans Associations and his personal pleasure, and that of Mary, in being able to attend. He also gave a brief summary of the excellent shape in which OTC finds itself and of the potential changes which may occur in the next year or so as a result of government policies.

President Keith also asked that appreciation be recorded of Jim and Beryl Banks' efforts in arranging the catering for the Brisbane Office in helping serve it.

The date and venue of the 14th Annual Reunion was set as:

Wednesday, 16th November, 1988 at Brisbane Maritime (VIB)

with Dick Westwood and his team to act as hosts. President Keith then closed the meeting and good fellowship followed.

GIVING CREDIT WHERE IT IS DUE

NEWSLETTER would like to express thanks to the contributors of the November 1988 edition.

GORDON CUPIT
JACK BURGESS
BRAX HORROCKS
RAY CONNOLLY
LAWRENCE DURRANT
GUYE RUSSELL
MARTIN HADLOW
BILL CRAIG
R.B. SCOTT
RAY RAISON
JIM BANKS
BRYAN NELL

The article giving Ted Bishton's version of happenings at Rabaul was supplied by Jack Burgess.

NOTES FROM THE QUEENSLAND VETERANS 13TH AGM (Jim Banks)
held in the OTC Brisbane office on Tuesday 24th May 1988

Members and visitors present were as per the attached copy of the minutes, a total of 28.

It was good to have some 'new blood' present in the shape of Dennis Bloudani, recently retired from the pay section and now resident in Carindale, a new suburb of Brisbane, with his wife Eve, and also John Toland who actually lives with wife Betty in Lismore in "that other state" but finds it easier to reach Brisbane than Sydney. Their loss, our gain. John plans to put his technical ability to the test and has already received official approval to begin operating on the amateur bands.

Newish member Keith Vincent, also technically one of the light blues (he lives at Bogangar, just south of the border) hasn't lost much time in making his presence felt. By sending some photos of the Reunion held at VIB last December, he prompted perpetual Secretary/Treasurer Jim Banks to put together the small collection of photographs and the (almost) complete lists of attendees at AGM's and Reunions since this branch was formed on 5th June, 1975 with the late Scotty Hamilton in the chair. Keith also took on the extremely burdensome task of President, thus relieving Alan Jones who has shouldered it for the last three years.

Jim Banks couldn't find a taker for the Secretary/Treasurer role but can probably handle it more easily now that he has mastered the 'hands-on' aspect of his IBM-clone and the intricacies of Word Perfect which are helping to while away the few idle moments of retirement.

John Norris couldn't escape either - he retained the burden of affixing his name to the annual balance sheet despite having undergone a quadrupal heart-bypass operation in January. Thankfully the operation has been successful and John would be an inspiration to any other Veterans who are faced with similar problems, as would Sid Gill who had a similar op a few years ago.

Bob Hooper is another who is putting health problems behind him. Life on bribe Island seems to be good for him and Margie, judging by their tans (are they really overall?).

Laz Eliou maintains he is not receiving golf lessons from the Shark despite claims from Alan Jones that he must have been. (Laz was part of the VIB team which again won the Maltby golf trophy against Brisbane Office. New OTC Manager Peter Cheleski played about his second game of golf to partner Alan for the latter).

John Marshall managed to make the meeting despite the problems that many Brisbane residents are facing at the moment - hosting long-lost friends who are suddenly finding Brisbane an excellent place to visit. Could Expo have anything to do with it?

Amongst the absentees, Pat Gray sent his usually cheery letter (and his subs and a donation - other absent members please note, at least the subs part...) claiming that although he has obtained a more reliable set of wheels now, he is saving his annual visit to the 'big smoke' for a visit to Expo later in the year. Pity it finished before the Reunion, Pat, we would like to enjoy a few good arguments once more!

Wilf Atkin continues to claim he is too old to travel up for the meetings (at a mere 85, too...) Perhaps we'll have to consider taking the mountain to Mahomet and have a meeting down on the coast?

Charles Carthew never fails to send his apologies and best wishes. He is a real optimist now - in his fourth year of convalescence and "slowly coming good!" All our best wishes go to you, Charlie and especially to you and Vi for your 58th anniversary next May - quite an innings.

VALE - CLENDYN EDWYN SEARLE, M.B.E.

Clen Searle, who passed away at Nambour on May 5th, was one of the oldest of the Queensland Veterans, aged 82. He joined the Marconi School of Wireless in Melbourne in 1923 and, perhaps uniquely, served for a short time on the s.s. Age even before he obtained his 1st Class ticket, to relieve a sick operator in an emergency. He also worked as a junior engineer with 5DN radio station whilst studying for his ticket, then, on attaining it, (No. 847) he joined the RAAF at Point Cook, as a shipping strike at the time prevented him going to sea.

After a year or so in the RAAF, however, he had himself discharged so as to go to sea in 1926. He served on several ships, including the renowned 'Jervis Bay', 'Dilkera', and 'Kalinga', until he was transferred to the Fiji CRS in 1929. He served at Suva until 1931, a stint which included several stints on the old cableship 'Pioneer', before transferring to Lautoka as OIC following a severe hurricane. Lautoka Radio was then located for a while in the empty gaol at the rear of the courthouse!

In 1933 he returned on leave to Australia and married his good lady, Pat, in Adelaide. Later the same year he was posted to the Beam and Island circuits operated from Clarence Street, Sydney, until in February 1934 he was sent north again, this time to Port Moresby Radio as a radiotelegraphist. After a short stint in the Commercial Engineering department of AWA in 1937, he again returned to Port Moresby, later to become OIC.

He was still at Port Moresby when war broke out and 'achieved' his ambition to become a plantation owner, leaving AWA, just before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour. His plantation was called 'Kokoda' - soon to become a famous battleground. Clen was "taken over" by the army and commissioned in view of his local experience, with an honourable wartime career.

When it was all over, he returned to his 1000 acres and settled down with Pat and their two children to the life he loved until he retired to Nambour near Queensland's Sunshine Coast in 1985.

Clen was a true example of the real meaning of the word 'gentleman'.. He will be sadly missed.

32ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING O.T.V.A.
NSW BRANCH 13TH MAY 1987

MINUTES

Present:

J. Anderson, A. Arndt, A. Barry, T. Bastow, R. Beaumont, R. Beecham, J. Bevan, K. Bobridge, L. Brown, H. Bulka, J. Burgess, B. Chant, M. Condon, O. Cooper, J. Cowie, J. Creswick, A. Culloden, G. Cupit, B. Curran, C. Dalley, J. Davis, W. Day, G. Day, P. Day, M. Dobson, A. Ebert, J. Edwards, K. Erickson, R. Fisher, P. Feely, E. Gunning, J. Hanson, E. Haran, E. Harcourt, N. Harris, J. Hart, P. Helps, A. Hennessy, F. Hickling, J. Hinwood, R. Hookway, B. Hoschke, T. Hughes, C. Hurndell, H. Jones, F. Kannard, F. Keen, J. Lee, B. Lewenic, W. Luke, S. Luxton, G. Madren, C. Maiden, J. Maurer, K. McCredde, G. McDonald, L. McIllree, D. Miller, T. Molloy, D. Montgomery, K. Morgan, J. Newlyn, J. Pow, A. Purtill, M. Reed, D. Richardson, A. Ricketts, D. Rogers, S. Sandilands, G. Schulze, P. Skinner, D. Smith, R. Smith, K. Stone, M. Subramany, C. Swinney, A. Taylor, J. Taylor, R. Taylor, G. Thompson, E. Thornley, R. Tully, C. Watson, R. Waugh, F. White, A. White, D. Wills.

Apologies:

A. Agius, R. Allen, E. Anthony, R. Baty, J. Bonnici, B. Callaghan, M. Casey, W. J. Chant, B. Collett, R. Collins, J. Collister, B. Darragh, P. Dean, A. Dulihanty, P. Frost, A. Griffiths, J. Heath, F. James, D. Lloyd, J. Mattes, S. Maynard, H. McInnes, K. Minogue, V. Moore, J. Morrison, J. Neylon, M. Nemeyer, E. Norris, M. O'Hanlan, R. Osborne, T. Perrett, P. Phillips, C. Pickford, C. Raecke, E. I. Richie, J. Rowley, J. Salloway, R. Scherf, P. Seaton, R. Stewart, S. Taylor, D. Temperley, T. Thatcher, W. Unwins, C. Vahtrick, A. Waugh, P. Whisson, C. Wood, D. Woods, M. Woods, Mr. Wright, V. Yen.

The President, Gordon Cupit, opened this meeting and welcomed our official guests, Pam Helps, OTC Welfare Officer and Tony Richardson, SLAPS officer, and all members present. A special welcome was extended to a new member, Mani Subramany, who was attending his first meeting.

Apologies were received from Commissioner Mrs. R. McIvor, Maurie Matthysz, Manager Norfolk Island, and Athol Brown. All others are recorded in the attendance book.

Fraternal greetings were read as received from the Quarter Century Club of Canada and the Vetaran Cableman's Association of N.Z.. Presidents and members of our Victorian, Queensland, South Australian and Western Australian Branches on this, the occasion of our 32nd Annual General Meeting. Chas Carthew, our National Secretary, also sent us his very best wishes and assures us he is still keeping very good health. A cordial invitation has been extended from our branches, to any of us who are interested in attending their next meetings.

One minute's silence to observed to mark the passing of the following members during the past six months:-

Jack Swift, Cedric Pegler and Joe Holmes.

Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of our previous meeting were distributed to members in our October 1987 Newsletter (copies were also available at this meeting) and were declared open for discussion. There being no discussion it was moved by Jim Anderson and seconded by Ron McDonald that the minutes of the 31st Annual General Meeting be confirmed.

Carried unanimously.

Balance Sheet and Annual Discounts

The Balance Sheet was presented to all members present and opened for discussion. There being no discussion, it was moved by Keith McCredden and seconded by Lyal Gowanlock, that the Balance Sheet and Auditors' Report be accepted.

Carried unanimously.

Election of Officers

The President declared all offices vacant, and called for nominations for a Returning Officer to conduct the annual elections.

Mr. Geoff Day was nominated by Alan Arndt and seconded by Chas Watson. There being no further nominations, Mr. Geoff Day was duly elected as Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer called for nominations for the office of President. Mr. G. Cupit was nominated by Bill Chant and seconded by Charlie Maiden. There being no further nominations, Mr. Gordon Cupit was declared President.

Mr. Alan Arndt was nominated as Honorary Secretary by Charlie Maiden, and seconded by Alf Ricketts. There being no further nominations, Mr. Alan Arndt was declared Honorary Secretary.

Mr. M. Wilden was nominated as Treasurer by Gray McDonald, and seconded by Kathy Morgan. There being no further nominations, Mr. Mick Wilden was declared Treasurer.

Messrs. R. Connolly and P. Roberts were nominated as Auditors by Alan Arndt, and seconded by Orme Cooper. There being no further nominations, Messrs. Ron Connolly and Peter Roberts were declared Auditors.

The following members indicated their willingness to accept a twelve months term of office on the Committee. Lou Brown nominated the new Committee in toto, and this was seconded by Claude Dalley. Duly elected to the new Committee were:

Jim Anderson, Peter Skinner, Charlie Maiden, Ron Connolly, Alf Ricketts, Peter Roberts, Keith McCredden and Ted Bastow.

A vote of thanks to retiring committee members Ray Peacock and Trevor Thatcher for their valued assistance during their terms of office was moved by President Gordon Cupit, and was most enthusiastically acknowledged by all present.

32nd Annual Reunion

The Secretary recommended we endeavour to secure the OTC Conference Centre located at Head Office at 231 Elizabeth Street Sydney, for Friday 2nd December 1988 as the venue for our next reunion. This recommendation was supported unanimously, with a suggestion that final arrangements be left in the hands of our Committee.

Sick List

The Secretary regretfully reported one member, Carl Raecke has a back problem which is confining him to the house.

Business Arising From Minutes of Previous Meeting

Nil.

General Business

- (a) President Gordon Cupit advised the meeting that he had had the pleasure of attending the unveiling of the Phillip Geeves Memorial, in the Palace Garden Ground of the Botanical Gardens, on 26th April 1988. He also urged all present to avail themselves of the opportunity to attend the Settlement to Satellites Exhibition at OTC's Paddington terminal once it is opened in July.
- (b) The President then asked how many of the members in attendance had commenced working in communications prior to 1920, and five responses were received - from John Lee, John Creswick, Claude Dalley, Charlie Watson and Charlie Swinney.
- (c) Before closing the President thanked OTC for the complimentary copy of Edgar Harcourt's book, "Taming the Tyrant", which the Commission had so kindly made available to all present at this meeting.
- (d) The President expressed our appreciation and thanks to OTC for its continuing generous support of our Association.
- (e) There being no further business for discussion, the President closed the meeting after inviting all present to adjourn to the lounge area for some light refreshments and fraternisation with old friends, especially those attending for the first time in several years due to the recent change over to conducting Daylight Meetings for our AGM.

ALAN ARNDT
Honorary Secretary

RABAU VOLCANO - Ted Bishton's Account

We have had Jack Burgess's very interesting accounts of the Rabaul volcano. Jack stayed in Rabaul and kept the radio links going. However, Ted Bishton and his family evacuated Rabaul and his story gives another picture to this frightening event.

On Friday morning we had a very violent earth tremor. These tremors continued all Friday morning and about noon the sea began to recede. Our house was right on the water front and the wireless office was also on the water front about 50 yards from our house. When I saw the water receding, I ran down to our house and told Rene to get into the car and take Margaret (their small child) up into the hills at Namanula, which she did. I expected that when the water receded that it would come back in the form of a tidal wave, but this did not happen. Some time after the water receded, it came back very gently, only about 4 or 5 inches high. We had many tremors during Friday night and at 5am on Saturday, 29th, the tremors were so bad we thought the house was going to slip off its foundations. From 5 o'clock onwards we were getting severe tremors every few minutes. Things were falling from shelves, glasses and bottles were falling off the tables and everything in the house was shaking and rattling. I was on duty at the wireless station from 6am until noon. I was pleased when noon came so that I could get home and be with Rene and Margaret in case something happened. We went to Dodd's place for lunch as their place did not seem to shake as much as ours.

After lunch, we returned to our house. I remember I went into the bedroom to have a rest. Rene and Al Dodd, her sister, were sitting on the front verandah when they saw a fine film of smoke on the harbour at about 4pm. They called out to me to come and see what it was. I was wondering what it could be when the smoke began to rise about ten or fifteen feet. Then there was a small gusher about 20 feet and they began to go higher. This was all in a matter of seconds. Rene and Al got very scared and Al rushed to get Margaret while Rene got the car out and I got into some clothes. By this time it was blowing huge rocks, pumice and columns of smoke and steam hundreds of feet into the air. Harry Dodd was up in chinatown having a haircut, so we went there to pick him up. Al rushed into the Barber's and told Harry what was happening in the harbour and to come quickly. Harry protested that his haircut was not finished, but Al said "bugger your haircut" and bundled him into the car.

We decided to make for the northcoast and to do so we had to drive towards the volcano. When we drove down Malaguna Road, the roar and explosions from the volcano were terrifying, with a huge black mass like a big black cloud coming right toward us. By this time there were possibly a hundred cars or more along Malaguna Road and when they saw this huge black mass sweeping towards us, most of them turned back and went over to Nordup on the other side of Namanula. By going on the north coast road we would be getting further away from the volcano so I decided to take the risk and continue on. We had to go to race this black mass and of course Al and Rene were urging me to go faster, but I was afraid of falling trees and cracks opening up in the road. This black mass was following us all the time, however we got as far as a place called Wangaramut plantation, which was owned by W.R. Carpenter and Co., and managed by Captain John Bunney. By this time the black mass had caught up with us. It was now about 4.45pm and blacker than the darkest night. You could not see your hand in front of you and the car headlights would not penetrate this powdered pumice. It had started to rain and this pumice now turned to mud. the car was covered with it and the windscreen wipers could not cope with it and just jammed as it was 1/2 inch thick. We made our

way to Captain Bunney's house. The mud was so dense we were finding it hard to breathe and thanked God when we got inside Bunney's house. There were about 75 people who got to Bunney's including 9 children. We were all crowded into a couple of small rooms and the Bunneys gave us tea and biscuits for which we were very grateful. Everyone was wet and covered with mud, but there was nothing we could do, but sit down and await results.

About 7pm the lightning started followed by terrific explosions. It was like hell let loose. I had experienced some very bad lightning storms in New Guinea, but these were not one hundredth part as violent as that we went through during Saturday, Sunday and Monday nights. The lightening seemed to be right in the house and the coconut palms were being struck and going down in hundreds from the weight of the wet pumice. That Saturday night I don't think anyone slept owing to the noise of the lightning and explosions. We got a blanket from somewhere and Rene and Al lay down with Margaret on the floor. Margaret slept practically the whole night through, but it was a night of terror for the rest of us.

At day break we were all out having a look at the damage. All the fronds of the coconut palms were just hanging down round the trunks as the weight of the pumice, mud and ash had broken them all off. Our car and all the others were covered with this mud about six inches thick. This muck seemed to be as heavy as lead and the tyres of all the cars were nearly flat with the weight of it. We left Bunney's place to try to get back to Rabaul, but only got about 4 miles when we encountered a stretch of water across the road, hundreds of yards wide and in places 12 to 20 feet deep, where the road had just disappeared. During the previous night there had been cloudbursts and the water had come down in raging torrents. We had come through parts only a couple of feet deep, but in the meantime they had got bigger and we were unable to get back to Bunney's, so we made our way on foot to Wunawutung and the owner, J.O. Smith, gave us breakfast. We had to abandon the car. There were over 70 people at Wunawutung, those who had been unable to go further the afternoon before owing to the utter blackness. There were cars strewn all along the road, abandoned and ditched, having run off the road during the blackout. A most peculiar thing was that as soon as daylight came, the explosions and the lightning ceased completely, which was a great relief. We stayed at Smiths all day Sunday watching Vulcan Island crater going up. It was estimated that the height of the blowout would be around 16,000 feet and some of the rocks must have been as big as houses. On the Sunday afternoon, the old Matupi crater blew up and we could see it go up from where we were. This is the crater that did the damage to Rabaul, as it threw up black mud which covered the whole of Rabaul to a depth of 6 to 12 inches. Sunday night we put in another night of terror on the floor. As soon as the sun went down, the lightning and explosions commenced and continued throughout the night until daylight came.

Margaret was doing well and it was funny to see her getting round with a dog biscuit covered with bully beef and enjoying every mouthfull - I mean every nibble. Poor old J.O. Smith had no more food to give us, only native rations, which were very acceptable. The women and children were wonderful as it was an awful experience. At daylight on Monday, we all went outside to inspect the damage.

By now thousands of coconut palms had been washed out to sea and most of the road had disappeared altogether. On the Sunday, the Burns Philp ship Montoro had picked up a wireless signal from the Golden Bear, which was in Rabaul Harbour and operated by Len Coleman and Les Farnsworth, who had returned to Rabaul. Both these ships went to Nordup which is behind Rabaul and picked up everyone, including Chinese and natives and took them to Kokopo where they were safe. On the north coast there were about 200 Europeans strewn along the road at a number of plantations so the authorities sent schooners around and picked us all up and took us to Kokopo on the Monday. The schooner that picked us up at Wunawutung plantation was manned by a couple of Japanese and natives. My old friend of Manus days, Nozaki, who owned the schooner was very pleased to see me. I introduced my wife and Al and Harry Dodd. He invited us down to his cabin and produced a bottle of whisky which helped to restore our frayed nerves to some extent. When all were aboard we set sail for Kokopo where we arrived some time on Monday afternoon. The Catholic missionaries looked after all the refugees, supplying food and accommodation. Jimmy Twycross took me aboard the Montoro to endeavour to clear the radio messages which had piled up. I worked until 4am on Tuesday morning, then collapsed on the floor of the wireless cabin. This was the first time I had closed my eyes since about 6am on Saturday, which meant I had been awake for about 70 hours. The boss, Jimmy Twycross, another chap and myself were taken back to Rabaul on Tuesday, we being the only 3 allowed to land. The sight of Rabaul was appalling; it was impossible to walk along any of the streets as most of the trees had been stripped of their branches, leaving a heap of debris as high as the houses. It would take about an hour to cover a hundred yards, as one had to crawl on hands and knees to penetrate the debris. The only way we could make progress was by going under the houses (which were all built on piles). All the houses were covered with black mud up to 12 inches thick. Quite a few of the roofs had collapsed with the weight of the mud. There were two mechanics and one telegraphist at the wireless station when we got back, so the boss gave me some gear to take back to Kokopo to get another station going there. I got back that evening to Kokopo and with the other wireless operators at Kokopo we had the station going the next day. Bill Thomas, an employee of AWA still had a house and trading station at Bitu Paka which is about 9 miles from Kokopo, so we were all living there and used to go into Kokopo daily. I had 5 to 6 hours sleep in the meantime, but it was Thursday night before I took my clothes off, nearly a week after the commencement of the eruption. I imagine I was a bit musical and hummed a little, but we were all in the same boat and did not notice each other. We worked at Kokopo for about a fortnight, then all the staff went into Rabaul.

Rene, Al, Margaret and a couple of other women stayed on at Bitu Paka and I used to go out there each weekend. However, they all came into Rabaul at the beginning of July. I forgot to mention that, when I first went into Rabaul on the Tuesday after the eruption, I got along to our house to collect a few things. Everything was covered with a very fine pumice powder about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch thick. Nothing was recognisable. There was a small mound on the bed, I picked it up, shook the dirt from it and there was Al Dodd's purse. Boots on the floor were just mounds of dirt. The meat and things in the fridge were all stinking, as all power went off when the eruption started. I went up to Dodds house and their dog Rinty nearly went mad with joy; he had had nothing to eat since Saturday. I opened their refrigerator and gave the dog a $\frac{1}{2}$ lb of butter, about the same quantity of ham, then opened a tin of salmon, which was all I could find for the poor thing. I then took the dog down to my place and gave her half a dozen tins of sardines. When I went up to Dodds place again on Thursday, 2 days later, the dog had disappeared, so I told Al that I suspected that the police had shot it, as they were shooting all the

dogs, as they could not be looked after, or fed. However, when Harry Dodd came in some time later, he found that the police had taken the dog to the police barracks and cared for it, as they did for all the good, well bred dogs.

Rabaul was now only avenues of limbless trees and thousands of piles of debris and mud which they gradually cleared away and dumped into the sea. The whole of the harbour was completely covered with pumice and in parts so thick that a ship loading copra dropped a sling of 14 bags into the harbour and it did not sink. In some part the pumice was up to 10 feet thick and it was not unusual to see natives walking on it. During this time we were all very worried about Margaret, but we had no cause for alarm as she seemed to thrive on pumice dust and had put on six pounds since she had returned to Rabaul, just prior to the eruption. I think the stay in Bitu Paka could have been the answer as it is wonderful and cool there. The marvellous thing was that only two Europeans were lost, they were Bill Ellsworthy, who was in charge of the power station and was down near Matupi taking photos of Vulcan exploding, when Matupi erupted. The other European was the wireless operator from the Golden Bear, which was tied up at the Toboi wharf. It was presumed he was drowned. Over 500 natives perished, mostly in the vicinity of Vulcan Island. As they were running away, Vulcan just spewed mud all over them. Some of the villages close to Vulcan were covered to a depth of over 90 feet, as only the tops of old coconut trees were showing. I hate to think what the toll would have been had Vulcan erupted at night.

People were now gradually moving back into Rabaul, Europeans, Chinese and natives. The pumice and mud, which was anything from 6 inches to a foot deep had settled like cement, with the result that everytime it rained, the water came down from the surrounding hills like a wall of water. There was no soakage and, until all this mud and pumice had been cleared away, the flooding continued. The Government cut huge cement drains, 4 to 5 feet deep and 10 to 12 feet wide to carry these flood waters away. After some months, the trees began to shoot, the grass began to grow and the frangipani bloomed again and life in Rabaul returned to normal.

My wife was never happy again in Rabaul and prevailed on me to get a transfer, so I saw Jimmy Twycross and he transferred me to Kavieng in February 1938.

O.T.V.A. SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD THURSDAY, 25TH MAY, 1988

The meeting commenced at 2.30pm.

Our meeting was held at Adelaide Maritime Communications Station, McLaren Vale by invitation of the Manager, Fred Reeve.

In attendance were:- Hugh Taylor, "Brax" Horrocks, Ken Springbett, Keith Parker, Max Lange, Fred Reeve, Bert Dudley, Geoff Cox, and from Sydney, Gordon Cupit, President of the N.S.W. Branch of the O.T.V.A.

Apologies were tendered by George Rowe, Ron Ward, Denis Maher, Cliff Birks and Ken Collett.

Brax Horrocks reported in having recently visited 98 year-old Cliff Birks who is remarkably fit for his age. Brax reckons that Cliff will make his century, easily. Hugh Taylor is chasing Cliff with Hugh's 90 coming up on 29th November next.

President Geoff Cox welcomed Gordon Cupit who brought best wishes from Managing Director, George Maltby.

Gordon gave us some interesting information concerning the Commission's (now Corporation's) new headquarters with its outlook over Hyde Park and Sydney Harbour. He also referred to the establishment of the Communications project at Paddington for the display of telecommunications items of historic interest during July/December, 1988, and there is expected to be a unique contribution from Brax.

OFFICE BEARERS Geoff Cox and Bert Dudley were re-elected President and Secretary respectively.

A vote of thanks was proposed by the President to Fred Reeve and his "social secretary" for having us along and the provision of a delicious and more than adequate afternoon tea.

NEXT MEETING Our reunion to be held Thursday, November 24th, 1988, at 2.30pm at the Maritime communications Station, McLaren Vale.

Bert Dudley

MORE MEMORIES by Brax Horrocks

"The good old days" -

How things have changed. I feel that when I joined the Eastern Extension Australasian & China Telegraph Company about seventy years ago life may have been harder in some ways but was less complicated and there were less problems than are faced by a young lad leaving school these days, life may not have been easy but it was reasonably straight forward and there were less decisions to be made than must now be the case.

Our commencing salary as probationer operators was four pounds a calendar month but having contributed half of it towards board and lodging, there wasn't much left for other things even though tram fares, clothing and shoes were cheap, other necessities were pretty reasonable too, a haircut cost one shilling and the standard cost of a tooth extraction was five shillings.

The training period was 18 months and we had to work fairly hard to attain the required standards using the primitive instruments of those times, morse key & sounder, twin-keys for sending and for perforating, the reading of siphon-recorder cable signals, touch typing and hand-punch perforating. We also had to achieve set standards in fitting & turning. & submarine cable jointing under the supervision of Bill Lee and seaman Rodman.

Becoming operators we of course were on shift work, 6 hours a day, seven days a week, though we did have an occasional Sunday off and a fortnights annual leave. Of necessity we worked at Christmas and at Easter but this was accepted as being just part of the job.

And life was simple in other ways too. There was no traffic problems, in any case it was many years before an operator could afford to buy any sort of car, my first one was a Gwynne 8 horse-power single seater which I purchased when I was 24 for the sum of fifteen pounds. Before that I used to walk home at 1am after evening duty and on Sunday mornings when there was no public transport, but in perfect safety for there were no bashings in those days even though the suburban lights were turned off just after midnight.

Other things were simple too. At the time I left school there was no electricity connected to our quite modern house at Kingswood and it took many weekends work for my brother and me to wire the home for connection to the 240 volt service from the Adelaide Electrical Supply company - I recall that where possible we used the existing gas pipes into which we fed the single-core copper rubber insulated cables. We made certain that we provided a power point in the kitchen so that the old gas-iron could be thrown away but it was many years before we had a fan, and I bought my first refrigerator many years later, after I was married, about 1940.

The staff in Adelaide in those early days numbered about 80 for there were, of necessity a number on the clerical side who did audit work and so on, as well as the operators, engineers, and supervisors. We were fortunate in having a very active sports club so if one happened to be off on a Wednesday there was always a game of cricket during the summer months, and football in the winter. We hired the Unley oval for these matches against the banks and leading colleges, and also hired it for our annual athletic meeting. Our swimming carnival was usually held in the baths adjacent to the Glenelg jetty.

Our work as operators in Adelaide in those days was rather primitive. Dots and dashes (morse cable-code) were sent and received through a single core submarine cable from Fremantle which came ashore at the Grange, about 7 miles from the office. A four-core lead-sheathed rubber insulated landline was connected to the cable in a cable hut on the foreshore and the landline, buried about two feet, wound its way through suburban streets to the office in King William Street. The speed of sending and receiving (duplex) was 145 letters per minute.

But, as you know, things have changed. They now talk of optical fibre cables, and of bouncing signals off satellites, things quite beyond my comprehension so it is nothing but sheer ignorance that made me title this story "The good old days".

A FAREWELL TO "BRAX" HORROCKS.

It is with deep regret that I announce the death of Brax Horrocks, who died on 20th August, 1988. Though he was Christened Crawford Eardley I feel sure that had I submitted this notice under that name quite a few of us wouldn't have recognised the fact that it was our old mate, Brax.

He was born on May 25th, 1905, at Semaphore, South Australia. His great, great grandfather of Preston, Lancs., had founded the cotton industry there and had amassed a fortune. In turn, his grandsons, Arthur (Brax's grandfather) and John Ainsworth came to South Australia in 1938 and settled at Penwortham, some 80 miles north of Adelaide.

John Ainsworth did some exploring and found a pass through the Flinders Ranges which was named after him. Brax's mother's father was one William Johnstone S.M. whose people had come from Scotland at the same time as Brax's paternal grandfather.

Brax was educated at St. Peter's College, Adelaide, and was there at the same time as Cable veterans Keith Goode, Ken McMillan, Arthur Shepherd, H.J. (Bert) Edwards, and Charles Smith, junior.

His uncle Charles Smith senior, was Divisional Manager, Melbourne, of the Eastern Telegraph Company at the time he left school, and it was at his suggestion that he joined the company as a probationer operator in 1921. Other probationers at that time were Moss Hart (jnr), Len Mitchell, S.A. MacDonald, Len James, Bruce Sutherland, Ken Goodale, Roy Edwards and Charles Smith (jnr).

In 1925 he was transferred to Darwin. During the two years he was there he was with "Pup" Wilson, Jack Finlayson, Dickie Heaps, Stewart Ringwood, Brian Browning, "Bumble" Stewart, Keith and Aubrey Barnes, Bruce Sutherland, Moss Hart junior, Clive Tressider, George McKittrick, Gus Moss, Ted Jacobs, Norman Giles, Ken McMillan, Reg Johns, "Snap" Ellis, Dan Webster, Major Reid, Mac. McAlpine, Harry Naylor, Len Mitchell, John Roder, Eric Meredith and Chas. Smith junior.

On return to Adelaide, he worked as an operator for some years then, following the resignation of Bill Lee, he was placed in charge of the Workshop for five years. In 1936, having passed the cable-electrical examinations, he was transferred to the Sydney school for six months before returning to Adelaide.

During the war (1943/4) he volunteered to serve at Cocos and was there with Tufty Baker, Bruce Sutherland, Pat Sykes, Frank McCay, Peter Wolfe, and "Chum" Chumley. He was returned to Adelaide three years later as a 5th Grade Supervisor, was transferred to Suva and a few months later, to Fanning Island.

For health reasons it was not possible for his family to accompany him, and being unhappy at the prospects of at least four years' separation, he resigned and joined the Electricity Trust of South Australia. Subsequently, because he was an Associate of the Institute of Electrical Engineers, London, he became one of their Rural Development Engineers.

In 1954 he accepted a position of Sales Manager with Power Plant Ltd. of Adelaide and progressed to similar positions with Oliver J. Nilsen and Camelec Ltd. Retiring from business at the age of 65 he became Secretary to the Board of the South Australian Foundation on Alcoholism and was with them for five years. He was later elected to Honorary Life Membership.

In 1975, when he was aged 70, he became the agent in South Australia for Adcal Ltd. of Victoria and continued to represent them until May 1981.

Brax was the President of the Adelaide Branch of O.T.V.A. from 1979 until 1987. It was at this time that his health began to deteriorate rapidly.

Our condolences go to his friends and family. It is a great personal loss to me, as Editor of NEWSLETTER, because Brax was a prolific supplier of material for the publication.

VALE GORDON JAMES JOHNSTON

We have received the news from Diana Reynolds, who is an ex-OTC employee, that her grandfather, Gordon James Johnston who lived in Northbridge, died on the Thursday after Easter at the age of 77.

Gordon spent 50 years in the industry beginning in the A.W.A. days and retiring from the Service of OTC in January, 1975. He had been ill for quite some time, so much so that he was hospitalised for long periods prior to his death.

Gordon had had a lifetime's interest in communications, which started when he assembled crystal sets whilst still in school. He joined the Army Signals Corps from A.W.A. in World War II and joined OTC at the conclusion of the war. During his war service he served in Papua New Guinea and the Far East. He was in Accounts when he retired.

Gordon is survived by his wife, Hazel, daughter Maureen, and grandchildren, Wally, David, Diana and Elizabeth.

To those members of his family we offer our sincerest sympathy.

A GUIDELINE FOR PUBLICATION

In the past I have stressed the fact that NEWSLETTER is basically a publication dispensing news which may be of interest to those of us who have spent a great deal of our lives in communications. I have also stressed that material passed to our Secretary, Alan Arndt, is onpassed to me as being newsworthy unless it is of an extremely personal nature, in which case it should be marked PERSONAL - NOT FOR PUBLICATION. Better still it would be appreciated if material regarded as being for personal information only be clearly marked, and that information which will be of interest to readers should be marked FOR THE NEWSLETTER. It has never been the intention to embarrass anyone by publishing articles which could cause red faces on both sides.

I have also received notes from some of our correspondents complaining about spelling errors which tend to make them appear illiterate. I can assure anyone submitting material for the NEWSLETTER that all care is taken to ensure that material submitted by them is forwarded in the correct and proper manner.

To understand our problem the compilation of material for NEWSLETTER is a one-man operation. The rough draft leaves me and is prepared for the copier by a series of typists who are supplied by the good graces of OTC. I am ever grateful for the work performed by our girls who find time to prepare the material outside their normal duties. However it is inevitable that where constant interruptions take place some errors and/or transpositions take place. I ask our readers to bear with us and accept our shoe-string operation for what it is - a means of keeping a group of people informed about people and things we know. If anyone out there has been miffed in any way through the matters arising from above, please accept this explanation as an apology.

VALE

PHYL COOPER, wife of Orme passed away on 30th September, 1988 in Prince of Wales Hospital, after a long illness. Sincere sympathy to Orme on his sad loss.

VALE

CARL (CHARLIE) RAECKE, aged 89 years, passed away on 8th October, 1988, after a short illness. Charlie started work in Melbourne with the Pacific Cable Board on 12/4/1916. He came to the Sydney office in 1919, where he later transferred into the EECC Goulburn Street office. His career with PCB, EECC, C&W and OTC saw him service in SUVA and FANNING ISLAND, before spending his last 10 years until retirement in 1974, as the Travel Arrangements Officer for OTC in Sydney.

He will be sadly missed by his wife Mollie, and all of his many friends and associates he made during his years with us.

The following article was featured in the May issue of Practical Wireless. We are indebted to that publication for its reproduction here.

A MARCONI ANECDOTE

Marconi's early experiments were not without an element of humour, one of these incidents was recorded in 1926, almost 30 years later, by a member of the party concerned. Eric Westman tells us the story.

Following his successful Bristol Channel transmission of May 1897 (described in the July 1987 issue of Practical Wireless), Marconi returned in triumph to Italy. By autumn, he had returned to Britain and was staying in the bungalow allotted to him on Three Mile Hill, near Salisbury. Here he continued his experiments using huge kites to raise his antennas. These kites had been lent by Major Baden Powell (of later Boy Scout fame) who had been using a string of five hexagonal kites, each measuring four meters across, to raise a basket containing an artillery observer. To get the kites airborne on windless days, Baden Powell attached them to a horse which he then sent galloping down a field, dragging the kites after it. On one occasion, the rope became entwined around his leg, and the future Chief Scout found himself suspended upside-down in the air by his left ankle.

Encouraged by his 14km transmission across the Bristol Channel, Marconi decided to attempt a really ambitious feat: to transmit from Salisbury Plain to the City of Bath, 55km away. Late in September 1897, a Post Office party, accompanied by a squad of Royal Engineers, set up a receiving station at Battlefields, Lansdown, a high point above Bath. They soon had their kite soaring 70km above them tethered by a great length of piano wire that also acted as the antenna. At the appointed time, the first signals from Salisbury Plain tic-tacked through their recorder: Marconi had succeeded in his farthest transmission so far.

The success was not to last long, for a sudden gale sprang up and the antenna wire snapped. Away blew the kite, trailing after it nearly a kilometre of wire that dragged along the ground, frightening people working in the fields. Later, it chased the members of the experimenting party in an unpremeditated cross-country run. At the end of a flight of 9km, the kite plunged to the ground near a cottage, whose acquisitive inhabitants quickly hid it in an outhouse.

To no avail, for they had been seen. When the rescue party panted up and demanded their kite and wire, the cottagers refused to give it up, adopting the attitude that "finding is keeping". Eventually, threats of being charged with stealing Government Property persuaded them to reluctantly hand it over.

So ended Marconi's record-breaking transmission. The chronicler of 1926, who took part in the chase after the kite, gives the names of the two officers who assisted, but Baden Powell was not included. Presumably he and his horse remained on Salisbury Plain with Marconi.

CONTRIBUTION TO OTVA NEWSLETTER

Ex-TELECOM staff (Cable & Wireless Ltd) in N.Z. are members of the Veteran Cablemen's Association in Auckland. As such, they enjoy receiving the NEWSLETTER regularly.

I have been requested to offer the attached contribution to the newsletter concerning the recent reunion of TELECOM staff at Auckland. We hope it is of interest to others.

On behalf of the Veteran Cablemen and the TELECOM we thank you for the excellent newsletter. It is of continuing interest.

Kind regards, Ray P. Connolly Ex-NZ-TELECOM

TELECOM CLASS OF '44

AUSTRALIAN & NEW ZEALAND REUNION APRIL '88

From Ray Connolly
Ex-NZ-TELECOM

11-14 April 88, saw the second reunion of Australian & NZ TELECOM, this time at Auckland. These groups trained in 1944 in Auckland and in Adelaide. Both groups began work as C & W operators in Colombo in 1945 and moved forward with UK senior staff to various stations including Penang, Singapore, Batavia, Hong Kong and Cocos. Their service included the famous PRESS SHIP in Singapore. A total of 52 TELECOM and wives attended this reunion. There were a variety of functions, ranging from "meet & greet", formal dinner, a tour of some Auckland vineyards, a harbour cruise and a casual farewell function. But above all there was the TALKING - in some cases the pent-up accumulation of 44 years. Veterans came from UK, Canada, Australia & New Zealand.

Among the highlights was the attendance "meet and greet" afternoon function of a number of Veteran Cablemen from Pacific Cable Board and Eastern Extension, including Bill Craig, Alan Millar, Fred (Spook) Studman, Huia Evetts, Les Gladding, Frank Blakeley and Syd Murray.

Another highlight was the music on the final night provided by Anne and Ken Rea. Likewise, the video film produced by Joan & John Coles (Perth).

Pride of place throughout the reunion went to W. (Bill) Craig, leader of NZ TELECOM unit throughout 1945-1947. Now aged 90, Bill showed he can still foot it with "his boys" (who are now themselves in their sixties).

But age has not wearied them.....yet!

During the formal dinner, the toast to ABSENT FRIENDS included tributes to those who have passed on and to those who were unable to attend. Tributes were also paid to UK Telecom staff, who are still remembered with great affection "DOWN UNDER", and greetings from the U.K. class of '44 were conveyed by George Scurry.

A lot of old photographs and memorabilia were on display and were closely studied. The reunion was a resounding success and another is planned for 1991 in Australia.

Those attending the Auckland reunion were:-

From Australia

Pat and Ken Banks, Nina and Roger Bardwell, Judy and Bill Perry, Margaret and John Chancellor, Joan and John Coles, John Henry Coulson, Herb Farrar and his sister, Anne Abbott, Brian Morell, Joan and Syd Sherwood, Pad and Colin Stubbs.

From U.K.

Caroline and George Scurry.

From Canada

Catherine and Basil Chambers, Peter Cork.

From New Zealand

Grant Campbell, Josephine and Ray Connolly, Rita and Peter Cowlshaw, Bill Craig, Maureen and Denis Erson, Sylvia and Dick Fray, Mike Pulton, Beverley and Graeme Hawken, Margaret and Kelvin Healey, Cathy and Robin MacDiarmid, Dorothy and Jack McKenzie, Anne and Ken Rea, Marie and David Thompson, Gina and John Todd, Ethyl and John Walker, Joan and Brian Wallace.

MORE NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND - From Fred Studman

Fred Studman who is Hon. Secretary-Treasurer of V.C.A. Auckland sends along the following news.

Firstly a few casualties to report. Huia Nelson JACOBS passed away on 14.2.88 following illness. "Jake" (P.C.B. and C&W) served in Auckland, Halifax and Suva where he married a Suva girl, May Jones. He was a regular attender at our reunions and a popular member of our Veterans. He will be sadly missed.

Tom Condon is at present in hospital.

Two of our widows have passed on in recent months - - Connie Sextie, wife of the late Ray (better known as Ambie), and also Jean Langford, wife of the late Reg.

Now in a happier vein. Several of our older Veterans have priviledged to be guests at an afternoon function of the recent Telecom reunion held in Auckland and organised by Denis Erson, of which you in due course, will receive a report.

Our V.C.A. President Bill Craig, has sold his home and is now living comfortably in a retirement village and still has his daily walk. His new address is:-

Wm. Craig
Unit 116
Remuera Gardens Retirement Village,
57 Richard Farrell Avenue,
Remuera. AUCKLAND 5.

He tells me that one of his dining table mates is Sir Dove Meyer Robinson, a one time Mayor of Auckland.

Another of our Veterans who would like to receive the Australian NEWSLETTER if this can be arranged. He was with C&W here in Auckland and extensively overseas, Colombo, Penang and Singapore, etc. His address is:-

Len Sedman
20 Makora Avenue,
Oneora, Waiheke Island, AUCKLAND

Sorry to see in the last NEWSLETTER that Cedrick Pegler had passed on. I worked with him in both Auckland and Bamfield, Canada.

Fraternal greetings and best wishes from across the Tasman.

A POSER FOR YOU OLD SOUTHPORT MEN

The following letter has been received from

R.B. Scott
173 Hewlett Place
VICTORIA B.C. CANADA

The Editor
O.T.V.A. Newsletter
SYDNEY

Dear Sir,

I wonder how many supervisors of the Southport Training School there are besides myself?

Sincerely, R.B. Scott

Drop us a line at the NEWSLETTER

FROM OUR CANADIAN FRIENDS

Suite 6 - 7163 Ash Crescent
Vancouver, British Columbia
C A N A D A
V6P 3K6

22 June 1988

Mr Alan Arndt
Secretary
Overseas Telecommunications Veterans' Association (NSW)
GPO Box 7000
SYDNEY NSW 2001
AUSTRALIA

Dear Alan

Greetings once again from Canada. The Quarter Century Club of Teleglobe Canada Inc (A Memotec Company) Western Chapter held its Annual Meeting & Dinner on 14 May, 1988. A unanimous vote was passed conveying greetings and best wishes to all members and wives of the OTVA (NSW) Australia.

In addition, the Club wishes to thank you for copies of your Newsletter, VOL. 3 PT. 7 PAGE 322 APRIL 1988. I would like also to thank you for my personal copy of the Newsletter. In this area the retired Pacific Cable Board Members enjoy the Newsletters.

PCB Retired Members are:-

Lawrence Peter Crakanthorp
William D. Fowlie
B.C. Johnnie Fisk
John H. Knight
Harold H. Le Quesne
Donald L. Schutz
Robert B. Scott

Some others in Eastern Canada are:-

A.W. Quirk
Christmas E. Thomas
E.F.J. Hoodall

With very best wishes to you and yours.

Sincerely, Harold H. Le Quesne

CAN ANYONE HELP?

Mr Lawrence L. Durrant who lives at 17 Newell Place, French's Forest NSW 2086, has forwarded us the following letter he has received from Martin Hadlow seeking information which may be known to someone out there. The letter is self-explanatory, and we have reproduced it together with Mr Hadlow's address should anyone like to contact him direct.

No. 1 Jalan 16/6
46350 Petaling Jaya
Selangor
MALAYSIA

Mr Lawrence L. Durrant
17 Newell Place
French's Forest NSW 2086
AUSTRALIA

Dear Mr Durrant

You might recall that we were in touch about this time last year concerning your book The Seawatchers. You also kindly asked OTC to send me a good deal of interesting material on AWA and its role in WWII.

I wonder if I might call on you again for some assistance? My continuing research has brought to the surface a couple of names of radio operators from the Pacific during and immediately after the war. I would be very keen to trace them for some specific information but, of course, have no immediate contact point. It occurs to me that they may have joined AWA after the war or, at least, could be known to some of the old AWA operators formerly based in Port Moresby or Rabaul.

I am seeking Mr R. Taylor who was Senior Wireless Officer at Tulagi in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate prior to and during the first couple of years of the war. Upon the outbreak of hostilities he was evacuated from Tulagi, was commissioned (Captain) and later operated from the Administration base on Guadalcanal. The other gentleman is Mr J. Davies who became Chief Wireless Officer after Taylor. He too was commissioned (Lieut) and worked from Guadalcanal until about 1945.

I have seen correspondence which indicated that both men visited AWA in Sydney at various stages when the BSIP Administration was seeking to purchase new transmitters, teleradios and so on.

Perhaps you have addresses for Mr Taylor and Mr Davies on file? If not, would you be able to aim me in an appropriate direction or, perhaps, ask one of the "old hands" whether he knows them. As you point out in your book, the BSIP ran its own service outside the AWA system and this makes research a little bit more difficult.

Thank you for your on-going assistance. I would welcome any help you can offer.

Yours sincerely, Martin Hadlow

No. 1 Jalan 16/6
46350 Petaling Jaya
Selangor
MALAYSIA

10th July 1988

Dear Mr Arndt

RE: MORE HELP NEEDED

Thank you so much for your very welcome letter recently to hand.

I was delighted to learn that Mr Durrant had been in contact with you concerning my request for assistance. It was most kind of you to attempt to trace both Mr Taylor and Mr Davies, former Chief Wireless Officers at Tulagiradio. Here's hoping that we have some luck from your next newsletter!

In passing, I would also appreciate hearing from any OTVA members who recall working Tulagiradio and know something of the equipment used by the station. My research on this aspect of operations is a little thin on the ground. Tulagiradio would have primarily worked Suva radio, where the British High Commissioner for the Western Pacific was based. As Suva radio was an AWA outpost, some of your members may recall some aspects of Tulagiradio. Any information at all would be useful - names, skeds, equipment details, frequencies, etc.

I trust that you will not find me too tiresome, but I have two further requests which could well be answered by your members. Can you help?

The first request concerns the very early days of radio in the South and South-West Pacific. I have come across a document which lists wireless station for the year 1919. Most, apparently, used 500 kHz for communications purposes, with 375kHz being used for direction finding. The list includes VJZ, Rabaul (103 kHz), VQJ, Tulagi and many others. It also says that some Hawaiian stations, HU, Oahu, KA, Puako and LA, Lahaina began operating as early as 1900. I cannot quite come to grips with this. Does such an early start sound correct to you or your members? If they were in existence, who would have operated them? The year 1900 seems too close to Marconi's experiments to consider that operational stations would have been in constructed in the Pacific.

My second query relates to the AWA transmitter VPD2, Suva which broadcast radio programmes on 9536 kHz (relaying ZJV, Suva, 920 kHz) as early as 1937. These broadcasts were in English, Fijian and Hindi. However, another reference indicates that during the war, VPD2 also broadcast special programmes in Pidgin aimed at listeners in Solomon Islands. Can any of your members confirm the latter point?

Thank you again for all your help. I look forward to hearing from you again after your newsletter is published towards the end of the year.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely, Martin Hadlow

17th June, 1988

VICTORIAN VETS 31ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Victorian Vets celebrated their 31st Annual General Meeting in the Manager's Suite, 3rd floor, OTC House, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne on Friday 13th May 1988.

In the absence of President Jim Robinson who was overseas, Past President Arthur Green took control of the A.G.M. and called for one minutes silence in respect of those colleagues who had passed on to the Operating Room above - they were Shirley Alexander, Max Fernando, Sep Harvey and Jack Cornish.

There were 44 members in attendance and 15 apologies received.

After dealing with the business in hand Acting President Arthur advised that it was his pleasing duty to announce that Retiring President Jim Robinson was willing to carry on for a further term of office. This offer was gratefully accepted by all present.

A further pleasing feature of the meeting was the welcome to Jim O'Toole as Melbourne Manager, and as a veteran amongst his old mates of many years, naturally Jim responded accordingly.

The Meeting then closed with the Past President inviting all present to partake of the hospitality of the Vets.

Gaye Russell
Secretary

VALE SEP HARVEY

It is with regret that we record the passing of SEP HARVEY who died on March 30, 1988, aged 91 years, at Batman Hospital, Glenhuntly. Sep was christened Harold S. Harvey, but he was Sep to so many of his friends that most had forgotten what the Harold S. stood for.

Sep had no family within Victoria, but has two sisters and several nieces and nephews in NSW. It is to one of his nephews, Roy South, to whom we are indebted in supplying information re Sep.

Sep retired from the Accounts Branch after 50 years service in communications. He commenced with the P.M.G.'s Department in 1912 and left to join the Navy during World War I in which he served from 1917 to 1921. Returning home he signed up with A.M.A. and among other duties relieved at Pennant Hills radio station in 1925 before being transferred to Willis Island. Later he joined the Marine Service of the Canadian Australian Line.

Discharged with the rank of Warrant Telegraphist from the Navy, he continued on in the reserves and was subsequently promoted to Naval Reserve Officer for N.S.W. at H.M.A.S. "RUSHCUTTER".

Sep Harvey was in the Beam Service from 1927 until 1929 and then again went back to sea only to rejoin the Navy at the outbreak of World War II as Warrant Telegraphist and was subsequently promoted to the grade of Lieutenant. He received the Volunteer Reserve Decoration. During the second World War Sep served with the Naval Board on staff of Director Signals and Communications in an executive and technical capacity. He rejoined O.T.C. Coastal Radio Service and eventually went into the Melbourne Accounts Branch of O.T.C.A.. He was well known and respected by all with whom he came in contact.

His funeral service was necessarily small, being attended by one of his old colleagues, Harold O'Connor, aged 88, and Roy South representing the family. The President and manager of the Dandenong R.S.L. were also present and accorded Sep the R.S.L. service terminating with the "LAST POST".

Sep was proud of his war service, and rightly so. He was at the Anzac Marches, seldom missing one.

He will be sadly missed by his colleagues and family, and to them go our sincerest condolences.

VALE

Guye Russell, Hon. Secretary of the Victorian Branch of O.T.V.A. has also advised us of the deaths of SHIRLEY ALEXANDER of West Ivanhoe, and JACK CORNISH of Balaclava. I have no information on file as to their service records but would appreciate it if someone can furnish a precis on each of them.

BITS AND PIECES - ROUND ABOUT - HERE AND THERE

One of our Sydney veterans DES WOODS, and his good wife IRENE, (who should be a veteran, being married to Des) have done a bit of globe-trotting lately and have only just returned. Haven't got any details of the voyage as yet, both of them being busy with their newest grand daughter Jasmin. From all accounts they are fit and well, and the trip has done them a great deal of good.

Charles Carthew reports that one of the Victorian vets., E. Willingham, called in to see him recently. He had been along to the passing-out parade of his grandson who had graduated from the Police Academy. It appears that Charles' grandson is an Instructor at the Academy and had trained Willingham Jnr. Small world.

Whilst we think about it, congratulations are in order to CHARLES CARTHEW and his good wife Vi. Charles is an Honorary Life Member of the Quarter Century Club of Teleglobe Canada.

Harold says that he is not sure of the future of Teleglobe Canada, which was privatised recently. However, he assures us that all is well with Club and its members. Though the years are mounting up, he hopes that he and his wife KATHERINE, will be visiting Australia for the sixth time, with the hope of renewing old acquaintances.

We have obtained a clipping from the PROGRESS PRESS (April 27, 1988 issue) which tells of volunteer companions who visit the elderly and VIPs under the auspices of DO CARE, a Welfare programme of the Wesley Central Mission. It is a programme designed to be of mutual benefit of the elderly and the younger members of DO CARE which leads to a great understanding of the generations involved. There is an excellent picture of Charles Carthew chatting with Sammy Lau, a Monash engineering student, who is also a member of the DO CARE group.

Got a card from GEOFF and RITA DAY who have gone for a roam around the world. The card was from Switzerland. "Haven't had a war here for over 300 years", says Geoff. "Noone appears to work," says he, "which probably accounts for so many foreign political seminars and meetings of International bodies being attracted to the place." God forbid Geoff! Wash your mouth out, dear boy!

Had a call from JACK SALLAWAY. He and his good wife have retired to the N.S.W. Central Coast hamlet of BUDGEWOI where Jack gets out of most of the housework by going fishing in Lake Munmorah which is parked just outside his back door. If you are ever thinking of going to see them you'd better ring first - they have the habit of tripping around when the fish are off the bit.

HAROLD AND KATHERINE DEQUESNE write to say

"So that this will be in time for your 1988 annual N.S.W. OTVA Banquet presumably in November, I wish to convey fraternal greetings to your President, Executive, and all members of your Association and their wives, from the Members and wives of the Quarter Century Club of Teleglobe Canada (Western Chapter).

I personally wish to thank all Officers and Members who assisted me on Friday, 25th November 1987, when the Australian "wog" caused me to spend six days in the Manly hospital. I am right back to normal now and have tentative plans to visit Australia in 1990.

Thank you all very much.

Taking the cue from Harold and Katherine, the Editor, compositor, proof-reader, (me) together with our hard-working typists of the O.T.C.A. wish to convey to all our readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, with the fervent hope that it is going to be a better one than the last one.

VALE DORIE ROWE

Wife of Adelaide veteran George Rowe passed away recently after a long illness. Dorie, as she was affectionately known, would be well remembered, especially by Western Australian veterans for the organisation of Staff Xmas Parties at the Cottesloe Cable Station.

ADDITION TO VALE FOR BRAX HORROCKS

Eardley (Brax) Horrocks died peacefully in his sleep on 27th August, 1988, after a brave battle against a terminal illness. Brax remained courageous to the end and continued with his twice weekly Bridge parties. His remains were cremated at the Heysen Chapel in Centennial Park. OTC was represented by Fred Reeve, Manager OTC Coastal Radio Station, and the South Australian veterans by Geoff Cox (President), George Rowe and Bert Dudley (Secretary).

His wife Rita, had expressed her appreciation for the basket of flowers from OTC. She said she has never seen such a wonderful display of flowers in her life.

Bert Dudley - Secretary SA Vets

A TRIBUTE TO W.H. JENVEY, MIEE

On 24th May, 1988, at 2.00pm, a commemorative plaque was unveiled in the Citizens' Park Gellibrand Street Queenscliff, Victoria, near the Queenscliff Fort, to mark the first wireless message exchanged on 6th May, 1901, between two Royal Navy ships and W.H. Jenvey who sent off a welcome message to the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (later King George V and Queen Mary). A wide coverage was given to the commemoration of the plaque by the papers, the Geelong Advertiser and Echo. One of those articles and the text on the Commemorative Plaque are reproduced below.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF H.W. JENVEY

A plaque is being presented by the Broadcasting Directorate of Telecom, Australia, to commemorate the transmission by H.W. Jenvey of an address of welcome from the Governor General of Australia to the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (later King George V and Queen Mary).

The Duke and Duchess were travelling to Melbourne where they were to open the first Australian Federal Parliament and were aboard RMS Ophir escorted by two ships of the Royal Navy - HMS St George and HMS Juno.

Mr H.W. Jenvey, MIEE, Electrical Engineer of the Victorian Postal Department, had been experimenting with wireless telegraphy for some time and when it was learnt that the two escort ships were equipped with wireless equipment, it was agreed that he should attempt to send a message of greeting to the Royal couple as they approached Port Phillip. Queenscliff was selected as the site of the transmission because it had a town gas supply needed to inflate the balloon with which it was intended to raise the antennae.

Mr Jenvey installed his equipment, probably in the Signal House near the black lighthouse, and began tests on 3 May: when the use of balloons proved to be impractical to raise the antennae, a kite was tried but it was found to be unsatisfactory also. As a last resort, the antennae was hauled up the signal mast which then stood nearby.

On 6 May 1901, Mr Jenvey successfully exchanged messages with H.M.S. St George and HMS Juno, and transmitted the address of welcome when the ships were 17 miles from Queenscliff.

This was the first occasion on which wireless telegraph messages were exchanged between an Australian shore station and a ship at sea, with permanently installed wireless telegraph equipment and where no prior arrangements had been made. It was true shore-to-ship communication in contrast with earlier experiments in which signals were exchanged at a set time between Perth and Brisbane shore stations and specially equipped vessels on local rivers.

The transmission by H.W. Jenvey occurred only 13 years after the publication in Germany by Heinrich Hertz of the first account of his experiments with electromagnetic waves and before Marconi had established a marine wireless telegraph service around the coast of Britain.

Mr Jenvey was the Chief Electrical Engineer of the Victorian Post Office who designed and constructed his equipment with knowledge gleaned from reports of overseas experiments published in various scientific journals.

TEXT ON COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

ON 6 MAY, 1901, FROM NEAR THE BLACK LIGHTHOUSE,
AN ADDRESS OF WELCOME TO
THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CORNWALL AND YORK
ARRIVING BY SHIP TO OPEN THE FIRST FEDERAL PARLIAMENT
WAS SUCCESSFULLY TRANSMITTED BY H.W. JENVEY, MIEE,
ELECTRICAL ENGINEER, VICTORIAN POSTAL DEPARTMENT,
USING EQUIPMENT HE DESIGNED, BUILT AND OPERATED.

THIS WAS THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN SHORE-TO-SHIP
WIRELESS TELEGRAPH COMMUNICATION
EXCEPT FOR PRE-ARRANGED EXPERIMENTS.

BITA PAKA By Jack Burgess

Most people living in Australia at the turn of the century had never heard of New Guinea, and those who did knew very little of it or of the other islands adjacent to it.

Their presence and location was vividly brought home to them in the middle of 1914 with the release of news bulletins advising the world that Germany had made purchases from Spain of the Carolines, Pelew, and Marshall Islands in addition to their holdings in New Guinea.

World War 1 opened in August 1914, and a few days later after World War 1 was declared, Britain asked the Australian Government to destroy the German Radio Stations in Rabaul, Yap, and Nauru and to occupy the German colonies in New Guinea and adjacent islands.

The invasion force stood off Rabaul in September and no ships were sighted and no action took place.

Two groups of reservists were put ashore from the cruiser "SYDNEY". One group was put ashore at Herbertdhohe and the second group at Kabakaul. The second group was under orders to blow up the big German radio station then under construction at Bita Paka. This feat was accomplished shortly after with a casualty list of six dead and four wounded. Captain Pockley was one of those killed and gained the dubious claim of being the first Australian killed in World War 1. A concrete monument on the road between Bita Paka and Kokopo marks the spot where he was killed.

I was loaned to the Island Radio Service from the Coastal Radio Service to relieve the New Guinea staff for long service leave and took up duty at Bita Paka in July 1935. Ted Bishton was the first telegraphist to go.

The Radio Staff accommodation consisted of five houses for married couples, including the Manager's house, a large house available for single mens' accommodation, plus a number of grass huts for the native staff. Due to the fact that there were only a few married couples on the station there was always a spare house available for single men.

The staff at the station in 1935 were:-

Station Manager Jack Allan

Telegraphists Norm Foxcroft, Bill Thomas, Don McMillan, Frank Tracey,
Harold Doherty, Len Coleman, and Jack Burgess

Mechanical Staff Percy Good, Fred Mibloe and Lap McGuigan

The station consisted of a very large building situated at the foot of the hill housing 2 very large German Diesel engines, plus a smaller Diesel engine of the Ruston Hornsby type, driving large generators for the station and cottage power requirements.

There was also a large bank of chloride batteries supplying power to the station and cottages when the station was closed down.

Transmitters

2KW Valve Transmitter for the Australian Service
 1KW Valve Transmitter for the New Guinea Outstation Service
 1KW Valve Transmitter for the 600 meter transmitter for the ship to shore service

1KW valve transmitter was originally used to work into Australia through Townsville on the low frequency of 2400 meters also used for the transmission of Naval messages to British merchant ships under the G.B.M.S. during the war.

Aerials

A high lattice steel mast standing approximately 400 feet supporting all aerials to the transmitting site, plus a 600 meter receiving aerial for maritime shipping during the 5.00pm-11.00pm watch when all other services had closed down for the night.

Receiving Site

Situated on a ridge overlooking the transmitting station and approximately a quarter of a mile from it. It had its own receiving aerials bringing signals from Sydney, New Guinea outstations consisting of Bulolo, Wau, Salamau, Manus, Kavieng, Wewak, Aitape, Madang, Kieta, the Japanese station at Truk and Samarai.

Schedules

Outstations Monday to Friday - Most stations two skeds a day morning and evening with Wau which was a two man station being the last on the list.

Saturdays - Only one schedule to each station closing about 1.00pm.

Sundays - Closed.

Sydney Opened at approximately 7.00am until clear of traffic, which was about 7.00pm.

Ships International intermittent service. Weekdays opened continuously until 11.00pm.

Landline To Rabaul. Opened 8.00am until clear, usually approximately 5.00pm. In the early days of the service a telegraph sounder was in use, but due to damage to the line through earthquake tremors, falling coconuts, the system was changed to electric tone service which was quite a big improvement on the sounder system. At times the tone system had failures, and when this happened we would transfer our tone system to the phone line, and this act did not please the local residents at Kokopo and other phone users

Services The gold fields with stations at Wau and Bulolo were the busy stations. Messages up to 400/700 ten letter code were frequently received and retransmitted to Sydney. After the war the local set up with ten letter code was discontinued and all services went over to five letter code.

Press The first duty each morning was the reception from Nauen in Germany of a press transmission which was collected by the local paper "Rabaul Times". A press message to the outstations was transmitted noon Saturdays by the "Rabaul Times".

Close Down With the close down of Bitu Paka, very little of the old station's equipment went into the Rabaul station. The German diesel engines were sold to the timber industry along with the accumulators. The Ruston Hornsby diesel engine, the 600 meter and outstations transmitters found their way into Rabaul. The Ruston Hornsby diesel made a name for itself during the Rabaul volcano episode when the loss of the town supply of electricity failed, and it was able to generate enough power to keep the station open to Sydney until the town supply was re-established.

Fatalities

Frank Barclay - On recreational leave from Madang preferred to leave Madang via the Administrator's schooner "HERMES" (?) and all were lost.

Frank Tracey - Reportedly committed suicide in Madang.

Percy Good - Percy was head mechanic at the Bitu Paka station and was made redundant when the station moved to Rabaul. He bought a plantation at Kessa on Buka Island. Percy (or Dacca as we called him) took his recreation and long service leave, and not long after settling down he became the owner of a Teleradio transreceiver and was able to get good contacts with Rabaul and Moresby.

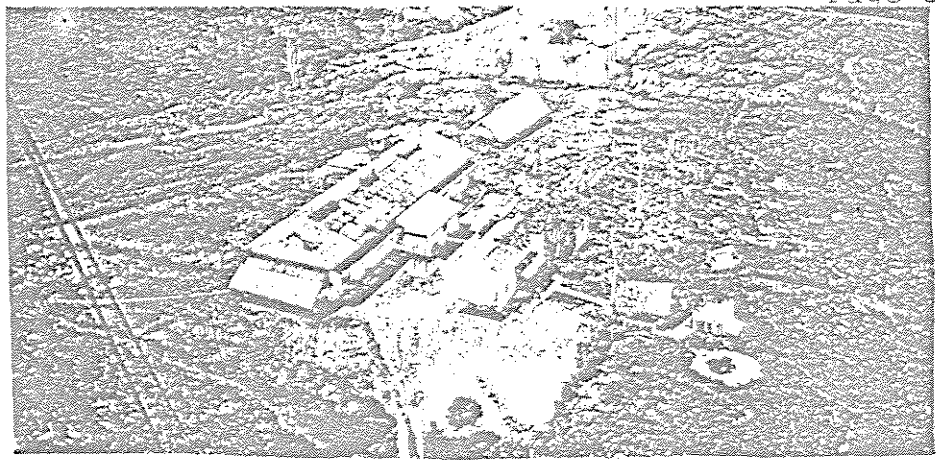
When the Japanese entered the war it was not long before they found their way to the New Guinea territory. In March the following year they occupied Buka Passage and the Shortland Islands. Percy Good was unable to escape to the jungle and stayed put, reporting enemy movements to Moresby. It was reported that one of his messages reporting the presence of a Japanese convoy in the Buka Passage went through Moresby to Sydney, passed by the censors, and broadcast by one of the local broadcasting stations. This message was intercepted by the Japanese Navy who located the transmitting equipment. Percy was captured and beheaded.

Eric Field, who was appointed to the position of "Staff Officer" (Intelligence) at Port Moresby in 1939, was given the task of expanding the Coast-Watching organisation.

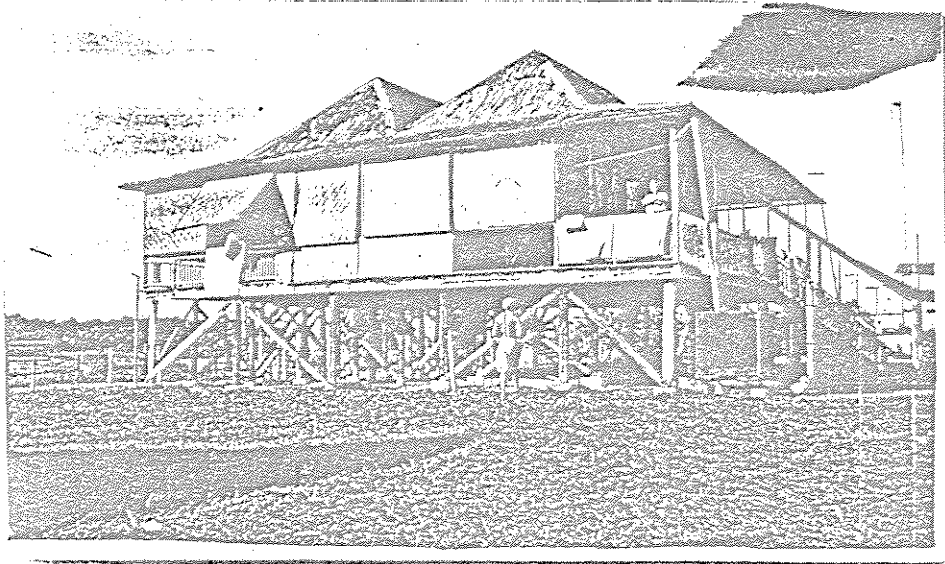
In an article in the book "As you Were" he reports Percy Good "was killed by the Japanese, an incautious News Broadcast being a contributing factor."

Finally, I regret to say, I am the last surviving member of the staff that served on the Bitu Paka Station.

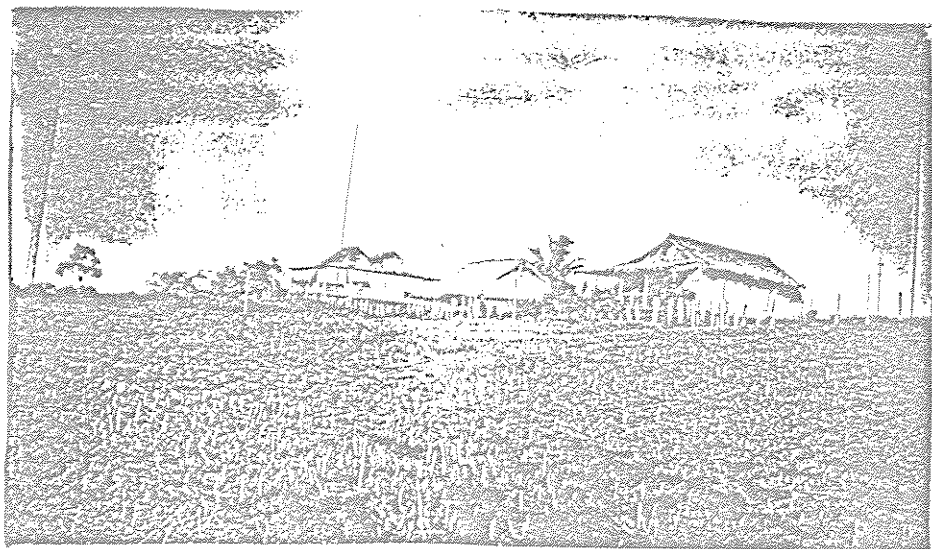
1.



2.



3.



4.



1. BITA PAKA (PAPUA NEW GUINEA) RADIO STATION

DATE: 1936

FEATURE: View of the Engine - Transmitters & Battery Room from 300 feet up the transmitter mast

2. BITA PAKA (PAPUA NEW GUINEA) RADIO STATION

DATE: 1936 General view from the Rabaul Road

FEATURE: General view of Manager's Residence, Single Men's Residence, Garage, Receiving Station.

3. BITA PAKA (PAPUA NEW GUINEA) RADIO STATION

DATE: 1936

FEATURE: Single men's residence housing 4 persons

4. BITA PAKA (PAPUA NEW GUINEA) RADIO STATION

DATE: 1936

FEATURE: Monument indicating the spot where the first Australian soldier fell in the first World War. He was thought to be Captain Pockley and was in a group of soldiers sent to blow up the German radio station at Bitu Paka. The monument is situated about 4K/ms from Bitu Paka

THRILLING STORY OF THE OLD EMDEN

I am indebted to Bryan Nell for this account of the EMDEN and her encounter with the SYDNEY. Bryan states that two things have happened to re-awaken interest in the story surrounding the German Cruiser SMS EMDEN. Firstly, the OTC Exhibition "From Settlement to Satellites" which displayed some of the old equipment similar to that which was used on the Cable Station at Cocos Island, along with a knife which was actually made from Emden steel. Secondly, he was able to obtain a book, "The Last Corsair", the story of the Emden by Dan Van Der Vat.

Though some alteration has been made to the punctuation, Bryan points out that the story, prose and wording remain unaltered.

Those of you who were on Cocos will remember that the Emden Old Boys' Association referred to by Mr Harmes-Emden, met at various times for a reunion and after each reunion sent a postcard to the Staff at Cocos. Bryan remembers the cards, and also Mick Wood's comments, (while he was President of the Exiles Club), how the number of the names decreased over the years. He wonders how many, if any, of the 1914 Emden survivors are alive today, and if there are, how many were ever told of the closure of the Cocos Station.

The article is too long for one copy of the NEWSLETTER so it is my intention to serialise it. I have included the letter from H.H. Harmes-Emden to the Exiles Club Cocos written on 17 December, 1963, mainly because of the sincerity expressed therein. I intend to take the first part which takes in the first day of action to where the Emden was doomed. The rest of the story will follow in successive editions. (Editor).

H H Harmes-Emden
HAMBURGE-Bergstedt
Kirchenheide 31

17 December 1963

The Exiles Club
COCOS (KEELING) ISLAND
Indian Ocean

Mr Paul Koster-Emden, Secretary of the "Emden Old Boys' Association", sent me a copy of your letter of 4.8.63. and also some photographs showing Memorial Plate and Memorial Parade in remembrance of November 1914.

I do confess. I was deeply touched by these pictures and take this opportunity to thank you very much for letting me have these souvenirs.

Then my glance fell upon your address and it struck me what a fitting name you have chosen for your Club (Exiles Club).

I was born in Hong Kong and spent most of my life in the Far East, especially in China and India, in far out-of-the-way places; in India on Christmas Eve under a dark sweltering tropical sky with jackals howling in the nearby jungle; in China in small grey-tiled houses that were shaking under a biting cold winterstorm and myself the only white man in a dirty and dreary looking place.

I shall never forget such Christmas Eves, sitting in front of my fireplace, along, except for my Golden Irish Setter, who seemed to perceive my thoughts, sad as they were.

Exiles Club! A really fitting name for your lonely Island. Maybe you will feel somewhat cheered if you know that on Christmas Eve, thousands of miles away a man will raise his glass full of Golden Rhenish Wine and drink to the health of all of you and wishing you a happy return to your Old Country.

With Kind Regards

NB: Please find enclosed copy of an article which appeared in the North China Daily News, Shanghai, in April 1931.

THRILLING STORY OF THE OLD EMDEN

Shanghai Survivor of Cocos Island Battle Describes Last Fight.

FAMOUS GERMAN RAIDER'S END

Heroic Struggle of Predecessor of Ship Now in Shanghai

The glory of the Emden, second of three German cruisers of that name, will never die. The new Emden bearing on her stem a replica of the Iron Cross awarded for her predecessor's exploits is now being feted in Shanghai.

After its successful cruise in the Indian Ocean during the early months of the world war, and its ultimate sinking off the Cocos Islands, Kaiser Wilhelm II, by special act of cabinet granted permission to the 150 surviving members of the crew to adopt as their surname that of the ship Emden. The Present German cabinet repassed this act to propagate the name through the ages.

Mr Hans Heinz Harmes-Emden, of the Sulzer Brothers Engineering Office of Shanghai is one of fifty living survivors of the Emden. At the request of the "North China Daily News", Mr Harmes-Emden, an unassuming, middle-aged man, reviewed his experiences as engine room petty officer of the Emden during her career in Western Waters.

This is the first time most of his thrilling account of courage and hardship incidental to the sinking of the Emden has appeared in print. In his book, "The Emden", Captain Von Mueller omitted several incidents here related. None of the survivors has ever before published memoirs of life on the Emden.

TRIBUTE TO EMDEN COMMANDER

Mr Harmes-Emden's account follows:-

To begin with, I should like to pay tribute to the commander of the new Emden now visiting Shanghai. Captain Witthoefft, who was Second Officer of the old Emden, was the most popular officer I have ever known. He was an efficient and clever leader; fine looking, human, and lacked the haughtiness that officers often assume. Because of these qualities, he was loved and respected by every man on the ship. I am sure that all those who knew him in the old days are glad to hear that he is in command of the new Emden.

The old Emden was manned by Germany's choicest men. Physical sturdiness, an unblemished reputation, and a high efficiency rating were the requirements the men met. Despite the fact that the navy enlistment period was of four years during which wages were but a few pfennings a day, and the army held forth the lure of two-year enlistment periods, more men volunteered for service in the navy than they needed.

When I was about 18 years old my Guardian decided to send me for four years to a Technical College. Before leaving for it, he granted me a trip to the North Sea. When I arrived at Wilhelmshaven, I saw her just in her right mood, and she fascinated me so much that I preferred to join the navy. I refused to return and after a while my Guardian sent me his permission to enlist in the Navy. I assume that his resistance was mostly overcome by the fact that I had to pay double the fee at the college, as I had always been compelled to do since. I was born in Hong Kong and they considered me a British subject. Even when I was a Prisoner of War, the British Authorities in Malta considered for two days whether I was a German or not.

It was only natural that I should want to go to sea. My father and forefathers were all sailors. My brother had joined the Navy before he went down with the Nurnberg during the Battle of the Falkland Islands.

MEETING WITH THE SYDNEY

At the outbreak of the war, the Emden was stationed in the Indian Ocean. With the aid of luck and under the genius of Captain Von Mueller, we established a good record during our service there. Many ships were captured and many sunk at our hands, while we fortunately escaped with few casualties.

The end of our activities came in November 1914 at the Cocos Islands, when because of our unfortunate position and the expert strategy of the enemy commander, who took full advantage of the longer range of his guns and his faster speed, the Australian cruiser Sydney, blew our ship to bits and killed or captured all but forty-nine of our crew.

I shall never forget the horror of the last two days of the Emden. We lay in a little coral-locked harbour off the Island. Early in the morning of November 9, forty-nine men under Captain Muecke went ashore with the destruction of the cable station as their objective. This was easily accomplished. I remember standing on deck with the rest of the crew and watching the mast of the station fall to the ground.

Little groups of men stood on deck laughing and joking as the sun rose. Everything seemed so quiet and at peace that everybody was happy. Although it may seem as incredible as the stories superstitious old ladies tell, an evil premonition or disaster made me stand out as a gloomy pessimist among my mates. Some of them commented on my low spirits to which I replied that the previous night I had dreamed the decks of the Emden were drenched in blood, and the familiar faces that now smiled at my account, were twisted with pain and terror, as had happened on the many ships we had successfully fought. I told my mates that I felt that this would be the last sunrise for many of us. Entries in my diary made before the presence of the Sydney became known, will prove that my intuition was not a product of fancy after the encounter. I later learned that two members of the crew had had similar dreams.

"CLEAR FOR ACTION"

My mates had scarcely turned their attention to other matters before the look-out called from the crow's nest, that a ship was approaching. At once the order rang out, "Clear For Action". We thought that this must be some old war vessel, that we could despatch with ease. Information previously had reached us that the British Cruiser, Sydney, was conveying a fleet of Merchants ships far to the north of us. But by some strange turn of fate, the convoy had forsaken the shortest route to their destination and came a round-about way, thinking in this way to avoid us, who might be watching for them on the regular course.

We later learned that a false fourth stack, which we disguised the Emden, had wobbled while passing another vessel, and the word was immediately passed on to the Sydney, who came to investigate.

As the mast, and subsequently the outline of the Sydney, appeared over the horizon, we at once weighted out anchor and went off with full speed to meet her. We had no time to embark our landing party but signalled them that something was wrong. They were not yet able to see our adversary.

At a distance of about 9000m we opened fire. The second volley was well placed. The Sydney soon retired to make repairs hiding herself behind a thick smoke screen, and at the time we thought we had sufficiently scared her off to continue the completion of our objective.

Sometime later however, the Sydney returned and keeping well out of the range of our guns, opened fire and soon her shells found their mark. We were helpless. The only hope to get the Sydney within the range of our guns was to deceive her by circling around and around and making unexpected loops. Our captain succeeded several times and even at one moment, the Sydney came within our torpedo range, she was already considered a sure prey. Captain Witthoefft being torpedo officer, standing in the conning-bridge aiming at the Sydney, shouted the preparatory command "Achtung!"

THE SHIP DOOMED

The men at the torpedo tubes stiffened ready to loose the apparatus, when a bare second too soon a shell from the Sydney crashed into the torpedo room filling it in a moment with water. Now we were doomed to perish. But again and again the Emden circled around to draw nearer to the Sydney, but our speed slackened, the ship was sinking slowly gaining much water every minute.

All our gunners had been killed; no ammunition, no men left at the guns, the ship was a mass of fire and smoke. To save the rest of his crew, the Captain ran the ship ashore.

I was in the starboard engine, which had been the whole time under fire. The cranks of the engine were already beating the water to white foam, when we got the order to open the stop cocks and come up to deck. This we did, but the engine room had been so demolished by enemy's fire that only two of the twenty men could follow the order. All others had been killed during the flight or perished in the boiling water and steam that streamed from broken pipes. I, and an old warrant-officer were the fortunate ones.

I was saved from being scalded to death while opening the stop cocks, by a flow of oil from an open faucet. For a minute, I would work and then run back for a shower of cool oil under the faucet.

My clothes were blown from my body. I was not conscious of my nakedness until I reached for something in my pocket. I was embarrassed when I found I had neither pockets nor garments.

Through a hole I crawled onto the deck on the portside. Shells were still bursting everywhere. Through the smoke and flames I saw huge waves coming on and sweeping the deck. I thought we were just disappearing beneath the waves. Others apparently thought the same for they jumped over something. Maybe my good angel caused me to stop right in the jump, to turn around and to walk through smoke and flames to the starboard side. There I came upon Captain Von Mueller who was caring for the wounded. The smoke cleared away a little and we saw crying with joy, and forgetting everything around us, our flag was still flying from the mast. At this moment, a bleeding sailor stumbled forth from his damaged gun and shouted; "Three Hurrahs for the Captain!"

Scarcely had the cheers died away when the man fell down on the deck, silent forever.

BLOWN OVERBOARD

Shells were still bursting everywhere. Our own shells' concussion blew many of us overboard. Three times I pulled a friend from the water but he fell in a fourth time I learned later, and was drowned. I myself was blown over the side but managed to grasp a rope dangling from the mast, now shot down to a position even with the water.

Later, I became unconscious, overcome from the picric acid of the shells. I was lying in front of the conning-tower when I was awakened by the sound of bursting shells.

The Sydney had returned in the late afternoon and opened fire again, because we had answered her signal to surrender.

I saw Captain Von Mueller ordering the survivors to take protection behind the armoured tower while he remained in front of it.

There he stood out clear against the horizon, tall and motionless, calmly facing the flashing guns of the Sydney like a firing squad.

I could not help thinking that he was determined to share the fate of most of his men. But strange to say, though shells were bursting around him, killing and wounding many who had taken cover, he stood there untouched.

Fate refused to allow him to die with his men and ship.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

NUCLEAR TESTS RESUMED AT CHRISTMAS ISLAND

By Keith McCredde

The resumption of tests at Christmas Island in 1962 after almost 4 years break meant an increase in Fanning's population for a few months.

Two Weapons Research Establishment men arrived on April 6th followed on the 14th by four Americans from the Denver University Research Institute. A few days later a member of the U.S. Department of Health Radiation Safety (Radsafe) Division arrived. All these extras were housed in the mess making the total mess members 11.

W.R.E. chose Barbeque Point for their site where they set up a simple construction hut to house their equipment. The hut was air-conditioned and included a dark room equipped with a sink and external water tank. The equipment was all transistorized to enable it to run off batteries should they have a generator breakdown.

The D.U.R.I. party set up on Browns Point at the site used by W.R.E. during the 1958 series. They had all their equipment previously set up in a big aluminium trailer equipped with dark room, air-conditioning and the equipment used high powered valves. Supplies for this heavy load was obtained from three large GMC generators.

During the following 3 1/2 months 26 bombs of various sizes were set off at Christmas Island, 150 miles south east of FI. Tests were made at various altitudes and many different means of release were used. Most of the detonations occurred about one hour before dawn and were quite spectacular for those who cared to rise in the early hours to watch.

The sky turned instantly from darkness to a brilliant white light which reached its maximum brilliance in 3 to 5 seconds. It is possible to see clearly to the horizon in any direction for the first 15 seconds when the light begins to fade slowly and dies out after 40 to 50 seconds. The fireball, which is clearly visible with the larger bombs, starts to appear and builds up to a big red boiling mass on the horizon. This lasts for a full minute with a red glow remaining afterwards for about 10 minutes. The bomb can be heard 20 minutes after the flash as a low rumble, like the sound of distant thunder and then a series of short loud bangs follow. The largest bomb of the series caused a rumble lasting half a minute and was followed by 25 bangs of which the loudest three shook buildings at the cable station. A bomb actually causes only one bang when viewed from close range.

The Johnston Island shot was disappointing after sitting up to many times only to hear KPOI (a Honolulu broadcast station) announce postponements. The night was very overcast, and although the rocket cleared the horizon before the detonation, the effect was only a dull green glow which later turned to pink at the only two small breaks in the clouds. The whole flash lasted only about 15 seconds. The effect on the cable was considerable with a slam on the loaded cable amplifier and some heavy zero swings on the slow cable. The stoppage lasted 17 minutes with auto scrut for approximately 2 hours.

Is "stoppage due Nuclear Detonation" going to be a regular entry in the log book.

The excessive use of the Cartwright Point road by large trucks reduced it to a series of pot holes. Two Americans came to inspect the road and decided to send the equipment to re-surface it with lagoon mud. Three heavy equipment operators arrived with a large bulldozer, grader, skip loader and two dump trucks. The two army trucks that came with the early supplies were also used. Labour was provided by the Gilbertese employed by C & W. During the following three weeks hundreds of tons of mud was distributed along the road, graded and rolled. The road is now in excellent condition.

The series ended early in July and both parties left on the 15th after a grand farewell night in the Hermit Crab. The road took another week to finish and the construction men left on the 29th July after grading some of the North Passage road and clearing the Rifle Range. Peace returned to Fanning Island. When will the next series commence?????

The above article is timely as this marks the 25th Anniversary of the Closure of the pacific cable route through Sydney/Auckland/Norfolk Island/Suva/Fanning/Vancouver.