

Jim Anderson

Newsletter

Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association (Australia)

VOLUME 5, PART 4, PAGE 478
NOVEMBER, 1994

MEETINGS AND REUNIONS

NEW SOUTH WALES	REUNION Tuesday, 29th November, 1994 12:00noon to 3:00pm	TELSTRA HOUSE 12th Floor, Conference Room 231 Elizabeth Street Sydney
WESTERN AUSTRALIA	MEETING Tuesday, 29th November, 1994 1:00pm	PERTH INTERNATIONAL TELECOM CENTRE 620 Gnagara Road Landsdale
QUEENSLAND	REUNION Tuesday, 22nd November, 1994 12:00noon to 3:00pm	THE IRISH CLUB Tara House 175 Elizabeth Street BRISBANE
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	REUNION Thursday, 24th November, 1994 12:00noon	TELECOM CONFERENCE CENTRE 2nd Floor 26 Flinders Street Adelaide
VICTORIA	REUNION Monday, 28th November, 1994 5:00pm - 8:00pm	CITY CONFERENCE CENTRE CAE Building level 2A 256 Flinders Street, Melbourne. (Opposite station)

Veterans from interstate who would like to attend these functions are advised to contact the Secretary of each branch to get confirmation of the times and venues and indicate their intention to attend so that arrangements can be made for catering.

Oscar

Tango

Victor

Alpha



OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS' ASSOCIATION SECRETARIES

NEW SOUTH WALES

Pam Helps
Telstra House
231 Elizabeth Street
SYDNEY 2000

Tf: (02) 287 4449

QUEENSLAND

John Taylor
10 Anamaran Place
Bellmere
Caboolture
QLD 4510

Tf: (074) 95 2521

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Harry Stone
10 Sussex Crescent
Morphettvale
SA 5162

Tf: (08) 382 4599

VICTORIA

Robert Hall
29 Merrill Street
Mulgrave
VIC 3170

Tf: (03) 546 3939

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Derek Walker
11 Flinders Avenue
Hillarys
WA 6025

Tf: (09) 401 8242



Giving Credit Where It Is Due Department

In compiling material for the November NEWSLETTER I wish to thank the following veterans and those who forwarded articles for this and future copies.

**Kevin Bobrige
Wilf Atkin
Harry Stone**

**Alan Arndt
John Toland
Harold Le Quesne
John Taylor**

**Audrey Travell
Gordon Cupit
Bruce Scott**

To KEN MULLEN - Your story 'Last Cruise of the Isis' had to be deferred because of the amount of material submitted. If you forward Part 2 I may get to publish them both in our April '95 edition, together with your letter which is right up to scratch, as usual.

To MOYNA VAGG - Thank you for the publication '130th Year Gathering of the Knuckey Family', and which I intend to serialise in a similar manner to Ted Bishton's epic, the final episode of which should appear in the April '95 copy.

To ALF CULLODEN - The brief account of your life which you say I can use when you "push off to that big bowling green in the sky" is too interesting to be kept on the back burner awaiting for the event you mention. Working on the basis that we both have all the time there is, I want to get it into the NEWSLETTER before we both qualify for the Sky Blue Mens' Pairs. Thanks, Alf - I found it interesting and I think others will too.

To KEVIN BOBRIGE - Please thank JUDY HOLLAND for me for her suggestion. There isn't enough space on the front page to record the names and addresses of State Secretaries or contacts in each State but I can make it a regular feature for page 2 of each edition and update it as required.

A word from our National General Secretary

I am taking this opportunity to thank all O.T.V.A. members for their support when selecting me to fill the position of General Secretary O.T.V.A. It will be a challenge for me to keep up the traditions established over the past 38 years by our most esteemed colleague, CHARLES CARTHEW who passed away last year and who will be sadly missed by us all. His dedication and tireless efforts to our Association made it what it is today! By keeping up the liaison with our Overseas counterparts, and co-ordinating our state Branches here, I am sure I can, with your ongoing support and help, keep our Association on track to become better and stronger as the years go by.

Yours fraternally,

ALAN ARNDT
General Secretary O.T.V.A.

**Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association
(Queensland)**

Secretary/Treasurer
John Taylor
10 Anamaran Place
Caboolture QLD 4510
Tf (074) 95 2521

President
Kevin Bobrige
47 Greenore Street
Bracken Ridge QLD 4017
Tf: (07) 261 2657

**Minutes of the 19th Annual General Meeting
Held at the Irish Club Brisbane on 24th May, 1994**

Present: President, Kevin Bobrige and Ana , Secretary/Treasurer, John Taylor, Jim & Beryl Banks, Dennis Bloudani, Harry Blount, John and Linda Burdinat, Blue Easterling, Laz Eliou, Alan and Colleen Jones , Deane and Alma Laws ,John and Mildred Norris, Jim and Sue Powell, Joan Sutherland, John and Betty Toland.

Visitors: Glenys Baldwin, Michael Bleisner, Harry Howard.

Apologies: Wilf Atkin, Roger Allen, Jack Burrows, Martin Cresswell, Duncan Dadswell, Pat Gray, Dennis Humphries, Doug Lloyd, Eric Norris, Alan Rees, Vince Sim, Peter Starbuck, Keith Vincent.

The meeting opened at 1239 - President Kevin welcomed all present members and visitors to the meeting. A minutes silence was then observed for members who had passed away in the previous year.

MINUTES of the 18th AGM were adopted as read, there was no correspondence other than notices of the meeting and apologies. The financial report was adopted showing current funds as \$439.56.

The President's annual report was read and accepted.

NOMINATIONS were called for the offices of President, Secretary/Treasurer and Auditor.

Kevin Bobrige was unanimously elected as President.
John Taylor was unanimously elected as Secretary/Treasurer.
John Norris was unanimously elected as Auditor.

GENERAL BUSINESS: A general discussion was held re the proposal of a National Committee and eligibility of O.T.V.A. whether 20 or 25 years. In Queensland, it is 20 years.

Jim Banks suggests 20 years nationally as in today's society people do not stay in jobs as long as they used to and 25 years is too long.

It was also pointed out that our next meeting would be our 20th Anniversary and all Queensland members and any visitors up this way should make an effort to attend this meeting.

The Meeting closed at 1315 and was followed by good fellowship.

John Taylor
Secretary/Treasurer.

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10 Anamaran Place
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O.T.V.A. (Queensland) President's Report 1994

Peter Shore, Managing Director International has now been appointed Chief Operating Officer of Telecom's Commercial and Consumer unit. Peter has given O.T.V.A. great support ever since the OTC/Telecom merger. Our best wishes go to Peter in his new position. Congratulations!

The new head of the International Business Unit is Warren Grace, formerly General Manager of OTC Maritime. I have been informed that Warren will continue to support the O.T.V.A. in the role that Peter so successfully filled. Thank you Warren from all members of the O.T.V.A. (Queensland).

A special greeting is extended to our new veterans of 1993/94 namely:-

John Purdy, ex SOR, BOR and now with Telecom.

Eric Norris, ex technician who has moved to the Gold Coast.

Jim Powell, ex British Telecom and now manager Brisbane Radio

Harry Blount, who I recently found has been residing in Brisbane for 3 years. Harry was from SOR and spent some time at BOR.

Duncan Dadswell, ex Antarctic communications and now with the Coast Radio Service at VIB.

It is pleasing to have new members entering the O.T.V.A. and I am sure that when the word gets around of Queensland's glorious weather we will grab a few members from other states.

Mailing of the popular 'Newsletter' and notices of meetings to members is performed by courtesy of the staff in the International Business Unit, Sydney. The NSW secretary has informed me some correspondence is being returned "addressee unknown". It would be of assistance, therefore, if all Queensland members could keep the committee aware of any changes in their address.

In addition, the mailing people in Sydney apparently sorted the mailing list using post codes. This resulted in some of our regular northern NSW members not receiving invitations to this AGM. Your hard working secretary, John Taylor, has been in touch with Sydney and some members with the view of rectifying the problem. Our apologies go to any of our "across the border" regulars who were not made aware of this meeting.

Most of you are avid readers of the O.T.V.A. "Newsletter" and look forward to receiving news of previous workmates. Indeed, some of you may have memories of occasions which would be of interest to all "Newsletter" readers. Our genial editor Jim Anderson would welcome contributions from Queensland veterans. Jim can be accessed through PO Box 9 Homebush South NSW 2140.

Some of you may be aware Alan Arndt has been appointed Secretary of the national body of O.T.V.A. Alan is an ex secretary of O.T.V.A. (NSW) and did an exceptionally good job in that capacity. Congratulations Alan. I also understand there is a move to form a national committee, although this is yet to be confirmed. I would point out that the original constitution of the O.T.V.A. made provision for such a committee which was to comprise of the state presidents plus an elected secretary. This seems a sound move insofar as the O.T.V.A. is concerned and, as you will notice, I have included this topic for discussion in general business.

I appreciate the continued support from members and sincerely hope our organisation will continue to grow. If any of you know of persons who should be members but may not be aware of O.T.V.A please let your committee know.

Finally, I would take this opportunity to thank our secretary, John Taylor, Glenys Baldwin and ex-secretary Jim Banks for assistance given during the current year. John Taylor has been extremely helpful through his term as Secretary and, let me assure you, a phone call to John sets the wheels in motion. Glenys and Jim are always available to give advice when needed. Well done the three of you.

I hope all of the members present, those who were unable to attend and our fellow members in other states enjoy good health and pleasant memories of a career in telecommunications which will provide you with many a joyous moment.

Kevin Bobrige
President O.T.V.A. (Queensland)
May, 1994

Jim Anderson
Editor Newsletter
PO Box 9
Homebush South 2140

Dear Jim,

I am enclosing a copy of the O.T.V.A. (Queensland) Annual General Meeting minutes for 1993/94, together with a copy of the President's report for the same period, for publication in the forthcoming "Newsletter".

The next annual reunion of our association, to be held some time in November will be the 20th such occasion for the Queensland branch and the committee is endeavouring to make it the best one yet. So if any interstate members are heading north in November, and would like to attend what is anticipated to be a wonderful day, please contact John Taylor or myself and we will arrange for a pleasant reunion with old acquaintances.

I had an interesting telephone call from Judy Holland (daughter of our late O.T.V.A. member Scotty Hamilton) recently. Judy has a wealth of memorabilia associated with telecommunications and would be only too pleased to pass this on to our association. She also came forward with the following suggestion regarding "Newsletter"

On the front page of Newsletter which gives the dates and venues of the coming AGM's or Reunions, why not include the name, address and telephone number of each state secretary, so that intending interstate visitors will have a contact.

Since our AGM in May, we have learned of the passing of our colleague, Eric Norris, and we offer our condolences to Betty. Eric had phoned me on a couple of occasions after arriving on the Gold Coast to live and informed me he wanted to attend our AGM but his health prevented this.

Jim, I would take this opportunity to congratulate all elected committee members following the recent AGMs and wish West Australian, South Australian, Victorian and New South Wales members of the O.T.V.A. all the best for the future.

Kind regards, Ando

Kevin Bobrige
President O.T.V.A. (Queensland)
18.7.94

Remembering

By Wilf Atkin

It's not much fun being old, but it's fun being "very old"!

Why? Because if you are blessed with a good memory you are able to recall events that took place so long ago that your recollection of them still makes you smile, and another thing, there's very few around (if any) to correct you.

During my 35 years in wireless communications, starting as a junior wireless operator on the R.M.S. "TAHITI" in January, 1927 until I returned as O.T.C.'s Staff Relations Officer when I was 59, I had many experiences, saw many funny things, some of them unbelievable; so unbelievable, that looking back, I sometimes wonder if they really happened. They happened alright!

Take the time that Lyle Gowanlock - 'Gow' to the boys - talked me into going with him fishing. He secured the boat, and with plenty of bait and sandwiches, supplied by his good wife, Aileen, we set off in the small boat to one of his favourite fishing spots. As we neared it we could see dozens of big kingfish darting about, so naturally we were elated, and when we dropped anchor we couldn't get our lines out quick enough.

Little did we know that as they circled the boat they were laughing at us. They had a secret way of removing the bait from the hook without running the risk of being caught. We couldn't believe it. In the hot sun we kept renewing our last baits until they had run out. Were we mad! Well at least I was, but Gow took it in his stride as he had similar experiences. Anyway, we enjoyed our lunch and later rowed our dinghy back to its resting place.

Gow lived at Balgowlah but came down to the Manly wharf where I was to catch a ferry, for I lived at Cremorne. Although he could see my ferry in the distance, Gow climbed down one of the piles of the wharf, and with a knife, cut a piece of mussel-like substance from the wooden pile, (I think it was called cungee), and took his line from the creel, baited the hook and dropped the line in the water until it reached the bottom.

By this time my ferry was halfway across. All of a sudden Gow felt a tug - just one tug - and started to reel in the line. When the line broke the surface he found he had a big flathead on the end of it. By this time the ferry was very much in evidence and was preparing itself to nudge the wharf where we were.

Quick thinking Gow, a real fisherman, clambered down to the waters' edge, got me to lean over and hand him his creel. and with dexterity born of experience, floated the flathead into the creel. It was a beauty!

I won't weary you with our antics at getting the creel up to the top and how Gow scrambled up just ahead of the ferry, but he went home to Aileen with a five pound flathead and I went home with "nuthin", only a sunburnt face and arms.

If you don't believe me, then ask Gow at the next reunion!

Another incident in Gow's life which he won't forget took place at Moore Park one Saturday morning when our cricket team was playing the Police eleven in the Public Service cricket competitions. He was at the crease and batting well when it happened!

A fast rising ball, which Larwood would have been proud of, hit him right in the delicate area where his "box" or protector should have been. He wasn't wearing one.

Whether he had forgotten to put it in, or was just one of those "smart blokes" who relied on sharp eyes and lightening reflexes to spot a dangerous delivery, I can't say.

I was on the seat in line with the wicket and saw it all.

He didn't give a yell, he just went down like a sack of spuds. All the spectators, myself and a young boy rushed to his aid, and all the fieldsmen gathered around.

He was moaning quite a bit and his face was the colour of an under done suet pudding.

We carried him off the field and tried to flag down a taxi, which was a fruitless task as the races were on at Randwick that day.

It would take me too long to supply all the details, suffice to say he survived. For days he walked very gingerly, and gradually the dead mullet look in his eyes disappeared, like the two soft cushions he used to sit on.

Gow had one small daughter named Margaret, and during the short time I was staying with them when I was transferred to Sydney, I felt she would have liked a baby brother, but, I would imagine, any hopes she may have entertained vanished after the Moore Park incident. Of course she had a dog, but it isn't the same, is it? You just can't continue putting a dog in a high chair with a bib around its neck and feeding it with a spoon!

I liked Margaret, for she was a bright little girl and was taking music lessons. Once piece she played was some composer's Nocturne in C: she played it quite well although she had a slight falter at one spot. Well that was forty two years ago, so I reckon she improved greatly in that time.

New Appointment

Congratulations to STEVE BURDON on his recent appointment to head of the Asia Pacific operations of British Telecom. Steve joined OTC as Managing Director in 1989, and has been interested in and a great help to the Veterans Association. He was behind the production of the historical books and for the setting up of the historical cabinets on most floors of Telstra House. On the merger of O.T.C and Telecom, Steve was promoted to the position of Group managing Director, Corporate, International and Enterprises. He will be missed in Telstra, but at least he is still in the industry, and we trust he will retain his interest in the Veterans.

Good luck Steve, we all wish you well for the future.

To Pasture

Congratulations to Morrie O'Connor, Ray Hookway and John Hampton on joining the ranks of us old retirees. Trust that you have all planned it well, and that Morrie may now consider himself old enough to join the Veterans Association.

Particulars on their careers appeared in a recent TRANSIT.

Tribute To A Work Colleague

By Audrey Travell

We are very sad to inform everyone that Mr Harry J Devine, Storeman with Telstra at Gngangara for the past fourteen years, passed away on Friday 5th November, 1993 after being ill for some time.

As a tribute to not only a staff member, but to a friend and best mate to many of us, we would like to share these few words with everyone:-

HARRY

Harry?
Who was Harry you ask -
Well I'll tell you of this mate we all knew -
Our work colleague, for all these years
And our friend, good and true.

Harry?
Who was Harry?
A best friend amongst us folk
Always time for a chat
Upon this and that
And always time to share a joke.

Harry?
Yes, our mate Harry
Who will be missed, like a friend who sails away
To another world - where everyone goes
But never to return another day.

At this sad time
We also think of Mary and the lovely family Harry left behind
But now he's free of pain
Safe to rest he is lain
And on the precious road to heaven, which he'll find.

As the sun sinks in the west
And now it's time for you to rest,
We will remember times we've shared.
So goodbye old friend
Even if sad is the end
We will remember how we always laughed and cared.....

From everyone at Telstra - Perth International Telecommunications Centre, Gngangara.

MINUTES
38TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
O.T.V.A. N.S.W BRANCH
HELD ON 20 MAY, 1994

1. The President, Gordon Cupit, opened the meeting and welcomed official guests. Gordon also made welcome the new members and introduced them to their first meeting. A total of 112 members attended our 38th Annual General Meeting.
2. Apologies
 - a. All apologies were recorded in attendance book.
 - b. The Secretary read a letter of apology from the Managing Director of the International Business Unit, Mr Warren Grace, which pledged future support to the Veterans Association.
3. Fraternal greetings were acknowledged from the Presidents and Members of our Victorian, Queensland, South Australian and Western Australian branches on the occasion of this our 38th Annual General Meeting.
4. One minute's silence was observed to mark the passing of the following members - Ken Banks, Dudley Treliving, Ted Gunning, Roy Tully, Les Waters, Harry Rumble, Keith Parker, Fred Jenkins, Charlie Watson, Tom Hughes, Frank Turville, Orme Cooper, Ced Dale, Charles Carthew, Cliff Allinson, Frank White, Jack Nosedo, Ron Roger, Phil Ryan, Ron Turnbull, John Coles, Harry Devine and Cec Mills.
5. The President introduced the Committee members and thanked Telstra Management for its support and finance. A special vote of thanks went to Donna Irvine, Leanne Porter, Mark Kitchener and Hugh Brislan for their invaluable assistance throughout the year.
6. The President advised that he attended the Handover Function when Peter Shore vacated the position of Managing Director International Business Unit and Warren Grace took up occupancy. He gave a speech on behalf of the Veterans and together with the Secretary presented Peter and his wife Di with a leather bound set of the historical books and an Orrefors glass dish.
7. The Secretary read a letter to the President from Peter Shore thanking him for his letter of congratulations in relation to his move from International to Commercial and Consumer Division in Telstra. He also thanked all the Veterans for the gift presented to himself and his wife Di at the Handover Function.
8. Sick List

Cyril Manning and Bob Fisher were both currently hospitalised.
9. Balance Sheet and Annual Accounts

The Balance Sheet was presented to all members present and opened for discussion. There being no discussion, it was carried unanimously that the Auditor's Report be accepted.

10. Election of Officers

The President declared all offices vacant and called for nominations for Returning Officer to conduct the annual election. Mr Geoff Day was nominated and duly elected Returning Officer.

All Office Bearers and the Committee were returned unopposed.

They are:

President	Mr Gordon Cupit
Honorary Secretary	Miss Pamela Helps
Treasurer	Mr Mick Wilden
Auditors	Mr Ron Connolly and Mr Peter Roberts
Committee Members	Mr Jim Anderson Miss Sylvia Ayres Mr Laurie McIlree Mr Brian Peacock Mr Martin Ratia

11. General Business

- a. The Secretary advised that eligibility for membership of the Association based on years of service in international communications differed in all states and forwarded the proposal that, as O.T.V.A. is a national body, the number of years should be the same for all States.

Discussion took place as to how many years should constitute eligibility and it was agreed that all States should be asked to vote on this item at their next Annual General Meeting.

With the years of retirement now being accepted towards eligibility for membership the question of whether the same should apply following retrenchment was put to the meeting. Members agreed that the same principle should apply for retrenchment as for retirement and all States will be asked to vote on this item at their next Annual General Meetings.

- b. The President advised that he was invited by Andrew Olle, the 2BL Broadcaster, to speak on his Anzac Day Program about the battle of the Emden. Following the broadcast, Gordon was presented with a 2BL tape which will be deposited in the archives.

- c. Martin Ratia played a video to the members on the President's speech and presentation to Peter and Di Shore on behalf of the Veterans at the Handover Function.

There being no further business to discuss, President Gordon closed the meeting after inviting all present to adjourn for refreshments.

Pamela Helps
Honorary Secretary

Interesting Book

By Gordon Cupit

I recently read a most interesting book published for the Bi-Centenary in 1988. It was 278 pages and is titled "The Book of Sydney Suburbs." Compiled and edited by Frances Pollon. In the credits is the following "This book was originated by the late Gerald Healy of the Holroyd Historical Society, who compiled a preliminary manuscript. Frances Pollon also had access to research material collected by Philip Geeves."

On pages 83 and 84 are two photos of "Bungarabee House" one taken in 1900 and the other in 1950. A comparison of the photos shows the degree of neglect and vandalism. The house was built in 1825, and was situated on part of the site chosen for the Doonside station. The Heritage Society strongly recommended that OTC provide the funds for its restoration and maintenance. OTC did not take up the offer, as by that time there was a further lot of vandalism and it was not a proposition. However, the barn, a substantial brick building was restored and used as a calamity store for the Compac cable spares. Unfortunately the barn was later destroyed by fire.

In 1981 Philip published a book on the Early Days of Sydney and recently another of his books 'Dawn of Broadcasting' was notified in the last Newsletter. This latter book was arranged by his widow Lee. Philip was a noted Archivist and Historian, especially on the subject of Early Sydney, and was well known for his historical session with Caroline Jones on 2BL. Also for his historical question and answers column in the Sydney Morning Herald, and his T.V. specials with Dick Smith.

A good deal of our archive and museum material was supplied by Philip. He died in 1983, and tis a pity he did not live to see the publishing of the above book, and our Settlement to Satellites Exhibition.

Early Beam Days

By Gordon Cupit

The mention of King Island service by Ced Dale, brought back memories of Harry Selfe who was killed in an aircraft accident on his way to take up duty at King Island. I remember, as a messenger, being detailed on many occasions to go down to the Queensland Hotel in Erskine Street to get Harry's breakfast of bacon and eggs. Harry was a resident at the Hotel. It was unfair that a hungry young fellow had to suffer this splendid aroma all the way to the office, so that debonair Harry could sit in all his splendour at the Supervisors desk and devour it.

The passing of Charlie Watson brought another reminder, this time of my first encounter with General Manager, John Mulholland. I was on duty one Saturday afternoon when Charlie was Supervisor, and the boys decided to play, a number of visits to the Occidental next door was the order of the day. On arrival on shift the following Monday, Superintendent Mark Mortimer confronted me and escorted me to the General Manager's office. I was terrified as I had never been before this small dignified gentlemen. He started off by informing me that he had been advised that I was a Telegraphist on duty on the preceding Saturday and asked if anything untoward had happened on my shift. I replied in the negative. He then asked if any number of the staff had been intoxicated. I again replied in the negative.

I was then reprimanded about telling the truth and told that one of the messengers on that day had told his father all the staff had been drunk. Also that he had perused the logs of all circuits and my writing was on all the entries. I was told that I was a fool to stick up for such a bunch of deadbeats as they were not worth it. Mark Mortimer, who did not mind a pint himself, had told Mulholland that I did not drink, so I was saved from a lecture on the evils of drinking on duty. Mul never held this against me or he had a bad memory, which I very much doubt, and we had a very good relationship in later life.

VALE - Jean Edith Heathershaw,

Jean was the wife of the late Jack Heathershaw, she passed away on 16th July, 1994 at Highett, Victoria.

Internal Memo



To Pam Helps
Secretary, OTVA

From Ron Beckett
Project Co-ordinator, Cable Operations

Subject Out of Service Submarine Cables

IBU
Cable Operations

4/231 Elizabeth St.
Sydney NSW 2000

Australia

Telephone 02 287-4918
Facsimile 02 287-4897

Date 26 May 1994

File 16-66-6

Pam,

I would appreciate it if you would publish this minute and the attachments in the next OTVA Newsletter as I am in need of assistance from those veterans who were in the cable service of yore.

I am currently working on a document detailing the procedures to be followed if a vessel fouls what they believe to be a submarine cable. Unfortunately, many of the old cables are not marked on hydrographic charts and, in fact, we are not really sure how many cables exist in Australian waters. Thus far, I have been able to identify the cables listed in the following excerpt from my document and I would appreciate any advice correcting or adding to this list. The dates shown are approximate and may need to be taken with a grain of salt. Corrections here would also be appreciated.

(Ron Beckett)

CABLES IN AUSTRALIAN WATERS

The following is a list of cables for which Telstra has responsibility. It includes out of service (OOS) cables because the owners cannot abandon responsibility for their cable. Note that a number of uncharted cables exist across the Bass Strait between Victoria and Tasmania and while it is unlikely that the INOC will receive calls about these, one needs to be aware of them. These cables are probably owned by Telecom Australia and, therefore ultimately by the Telstra Corporation.

Further, there are a number of OOS cables which we believe are owned by Cable & Wireless (as successors to the British Australia Telegraph Company, Pacific Cable Board, Eastern Extension Company, Imperial & International Communications Ltd. *et al*) and, again, one needs to be aware of these. Note that calls about these cables **must** also be logged and referred to the Manager, Cable Operations. Any claims arising out of fouling of cables not owned by Telstra will, initially, be handled by Telstra on behalf of the cable owners.

Note that in the following list, the words uncharted means that they are not shown on hydrographic charts issued by the RAN Hydrographic Office. However, in some cases, it also means that we have no records of their exact location. We are actively working with the Hydrographic Office to have them included.

Telstra (IBU) Cables

- COMPAC (Sydney-Auckland-Suva-Hawaii-Port Alberni, Canada (1962-1983 OOS)
- SEACOM (Cairns-Madang-Guam-Hong Kong-Singapore-Malaysia) (1966-1986 OOS)
- APNG Cable (Cairns-Pt. Moresby) (1976-)
- TASMAN (Sydney-Auckland) (1976-)
- ANZCAN (Sydney-Norfolk Island-Fiji-Hawaii-Vancouver) (1984-) and (Norfolk Island-New Zealand) (1983-)
- TASMAN 2 (Sydney-Auckland) (1991-)
- AIS (Perth-Ancol, Indonesia-Singapore) (1986-)
- PacRim West (Guam-Sydney) (1994-)

Telstra (Telecom Australia) Cables

- Telegraph Cable from Cape Otway, Vic to Naracoopa, King Island, Bass Strait - Perkins Bay, Stanley, Tasmania thence from Godfrey's Beach, Stanley to Low Head, Tasmania (1859-1861 OOS - uncharted)
- Telephone Cable from Apollo Bay, Vic to Naracoopa, King Island, Bass Strait - Perkins Bay, Stanley, Tasmania thence from Godfrey's Beach, Stanley to Low Head, Tasmania (1935 -1979 OOS)
- Up to 4 OOS telegraph cables from Flinders, Vic to Low Head, Tasmania (Uncharted - laid between 1869 and 1898 - possibility exists that the 1869 cable has been lifted leaving only 3 cables)
- 2 telegraph cables across Torres Strait (1943, OOS)
- Rottnest Island, WA to Fremantle, WA, (2 OOS cables)
- Spencers Gulf, SA
- Broken Bay, NSW
- Darwin Harbour

Cable & Wireless Cables (All OOS and Most Uncharted)

- Telegraph cable from La Perouse, NSW to Wakapauka, NZ (1876 - landing site moved to Bondi in 1917. Out of service 1932) **
- Telegraph cable from La Perouse to Wellington, NZ (1890 - landing site moved to Bondi in 1917 to become Auc No.2 cable. Out of service 1956) **
- Telegraph cable from Bondi to Auckland No.1 (1912-1964)
- Telegraph cable from Bondi to Auckland No. 2 (1912-1956)
- Telegraph cable from Sydney to Southport, Queensland (1902-1964) plus a spare shore end 9nm long from Sydney.
- Telegraph cable from Southport, Queensland to Norfolk Island (1902-1964)
- Telegraph cables from Norfolk Island to New Zealand (1902 & 1926)
- Telegraph cables from Norfolk Island - Fiji - Fanning Island thence to Bamfield, Canada (1902 & 1926)
- Telegraph cable across the Great Australian Bight from Glenelg, South Australia to Cottesloe, West Australia. (1902-1948)
- COSCLO 1 Telegraph cable from Cottesloe, West Australia to Cocos Island and beyond (1901-1966) Some of this cable was recovered near Fremantle by C&W in 1986.
- COSCLO 2 Telegraph cable from Cottesloe, West Australia to Cocos Island and beyond (1926-1966) Some of this cable was recovered near Fremantle by C&W in 1986.
- Jakarta-Cocos Is. (1908-?)
- 2 cables from Darwin to Banjoewangi (previously Banyuwangi), Java, Indonesia (1871-1931 & 1880-1950). Possibly combined into one cable in 1935. Some of this cable has been recovered by C&W.
- Roebuck Bay, Broome, WA - Banjoewangi, Java, Indonesia (1889). Virtually all recovered in 1914-1915.
- Sydney - Norfolk Island. This cable, while not carrying traffic was formed by cutting and joining the Sydney-Southport and the Southport-Norfolk Island Cables in 1970. The operation was carried out approximately 35nm from Southport in depths of 900-1000 metres. Some of this cable was cleared near Narrabeen prior to the lay of PacRim West.

** The possibility exists that sections of these cables may exist from La Perouse to the point where the cables were diverted to Bondi.

France Cable & Radio Cable (OOS and Uncharted)

- Telegraph cable from Mon Repos, Bundaberg, Queensland to New Caledonia (laid 1893 abandoned 1895 or 1898). We have approximate positions for this cable and have transferred them to a chart of the region.

Chronological History of O.T.C.

By Gordon Cupit

The last entries on our Chronological History in the Newsletter are:-

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1975 | Completion of 600 channel Co-ax cable Aust/N.Z.
First Intelsat IVa launched. |
| 1976 | Installation of Hasler Telex Exchange.
First I.S.D. to overseas countries from Australia.
Opening of Papua New Guinea-Australia Co-ax cable (480
channels). |

Much has happened since that date and we are looking for volunteers (preferably someone still in Telstra who could have access to the files) who would be prepared to update the OTC Official Chronological History. The file is with the Archivist. The last time the Official History was brought up to date it was done by Edgar Harcourt. Anyone interested, please advise Pam Helps.

Bushfires

A number of my acquaintances with relatives overseas had phone calls during the recent bushfires, inquiring as to their welfare. It would have been interesting to know how many phone calls were generated by this calamity.

Newsletter Articles

Reading through old Newsletters, one finds many stories on the island cable stations. Except for Ted Bishton's amazing epistle, we have very little on the coastal and radio stations. Also some of the CRS guys must have been involved in some marine and aircraft distress's. What about some stories? Also you younger members who have been involved in new systems, which have now become obsolete. Other new developments (these in laymen's language would be appreciated). If you do not have the time or a typewriter, an audio tape would help.

37TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MELBOURNE

Held at the City Conference Centre, CAE 256 Flinders Street Melbourne. On Monday 6th June 1994 from 12:00pm to 3:00pm.

President Jack White welcomes everybody and declares meeting open then asks for a minute silence in respect of our passed colleagues.

Normal Functions of meeting take place:

- Minutes Read
- Treasurers Report
- Correspondence & General Business

President Jack White spoke about and gave a special greeting to Chris Tancheff and Barry McMillan and then recounted his memories of the late Mr Charles Carthew, Mr White then went on mentioning the recent passing of the late Jack Nosedo, Richard Vallis, and Sir Gregory Gowans who was a foundation commissioner of OTC (A) in 1946. Mr White suggested that a letter of recognition to Mr Alan Arndt on being elected as the National General Secretary of O.T.V.A. be forwarded. Mr Geoff Whitmore reported on the health of Keith Vincent and Keith Parker.

Elections: Arthur Green nominates Jack White for 2nd Term Motion, seconded by Norm Stubbs. No other nominations and Mr White duly re-elected.

Mr White suggested we have a Vice President and duly nominated Geoff Whitmore - fully supported by members.

Secretary/Treasurer agrees to another term.

President declared meeting closed at 12:46pm and invited everyone to partake in the hospitality of the meeting.

List of Attendees: Norm Stubbs, Les Foley, Denis Chambers, Pearl Peat, Win Pierce, Brian Williams, Robert Hall, John Davey, Arthur Green, John Bennett, Alan McLean, Gwen Hill, Page Barrow, Barry McMillan, Gerard McCarthy, Jim Fez, Alan Vagg, Vance Findlay, Jim Kennedy, Jack White, Doug Crabtree, Geoff Whitmore, Merv Fernando, Chris and Mary Tancheff.

List of Apologies: John Caulfield, Tom Lang, Merv Cooper, Merv Hinniberg, Betty Prentice, Clive Purvis, Alec Stewart, Roly Lane, Tess Hodges, Ann Dale, Jack McGrory, Elaine Keil, Guye Russell, Howard Newsome, George Fraser, Col Benson, Merrlyn McCarthy, Sam and Audrey Bright, Ted Read, Tom Smith, Joan Miller, Joan Ferne, Ian Reed, Joyce Nicholson.

From the Past....

One day in late September 1994, I was driving up Punt Road South Yarra, thinking of this person as I often do when passing this area I spotted Miss Betty Wallens formerly Secretary to the Traffic Accountant Jack McGrory walking up the footpath looking in pretty good condition considering that I think she would be in her early eighties.

Robert Hall

Wilf Atkin - Not just a name - Almost an Institution

I've had a couple of letters from Wilf. I first met him when I joined O.T.C. in December 1946. He was already firmly ensconced in the position of S.O.R. (Sydney Operating Room) chief, wit, wag, and a character known the length and the breadth of the old A.W.A. system. Our brand of humour ran along similar lines, especially with regard to satire, lampoons, or just straight out tomfoolery.

He was a prolific writer of skits for the old Cricket Club smokos and we cooperated in that regard on many occasions.

Wilf (now well into his nineties) and I have corresponded on an irregular basis, and I have always been trying to prod him into writing a few articles for NEWSLETTER.

I am pleased to say that our Secretary, Pam Helps, has received an assurance from Wilf that some articles will be forthcoming, dependent upon time and other things.

The following is his latest.

Wagga Wagga and the Credit Union

The last issue of TRANSIT held a special interest for me for it featured the Wagga Wagga Weekend and the Credit Union, my having a close association with both of them.

Forty eight years ago when a Senior Telegraphist in our Melbourne Office, I was President of the M.O.R. Cricket Club when the idea of playing a cricket match against a team from the Sydney office was mooted.

The small committee thought it was a good idea and left it to our energetic Secretary Lou Sherburn, to explore the idea. He certainly did for the next year it became a reality and it saw our team and supporters leave for Wagga Wagga. Lou, with the cooperation of the Wagga Postmaster, Bill West, had arranged hotel accommodation, a pitch at the oval and a hall in which to hold our pre-match entertainment.

On the Sunday, in the blazing sun, the first of the series was played. I think Melbourne won.

This was the first of a series which went on for about ten years in that format, and it engendered a warm feeling between the two offices. In the two operating rooms, when things were slack, the operators, instead of "snarling" on the key, would discuss events that had taken place at the previous Wagga outing.

Then other sports crept in, golf, bowls, snooker, tennis and even netball. Looking at the latest contestants I would say that, with a few exceptions none of them were born when we first "invaded" Wagga. To me, the only one of the old organising committee still around it is a phenomenon.

Now for the Credit Union.

The last nine years before retiring I was the Commission's Staff Relations Officer stationed in Sydney, and one day the late Trevor Housley, who was the General Manager arranged for me to see the Manager of the Australian Broadcasting Commission Credit Union to obtain details of how to go about obtaining a charter for O.T.C. to form one. I carried out the mission, but it was months before O.T.C. was granted a charter. The paper work it involved was enormous, and I haunted the steps leading up to the Registrar's Office.

As S.R.O. I became the first Secretary and a committee was formed to approve or turn down applications for loans. The staff was circulated an offered 6% on deposits and they responded well. Loans were approved at a 5% flat rate, which brought in a small profit to the Credit Union. Only permanent staff were eligible for loans and the fortnightly instalments were deducted by the Paymaster.

It was quite a small affair when I retired, but look at it now!

It certainly exemplifies the old adage "big trees from little acorns grow".

Vale

12.03.1902 - 20.06.1994

Edward (Ted) Turner

Ted was born in Matthinna Tasmania near Launceston and married in Hobart on 15.11.26 and then later moved to Victoria and commenced with A.W.A. on 14.06.1927 as a telegraphist beam on a salary of 271 Pounds PA. (According to records his salary went up 15 pounds every year until 1933 then apparently on the same salary for eight years then back to 15 pounds PA increments until 1944) Ted was provisionally classified as a senior telegraphist on 3.6.50. Various periods as Actg/Asst/Supervisor Actg/Control Officer, Actg Training Instructor promoted to Control Officer 5.11.56. Promoted to Supervisor 8.6.61 until Ted retired in 1966. Ted had two children Judith and John and his first wife died late January 1950. He later remarried. Ted was also a violinist, he was a foundation member of the Melbourne Veterans also former Past President being elected on 29.5.69. We believe that Wilf Atkins is the only surviving member of the original A.W.A. Operating Room.

Ted's funeral service among many other friends and family was attended by five Veterans, namely, Geoff Whitmore, Jack White, Sam Bright, Jim Kennedy and Norm Stubbs.

We would also like to acknowledge the special care and friendship of Tom Smith in Ted's later years.

Our sincere sympathy to his wife and family.

Robert Hall.

"Z" Special Force - World War II

By Gordon Cupit

Many articles have appeared in the press on the exploits of "Krait" and her crew. The latest of these appeared in the Sun-Herald on 19th September, 1993, and was written to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Singapore raid. It featured Veteran Horrie Young, who, with three other surviving members of "Krait", laid wreaths in Singapore to honour the crew of 14. At the function, Military teams from Australia and Singapore re-enacted Operation Jaywick, as the Krait mission is still used to inspire Australia's Special Comando Forces.

The following story on the Krait and the "Z" Special Force appeared in the "South Coast Register". It gives details of the ship, which I have not seen published before, and is of interest in that two of our members belonged to that special and elite force. Horrie Young (mentioned in the story) and Ken Erickson, who passed away last year, was on "Tiger Snake". Tiger Snake operated in the waters around Timor and Borneo. It also carry out many dangerous and heroic missions but did not get the publicity given to Krait.

Ken didn't talk much about his naval service but I did ascertain that he undertook his initial commando training on Fraser Island.

(Editors Note: There is a monument on Fraser Island commemorating that fact).

Operation Jaywick was possibly the most successful sea raid of World War II. The full story is covered factually in a remarkable book "The Heroes" written by Ronald McKie. This publication, I believe, is one that should be available in all school libraries so that children can read and understand properly our basic qualities - the spirit of comradeship, adversity, Australian ingenuity, and guts.

Fourteen operatives, twelve Australian, sailed from Exmouth Gulf, Western Australia, north into enemy waters for 47 days, 5,000 miles in all, and were responsible for sinking more ships than any other Australian vessel - seven ships and 40,000 tonnes of shipping.

"Jaywick" was one of the many operations of "Z" Force Special Unit. This unusual light unit was composed from volunteers from the three services, Navy, Army and Air Force. Nationalities included Australian, British, New Zealand, Canadian, American, Dutch, Malay, Chinese, Filipinos, Timorese and others.

"Z" Special was one of a number of special organisations formed and controlled by Services Reconnaissance Department (SRD).

This unit functioned under the control of General Headquarters, South West Pacific Area, and was responsible for the planning of special operations in that Theatre.

Operation Control of SRD was exercised through the Controller, Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB) under whose direction all operations were carried out. In all, some 24 operations were mounted: casualties totalled 164 killed, 75 captured, and 178 missing. AIB personnel earned over 100 decorations and awards.

A Special RAAF Unit, 200 Flight, operated out of Leyburn, Queensland, for training and later as operational aircraft for the purpose of dropping "Z" men behind the enemy lines and resupplying them later.

One remarkable member was a Major Jock McLaren, a World War I man. He and Major R Blow had been captured and taken to Borneo. They escaped and paddled a canoe to the Philippines. McLaren, who had been a veterinarian before the war, became ill. He had a Malay with him in the canoe. He strapped himself to a tree, had the Malay hold a mirror for him, made an incision and removed his own appendix. They took it in turn to stay awake and hold the wound closed until it healed. He and Major R Blow, who had separated after escaping, both returned back to Australia, joined "Z" Special Unit and operated successfully in Borneo.

Snake Boats

Basically though, this is to give you some of the background to "Krait". Naval vessels attached to Z Force were referred to as Snake Boats, hence Krait, Anaconda, Tiger, Black Snake etc. The largest of these, and at times used as a supply ship, was called the Mother Snake. This fleet operated out of Darwin under the name of Lugger Maintenance Group. A "Z" vessel at Tarakan, Borneo, was captained by an Air Force Squadron Leader; his crew were Army personnel.

Original Acquisition

"Krait's" early history is difficult to confirm, but it is generally considered she was built at the turn of the century somewhere on the Malayan Archipelago.

She is 70 feet in length, has a 12 foot beam, and grosses about 70 tonnes dead weight. She is of the old fashioned design with a counter stern. Her construction is of Burmese teak. She is fitted with a German 3 cylinder Deutz. Originally built as a fish carrier, her holds were lined with cork. Her original name was "Kofuku Maru".

On December 6th 1941, "Kofuku Maru" left Singapore towing two fish barges, with seventeen officers and crew aboard presumably headed for Japan. On December 11 H.M.A.S. Goulburn intercepted her and an army party was placed aboard with instructions to return the vessel to Singapore where she was handed over to the Naval authorities and impounded in the holding area along with a number of other pleasure craft.

The Kofuku Maru thus became the first ship captured by the Australian Navy in the Second World War in the Pacific area.

Three weeks before the fall of Singapore, Commander Reynolds, along with a Malayan crew, were placed on board and began evacuation operations with women and children to Sumatra, carrying approximately 120 on each trip.

The last of these dramatic journeys turned into a nightmare when, on arrival at Singapore, it found that the Japanese had occupied the island. Commander Reynolds made the decision to proceed to Trincomalee, Ceylon. 1700km later with crew exhausted, no water supply left and fuel only for another 12 hours the ship arrived at its destination over three weeks after leaving Sumatra.

After five weeks in Trincomalee, the Kofuku Maru made for Bombay, India.

In Bombay was a Captain Ivan Lyon of the Gordon Highlanders. He had escaped from Singapore and volunteered to join SRD. It was he who eventually came forward with the idea of the raid for which the ship was later to become famous.

Unable to sail back to Australia under her own power, the vessel was loaded aboard a P & O ship, the SS "Ballarat", and delivered to a Sydney shipyard for essential repairs, which were extensive.

Naming

Captain Lyon's proposition for the Singapore raid was approved by the authorities involved, using the "KOFUKU MARU".

The vessel, coming under the umbrella of "Z" Special Unit, was then renamed "KRAIT" a deadly venomous Indian snake of the Cobra family.

Operation "Jaywick"

The operation, codenamed Jaywick, was selected by the now Major Lyon after Jaywick Sands, an area near Clacton on Sea, Essex, England, where Lyon had a lot of his early training. Lyon wanted to return to Singapore to see his wife who was in a camp in that city with his son, having been captured by the Japanese after their vessel had been sunk whilst they were being evacuated.

The original Deutz engine was continuing to break down so a brand new GL3 engine was located in Hobart, Tasmania, destined for a timber mill. It was seconded, loaded aboard a Douglas DC3 aircraft and flown to Cairns where it was fitted into the vessel. This installation necessitated "Krait" being turned on its side. The engine is still in "Krait".

After intensive selection and training, the "Jaywick Operation" was ready and Krait left Cairns on August 9, 1943, on a 2,400 mile journey to Exmouth Gulf. Eighteen days after leaving Cairns, Krait arrived at Exmouth and anchored off "Potshot", codenamed for the American Navy Base situated there. Preparation was made to depart on September 1, but after leaving her mooring and travelling about 100 yards, the engine stopped - the coupling key of the propeller shaft had sheared off.

Krait was towed to "USS Chanticleer". The shaft was removed and brazed by the engineers on board that vessel and was back in Krait by the next morning. This was done as a temporary measure as the Americans believed Krait was sailing south to Fremantle. Warning was given that the repair could break down again at any moment. At 2 p.m. on September, 1943, Krait departed on her epic trip to Singapore.

Returning to Exmouth on October 19, 1943, Krait anchored off Potshot and Operation Jaywick had been successfully concluded. Krait then sailed to Darwin to join Maintenance Group. She was used in agent pick up and supply duties with "Z" Independent Units and Coastwatcher personnel before moving north to Morotai. Around about this time she was commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy and fittingly became HMAS Krait. In conjunction with HMAS Bundaberg, HMAS Krait accepted the formal surrender of the Japanese at Ambon.

Disposal

At the end of the war, Krait was taken over by the occupying authorities at Labuna, North Borneo, where she was eventually sold.

She was captured by Interpol after being used for running heroin, hashish, guns, war surplus material and other prohibited goods in the South China area. Purchased by a

sawmiller of North Borneo, she was sailed to Sandakan, her name was changed to "Pedang", and she was then used to haul logs and transfer logging crews around the island.

Purchase

In 1962, two ex "Z" men associated with the timber industry in Australia were on a buying trip to British North Borneo when they saw a vessel at anchor in Sandakan Harbour which looked like the Krait but was named Pedang.

Enquires established it was Krait but had been renamed because of the embarrassment of the new owner on finding out the unsavoury reputation she had acquired due to her earlier illegal activities in the South China Sea area.

Upon their return to Sydney these two "Z" men, Mr Steven Stevenson and Mr Max Hayman advised the "Z" Special Unit Association of their discovery and it was decided to acquire the vessel and return her to Australia, following protracted and sometimes difficult negotiations, the vessel was purchased by a specially convened board - - the Krait Appeal Committee. Funds were raised by "Z" Special Unit Association and a public appeal through the 'SUN' newspaper. Mr Harold Nobbs, Officer Commanding the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol, under whose care the vessel would be used for training, daily operation and maintenance on its return, finalised the sale of the vessel in North Borneo and arranged for the return of the Krait to Australia. Due to her poor condition she was unable to return under her own power so the vessel was loaded aboard the P&O ship "Nellore" and returned to Brisbane in April 1964.

Restoration

After unloading, the vessel was towed to the RAEME Depot at Bullimba, thoroughly cleaned, scraped, painted and mechanically repaired.

This work was performed by members of the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol, "Z" Special Unit Association and personnel from the Army depot.

Krait returned to Sydney Harbour on Anzac Day, 1964. On board were "Jaywick" members, Skipper Ted Carse, Radio Operator Horrie Young, sole boat raid survivor, Arthur (Joe) Jones and crew member Mostyn Berryman. Prior to entering Sydney Harbour, at Broken Bay the ashes of the 'Jaywick' Engineer, Paddy McDowell, were scattered at sea.

Housing in the Australian War Memorial

On Monday, April 22, 1985, at Canberra the three trustees of Krait, Ray Irish, Horrie Young and John Gardner, signed the necessary transfer papers and the vessel was accepted by the Governor General of Australia, the Right Honourable Sir Ninian Stephens, on behalf of the people of Australia for eventual housing in Australian War Memorial at Canberra. Krait is currently moored at the Sydney Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour.

Editors Note

Reading the above made me think of another of our blokes who comes under the classification of Quiet Achiever, the late LES YOUNG. Les was a Coastwatcher and to justify their activities the Coastwatchers were given the honorary rank of Commander by the Navy, with the hope that should they be captured they would be given prisoner-of-war status. It was a faint hope, because from my information any Coastwatcher captured by the Japanese was automatically beheaded.

Les was a man who seemed to me to have an air of "quiet nervousness" (my expression) about him, but considering his war-time job I came to understand why.

Maybe someone else has his story. I do know that he was decorated for his work as a Coastwatcher - got either the Distinguished Conduct or Service Order, I think.

Les was a thorough gentlemen. I met his father on one occasion and Les was a chip off the old block.

If anyone does know the fully story it would make good reading.

Sick List

Sorry to report the following members are on the "not in the best of health" list and to them we send our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Bob Fisher

Bob continues to recuperate at home and is even looking forward to returning to work!

Alf Ricketts

Alf is progressing well, following surgery and is back to sounding almost dangerous!

Norm Odgers

Norm is now home having been hospitalised in Royal Perth Hospital. He is progressing well and is back on the OTV Network.

Bob Hooper

Bob has been hospitalised and we trust he is making satisfactory progress.

Vale

Cec Mills

Cec suffered a stroke in September 1988 and died on 4 September 1993. He was Maintenance Officer at Bringelly for 35 years and according to Harry Stone and Geoff Warner, he was the best and most adaptable Maintenance Officer they ever had. He was extremely good in all departments of building and maintenance work and we understand he was a very good tennis player. Cec was on the Committee of the Annual Luddenham Agricultural Show for many years. His Luddenham property was resumed by the government and leased back to him in the meantime in preparation for the new Sydney Airport for which we are still waiting.

Our sincere condolences go to his wife Jean.

Jack Thomas

West Australian Veteran Jack Thomas died suddenly on 21st April, apparently of a heart attack. Jack was an adopted Sandgroper, having gone to Perth from Melbourne Operating Room around 1949/50 to work as a telegraphist at Cottesloe cable station. He stayed at Cottesloe until it closed down in 1966, when, along with some of the other staff there, he left OTC to join what was then the PMG's Department, now Telecom. He worked in the CTO Perth, again as a telegraphist, until his retirement about five years ago. As far as is known Jack had no relatives in the West.

Eric Norris

Eric, who retired 10 years ago had suffered from multiple sclerosis for approximately 15 years. He was living in Queensland when he died of cardiac arrest on 5th June 1994. He joined OTC from DCA and served in Engineering and Operations. He was Manager Doonside and Carnarvon and returned as Manager Doonside from which position he retired.

Our Sincere condolences go to his wife, Betty.

Len Mason

Len retired from the Sydney Operating Room approximately 13 years ago. He and members of his family (some of whom worked for OTC) were involved in the entertainment side of many of the hugely successful SOR Christmas Parties. Upon retirement Len and his wife Joan retired to Ulladulla on the NSW south coast. Len died peacefully on 12th July, 1994.

Our sincere condolences to Joan and his family.

Ken Springbett

Ken died on 16th August 1994. He joined Eastern Extension Cable Co. in Adelaide on 1st July 1924 and served at Darwin, Suva, Cottesloe, Fanning Island and Sydney. He was in Darwin during the Japanese bombing in 1940/42. He joined OTC when it was formed in 1946 and served in Melbourne and Sydney. He helped run the Cable Operators' Training School and was the first Manager Paddington from which position he retired back to Adelaide. Ken and his wife Dot were awarded the Order of Australia last January for their service to meals on wheels - approximately 34 years.

To Dot and family, we offer our sincere condolences.

Kath Morgan

Kath joined OTC from Eastern Extension Cable Co and Cable and Wireless Ltd. She was one of the first female clerks in OTC and worked as Cashier and in General Accounts. She died of a heart attack on 21st August, 1994. Our sincere condolences go to her family.

Arch Barrie

Arch worked in the Coastal Radio Service and served at La Perouse and out stations. He worked his way up to second in charge of the service as Assistant Superintendent CRS. Arch died in September.

Edwin (Eddy) Trezise

Eddy joined the Cable & Wireless Company as a 13 year old Messenger Boy in 1918 or 1919 and remained with the company, later OTC until retirement age. He was extremely well known in Melbourne as a Saxophonist and Comedy entertainer as well as an OTC Officer. He was also well known to many Sydney staff up until the 1970's as a consistent participant in the annual Wagga weekend. Until his death on 17th October, 1994 in Heidelberg Victoria he looked forward to receiving the "Transit" magazine. Our sincere condolences go to his family.

Keith (Pancho) Vincent

Keith was well known throughout the service. He worked in the technical field and became Manager, Cairns in the early eighties. Formerly of Concord in Sydney, he retired to Bogangar in Northern N.S.W.. Keith had been sick for quite some time and died at Murwillumbah hospital on 28th October 1994. To his wife, Sadie and family, we offer our sincere condolences.

O.T.V.A. South Australia Branch.

A.G.M. Report

I have received the following report from Harry Stone (Secretary/Treasurer).

The meeting was held on 26th May, 1994 (Thursday), in the Telecom Conference Room. 2nd Floor, 26 Flinders Street, Adelaide, at 12:30pm. This was made available to us by the efforts of Gary Kelly and Linda Lena, who also organised the refreshments and sandwiches, and which were greatly appreciated by those present.

Unfortunately, we were barely able to achieve a quorum for the meeting, with only five members present, these being Fred Reeve (President), Harry Stone (Secretary/Treasurer), Geoff Cox (Past President), Gary Kelly, and a new member, Trevor (Sam) Pfeiffer, who travelled all the way down from Kingston-on-Murray, where Sam and his wife are "mine hosts" of the motel there.

Apologies were received from Ken Collett (prior dental appointment), Bob Imrie, (Holidaying in Scotland), Dick Inwood (convalescing from an operation), Max Lang (visiting Perth), Dennis Maher (attending the funeral of a close friend), John McGregor (holidaying in Canada), George Rowe (health not the best), and Ernie Barrett, Dave Herbert, and Paddy Wilkinson (work involvement). Ken Springbett was absent due to failing health and wishes to be remembered to all of his old friends and colleagues.

President Fred Reeve welcomed those present and arranged for a scrutineer and election returning officer to be temporarily appointed, whilst the Committee stood down, but was unanimously re-elected for a new term with Fred Reeve, President and Harry Stone back in his usual saddle of Secretary/Treasurer.

Minutes of the previous meeting were included in the last issue of NEWSLETTER, and were taken as read and accepted.

Treasurer's report for the past period 1993/94 shows a balance of \$47.51 in the bank account. A subscription of \$5.00 was received from F. Reeve, H. Stone, G. Cox and S. Pfeiffer. This was ruled as the nominal annual attendance fee for attending members at future meetings in order to defray refreshments and victualling costs. A box of chocolates was purchased from the resultant \$20.00 subscriptions received, and was presented to Linda Lena in appreciation of her catering and venue efforts. Our total credit now stands at \$55.61.

General Business discussed, concerning the date and venue for our next Christmas do, and it was decided that the same venue (booked in advance) and the time and date of 12 noon on 24th November, 1994 be recorded for our Christmas meeting. Gary Kelly indicated that he may not be stationed in Adelaide by this time and we will certainly miss his cheerful presence and efforts on our behalf. Many thanks, Gary and the best of everything for the future.

END OF REPORT

Harry, my old son, I thank you for the postscript at the end of your report. The identification of the object, and its dressage left at the bus stop, and subsequently stolen by the English matelot from the front of the 47 York Street premises will be relayed to

Brian Wood and Lyle Gowanloch. In fact, if I had not been alerted by the words END OF REPORT in your letter, it could very well have appeared in print, much to the amusement of those who knew about the incident and the embarrassment of the editor.

Bless you, Harry, and regards to Kathy. Why is it that every time I see a bit of brown paper it reminds me of you?

SYDNEY/EMDEN BATTLE

By Gordon Cupit

As advised in the last Newsletter, the 9 November this year 1994 is the 80th Anniversary of Australia's first Naval Battle, between the cruiser "HMAS Sydney" and the German light cruiser raider "Emden".

Few of the present generation have knowledge of this action, and many of the oldies know of it, but are not aware that it was fought off Cocos or the role of the cocos Cable Station. Delving into the O.T.C. Archives and with information supplied by the HMAS Sydney Naval Museum, Snapper Island . Sydney Harbour, I have been able to prepare the following story. Much of the information found has been duplicated, a number of articles and some stories are inconsistent.

IMPORTANCE OF THE CABLE SERVICE

In 1914, at the outbreak of World War I, wireless was in its infancy, and International Communications relied on the cable service. Great Britain owned most of the world's cable links. The US also owned a number of cables, and had endeavoured to obtain permission to land a cable into Germany, but this was initially opposed by the German Cable Company. This was finally granted, but permission came too late, as the British Fleet at the time was operating in the Bight of Heligoland, had already cut five German submarine cables running from Borkum to Brest, Vigo, Tenerife, and New York. No fresh cables were permitted. As all the German oceanic cables passed under the English Channel, it was easy to cut them, and impossible for the enemy to repair or replace them due to the dominance and power of the British Navy. The cutting of six other cables between Germany and Great Britain was still easier, by terminating at the English end. Germany did have wireless links but these were only short range, easy to jam, and not secret secure. Not only was Germany isolated from its colonies, it had no communication or control of its Navy or Merchant ships in remote parts of the world. Later in the war, Germany made good use of numerous neutral countries to send coded messages over the British cable system. British intelligence and censorship countered this practise to a great extent.

Fortunately, just prior to the war, the British Cable Company, realised the strategic importance of their relay stations. On 31 July 1914, a company message from London to Manager Cocos advised that the Emden had sailed from her home port of Tsing Tau, China, on what was probably a raiding mission. The station was given the following orders:-

1. No member of the staff is allowed to leave or be absent from Direction Island at any time.
2. A 24 hour "ship radio watch" to be commenced - ship watching duties to be from the rooftop above the office.

(The 1¹/₂ kw rotary spark transmitter then in regular use was a mess chore and operated by an appointed member of the staff who was called a "wireless jaga". It was his duty to keep in touch with the P&O, and Orient passenger ships passing near Cocos, with a view to them calling and dropping a barrel of goodies. When war was declared he merely did a few hours listening for any ship's signals as a matter of interest.)

3. Tanks which are used to catch rainwater from the roof to be disconnected in such a way that, from a casual viewpoint, they are still in use; meanwhile the tanks are to be emptied, cleaned and dried, and spare gear placed inside them for immediate use if required.
4. Each member of the staff is to maintain 2 x 12 volt batteries in his bedroom cupboard.
5. Drinking water - on account of low monthly rainfall, each member of staff and servants is required to maintain 2 kerosene tins of desalinated water for drinking.
6. A dummy shore-end cable was to be laid. This information was kept from non-Australian staff.

These precautions paid off in the re-establishment of contact after the raid.

When World War I erupted on 5 August 1914. Admiral Von Spee, commander of the German China Squadron, based on Tsingtau, China, decided to take his squadron back to Germany. He did however, have an appreciation of the importance of the British cable relay stations and ordered the light cruiser "Nurnberg" to attack the cable station at Fanning Island, in the Gilbert & Ellice Group of the Pacific; and the light cruiser "Emden" to undertake the task of raiding commerce shipping and the destruction of cable stations in the Indian Ocean.

The "Nurnberg" arrived at Fanning Island on 7 September 1914 flying a French flag. They sent a landing party to the Island which destroyed the equipment with axes, and also destroyed the power plant and ice making equipment. Luckily some vital equipment was left untouched, although they did find the buried equipment, the position of which was found in some private papers. Before sailing away, the "Nurnberg" grappled for the cables 2 miles from shore and cut them. They then towed the ends some distance from one another.

The station staff were able to gather together enough equipment to make contact if they could repair the cut cable. The Station handyman, Hughie Greig, a part Islander and now a legend, began diving. Although he had no cable experience, he managed to locate the ends of the cable and tied buoyed ropes around them. They were pulled up, but the weight of the cable prevented them being connected. They were then joined by a thin copper wire and contact with Australia made and request made for a cable ship to effect a repair.

Meanwhile in the Indian Ocean, the "Emden" a light cruiser of 3650 tons set about her task. Commanded by Captain Karl von Muller, the "Emden" employed a simple disguise to get into close range with her victims. German ships were distinguished by three funnels, whilst British cruisers at the time ordinarily had four. Muller simply added a fake smokestack made of timber/canvas. For armament she mounted 10 rapid-fire 4.1 inch guns, and with a 25 knot top speed could overtake merchantmen and out race pursuit.

The Emden's career as a lone marauder began on 10 September 1914 in the shipping lanes between India and Ceylon. In the first week Muller boarded and scuttled his first ship a 3,400 ton freighter followed by another five British ships. That month his tally was 11 vessels totalling 50,000 tons.

On 22 September he took his ship into Madras with the sole purpose of destroying the cable station. Before the British could man their shore defences, he had shelled the city

hitting two huge tanks at the oil depot with minor damage to the cable station. The following month he entered a harbour in Penang and sunk a Russian cruiser, then a French destroyer he encountered outside the harbour.

Von Muller's next mission was to cripple the cable relay station on Cocos Island, but the time taken to attack Madras, Penang and shipping proved to be his downfall.

Simultaneously, a convoy of 38 ships carrying the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Division of the 1st AIF, and a NZ Division, escorted by the light cruisers HMAS Melbourne, HMAS Sydney, HMS Minotaur, and a Japanese ship IJS Ibuki, had left Albany in West Australia and proceeded out of the Southern Ocean, into the Indian Ocean using an indirect route which passed close to Cocos Island. It became clear that Emden knew of this convoy and planned to destroy Cocos and then attack the convoy.

As the Emden came closer to Cocos, the radio operators on the Island were kept busy intercepting morse and getting down all they could. The information they passed on by cable, indicated to the War Office that Emden was obtaining all her information from an interned ship in a Javanese port. The British Government took prompt action. They told the Dutch Government to investigate and dismantle that ship's radio at once - or else. This was done, and Emden's conversation practically stopped, but it was evident that she knew enough and that Cocos was next.

Captain Von Muller had been monitoring the signals passed between the ships in the convoy and when the Emden reached Cocos on the morning of the 9th November he estimated (by the strength of the radio signals) that the convoy was approximately 250 miles from Cocos. The convoy had been transmitting at reduced strength to keep secrecy, and in fact the convoy which had been taking an indirect route was only approx 60 miles away. Even though he picked up the S.O.S from Cocos he thought he had plenty of time to destroy the station and get away.

At about 6am on the 9 November, Cresswell Hall, the radio operator coming off duty from the night radio watch, met a Chinese servant, who said he had seen a ship lying off the entrance to the lagoon. Cresswell climbed on the station roof to see a four funnelled warship which was not flying a flag. At first, he thought it was the HMS "Minotaur" from the convoy, but the station doctor, now also on the roof, was convinced that it did not look right. This was confirmed when one of the funnels wobbled slightly, it had to be a dummy.

Cresswell immediately returned to the radio room and sent a message over the radio "SOS strange ship in entrance" I. this message was soon changed to "SOS Emden here". At about the same time, Von Muller was despatching a landing party in a steam pinnace towing a longboat. They contained 49 heavily armed marines. Accordingly, a message was then passed over the cable to Singapore that the Emden was at Cocos landing an armed party.

About 10 minutes before Cocos sent out their SOS, radio operators on the transports and escorts intercepted a message in an unknown code.

On receipt of the SOS, HMAS Melbourne (Captain Silver) leading the convoy increased speed and veered westwards. Captain Silver realising his responsibility as convoy commodore brought HMAS Melbourne back on station, and signalled HMAS Sydney (Captain Glossop) to proceed at full speed to Cocos. HMAS Sydney was of 5400 tons, with 8 6-inch guns, and a top speed of 25 knots.

Making 20 knots SYDNEY sighted Cocos and EMDEN simultaneously, at this stage Captain Glossop was unaware whether it was KONIGSBERG or EMDEN (KONIGSBERG a ship of the same class as EMDEN, later destroyed in the Rufiji Delta, was also fading in the Indian Ocean), SYDNEY, however, had more power than the German ships. At first Captain Muller thought SYDNEY was his collier .S.S BURESK, but when his lookouts reported a four-funnelled ship, he knew she was a British cruiser possibly HMS NEWCASTLE or a vessel of similar class, a class nearer Emden's class and age. Without waiting to take off his landing party, Von Muller steamed out to gain sea-room, and his fate, with both ships crews closed up and cleared for action.

In the meantime, the landing party on arrival on the Island, herded the station staff into a group and took a roll call, and control. The station staff consisted of 29 Britons who had a few 12 bore shotguns and small arms, who knew they had no chance against the rifles and machine guns of the landing party. The destruction of the station equipment and battery room then proceeded followed by the wireless mast. Three cables were cut, including the dummy cable, but the cable running to Singapore via Java was missed. Other sections of the station were being examined for destruction when suddenly the EMDEN's siren indicated an immediate return. The SYDNEY had been sighted and the EMDEN was forced to move into action while the landing party were on the way out to join her, but too late. The landing party then returned to the Island, where with station staff they watched the early stages of the battle.

The battle commenced at 9:40am, with SYDNEY closing her opponent at her full speed of 25 knots through a calm sea toward the just visible EMDEN, eight miles away. As the ships closed to approximately six miles EMDEN opened fire. The German guns had the exceptionally high elevation of thirty degrees, the first salvo fell very close along a rather extended line, every shell falling within 150 yards of SYDNEY. The next was closer still and for ten minutes Glossop intent on closing with his target took SYDNEY through intense and rapid salvos, it was during these ten minutes that SYDNEY sustained her only casualties and damage.

Two shells from a tight salvo hit the after control platform and wounded all on duty there, almost simultaneously a shell hit the range-finder on the upper-fore bridge wrecking the instrument and killing the operator. Had it burst it most likely would have killed Captain Glossop, fortunately it passed through the screen and over the side into the sea without exploding.

Other projectiles bursting inboard killed and wounded some members of the disengaged gun's crews and set fire to a number of ready-use cordite charges, these were smartly thrown overboard and the fire soon extinguished. A shell which pierced the F'castle exploded on the boys' mess deck causing considerable damage, but no injury to personnel.

Captain Glossop had intended to engage EMDEN at a short range but EMDEN opening fire at 10,500 yards, and extremely accurate and damaging fire at that, forced Glossop to open fire much sooner than he had intended, consequently the first salvos were not very effective, the first a long way over, the second fell short, and the third scored only two hits which went unnoticed at the time.

Captain Muller, knowing his only chance of victory was in getting in as many damaging salvos as possible before EMDEN was battered into submission. The German gun crews performed magnificently, firing a salvo every six seconds, thus in the early stages of the engagement having three shells in the air at a time. SYDNEY then veered slightly to port under a smoke screen, to make repairs and to continue the action at a greater

range. EMDEN falling behind, altered course to starboard in an endeavour to pass across SYDNEY's stern and rake her for and aft. SYDNEY countered this and from then on took full advantage of her superior speed and strength, her gunners settling down to accurate firing despite the constantly changes of rate and speed, her salvoes rained down on EMDEN, smashed wireless equipment, wrecked the steering gear, carried away both range finders and tore away the voice pipes between the bridge and guns.

Next the forward funnel was shorn off and went over the side, followed by the foremast and with it the primary control station, this also completely wrecked the fore bridge, then a shell entered the after magazine causing it to catch fire. The magazine was flooded to prevent it from exploding.

There was considerable smoke from both ships shrouding the area, this pall making visibility very difficult. SYDNEY's firing was a little ragged with both range finders out of action. The gunnery officer ordered independent firing, as it was impossible to bring a broadside to bear.

EMDEN now turned on a course nearly parallel with SYDNEY, but now her firing was sporadic and ineffective, so Captain Glossop closed the range.

EMDEN altered to starboard, intent on continuing the action despite the fact that no shot of hers had reached its mark since the first fifteen minutes of the action, the second funnel had gone and the engine-room was on fire, half the crew were disabled, the gunnery officer with only a few scratch gunners were intermittently firing two guns.

The third funnel went and EMDEN was shrouded with smoke and flames, EMDEN's plight was hopeless.

Finally a magazine blew up blasting a number of crewmen into the sea, and the ship began to sink. Rather than endanger the members of his crew still alive, and particularly the 20 working below decks, Von Muller beach the EMDEN on the reef of North Keeling Island. SYDNEY fired two more salvoes into EMDEN to ensure her destruction. This was at 11.15 am. Of the 325 men on board EMDEN, 141 were killed.

SYDNEY now steamed off to account for EMDEN's collier the S.S. BURESK. Overhauling the collier shortly after noon, a shot was fired across her bows and BURESK hove to. An armed cutter was lowered and pulled toward her, but the German crew had opened the Kingston valves and abandoned ship. As she was settling rapidly SYDNEY fired four shells into her and leaving the boats steamed back to North Keeling, arriving at 4 00 pm. to find EMDEN still had her ensign flying.

SYDNEY made a signal in international code "Will you surrender" EMDEN replied in morse "No signal books". Further requests in morse brought no reply. As long as her ensign flew EMDEN continued a defiant enemy. Despite her guns being destroyed or unmounted she still had torpedoes and might be capable of discharging one, and would certainly be able to resist with small arms fire any boat sent to board her.

Captain Glossop's duty was perfectly clear, if Captain Von Muller refused to surrender force would have to be applied to compel him to surrender. SYDNEY now closed to within two miles of EMDEN, laid her guns on the mainmast on which the ensign was flying and fired two salvoes. At once, a figure was seen climbing the mast, the flag was removed and white sheet was shown from the quarterdeck.

SYDNEY now steamed back and picked up her boats and BURESK's crew. Captain Glossop was still not clear as to the situation in the area, but he did know that the landing party was on the Island, but he was not sure that EMDEN was not in consort with a sister raider KONIGSBERG, and if that was so the convey was still in danger of attack. He sent one of BURESK's boats with a message that he would be back in the morning.

Meanwhile on Direction Island (where the cable station was situated - The Clunies-Ross estate being on Home Island), the landing party again disembarked on the jetty, set up their machine guns along the path to the station, and some climbed up on the roof to watch the battle, with the station staff.

Later the officer in charge of the landing party, Lieut. Von Mucke, informed the Manager of the station, that if EMDEN did not return by evening, he would commandeer the schooner lying out in the lagoon. If the SYDNEY came back they would fight to the death.

The schooner named "Ayesha" was a wooden three-masted schooner of 123 tons with square topsail yards on the fore. It was built in 1907 at Plymouth and bought in England by Clunies Ross. It was sailed to Cocos in four months, during which time it was damaged by storms, with a partial dismasting off the South African Coast. She was used for taking cargoes of copra to Batavia, and returning with rice and other stores, approximately four times per year.

When Von Mucke announced his intention of leaving the Island in AYESHA, officials at the cable station tried to dissuade him by stating that she was old and rotten. However, he was determined and in the afternoon he went aboard, sent the Master (Matey Blank) and crew ashore. The cable staff helped him provision the vessel with one half of the station's food stores, together with 150 gallons of fresh water. He then mounted his machine guns and ran up the German ensign on the masthead.

At sunset, with no sign of the return of the Emden, Von Mucke and his party gave three cheers to the cablemen, and under tow from the EMDEN's steam launch, set off on the perilous journey towards freedom.

In the night the cable staff found some forgotten oil-lamps and made sufficient light to clear the wreckage from one of the tables and to dig up some spare pieces of apparatus that had been buried in provision of the disaster that had occurred. With the temporary repairs Singapore was contacted.

Singapore had been anxiously waiting all day for some signal from Cocos. In the event that a feeble current may be coming over the line, the operator in Singapore rigged up one of the old mirror galvano-meters devised by Lord Kelvin in the early days. It was on this instrument that the report came.

In the morning, more elaborate instruments were dug from their hiding places and normal communication established with Singapore. A short time later, more alarm and panic, a naval ship was approaching the Island, and the Chinese servants took to the bush. It was soon seen as the SYDNEY seeking the landing party.

At this stage, Captain Glossop felt free to attend to the needs of EMDEN. He borrowed Dr Ollerhead and his two assistants from the cable station's staff and steamed back to North Keeling, where the long delay had resulted in appalling conditions. The EMDEN was riddled with gaping holes, gutted by fire, with dead and mutilated crewmen scattered over the splintered decks. Little had been done for the wounded as the sick bay was

burnt, the medical stores destroyed and the assistant surgeon dead. Dr Luther, the surgeon and some of the men did the best they could with improvised dressings and spun yarn tourniquets. But by the time SYDNEY arrived Dr Luther was suffering from nervous exhaustion.

Eighty severely wounded were embarked on SYDNEY, an operation which took five hours as a heavy sea was beating on the reef. SYDNEY was now extremely crowded, having 110 prisoners and 20 Chinese from BURESK, as well as EMDEN's crew and wounded aboard.

SYDNEY's two medical officers Lieuts. Darby and Todd on the Tuesday and Wednesday assisted by Dr Ollerhead worked continuously for forty hours. Dr Luther who had been incapacitated for many hours took over as anaesthetist when Dr Ollerhead disembarked at Direction Island. With the exception of two serious operations EMDEN's wounded were given precedence over SYDNEY's.

On the Thursday, the auxiliary cruiser Empress of Russia relieved SYDNEY of all prisoners capable of being removed and SYDNEY proceeded to Colombo to rejoin the convoy. Von Muller and his crew were interned at Colombo for the duration.

The Ayesha was towed out of the lagoon by the German steam pinnace, with the two cutters in tow. Lieut Mucke, who now called himself Captain, climbed the foremast of Ayesha, and directed the helmsman of the pinnace through the reef. Out in the open sea, sails were set and the pinnace also taken in tow. Before long it was decided that the pinnace was too heavy and she was cast adrift.

The first storm the Ayesha encountered, showed that the hull was pulpy and leaking. One of the cutters bumped into the stern and put a hole above the waterline. The 2nd cutter broke adrift carrying off a large piece of rotten bulwark. The sails were found to be old and rotten, and were torn by the storm. To add to these problems, they carried no charts and were navigating by means of an atlas.

After travelling some 800 miles they came in sight of the coast of Sumatra, where they were approached by the Dutch destroyer 'Lynx'. Only Von Mucke and one crew member were on deck and they were not challenged, but followed into Pandang Harbour. Here the Dutch intended to intern Ayesha, but Von Mucke convinced the authorities that she was a German Naval vessel. After taking on water, supplies and charts, they were allowed to sail out of Pandang, on a westward course.

Three weeks later, they were challenged by a British auxiliary cruiser, but by flying spurious signals were left alone as lunatics.

On the 14th December, they met up with the German merchantman, 'Choising', but the seas were too rough for the Ayesha crew to be taken aboard. They were taken in tow to the lee of an island, where the transfer took place. Arms and provisions, together with the ships figurehead and wheel were also taken aboard Choising. The Ayesha was then sunk.

On the agreement of the Captain of Choising, Von Mucke took over command and sailed west toward Arabia. The name of the Choising was changed to Shenir Genoa and masqueraded as an Italian vessel. The voyage to Arabian waters took 22 days and was without incident.

On reaching shores near Hodeida, French warships were found to be patrolling the harbour entrance. Von Mucke decided to land with the view of reaching Germany overland. He instructed the Captain of Choising to sail for Africa, and then sailed with his landing party in 4 lifeboats rigged with sails. The timbers of the boats were shrunk and leaked badly. On reaching shore they were menaced by Bedouins, but by means of gestures were accepted as friends and were escorted to Hodeida which was controlled by Turks. Here the Turks treated them as heroes and VIPs, and set up feasts in their honour.

An overland journey was planned, and they left Hodeida riding horses and mules, accompanied by some Turkish police. Progress was slow as sailors had trouble learning to ride. On second day out, saw bands of robbers, who were not prepared to attack such a large armed party. On the third day out left the desert and moved into the mountains, where trails steep and dangerous, and came to Henakha. Here again treated as VIPs. Next stop was Sana, Capital of Yemen. Again given VIP treatment, but due to a very bad climate and after the hard trip, 80% were down with fever and stomach problems due to water.

In the two weeks in Sana it became apparent to Von Mucke that the overland trek would be very difficult, due to poor terrain, bad climate, sick men and unfriendly Bedouin tribes. He decided to abandon his plans, return to Hodeida and try to get home by sea.

At Hodeida, he purchased two small Arabian sailing boats called Zambuks. They were 30 ft long by 12 ft wide. Because of spies, he let it be known that he would depart from Isa Bay, but planned to leave from the opposite direction. A British gunboat went to Isa Bay. One Zambuk he made his flagship and hoisted the German war flag the other contained his sick men, who were suffering from malaria, dysentery and typhus. He sailed along the Arabian shore for 350 miles, close in where no ocean going ship could sail. He carried German speaking Arabs to translate and Zambuk crews to fool any enemy encountered. A total of 35 men in each Zambuk in boats infested with lice, bed bugs, fleas and cockroaches.

A week later they were in waters unknown to the Zambuck crew and the second boat holed on a reef. All were saved and taken aboard the flagship. Goods and personal gear had to be jettisoned to allow the extra men to be taken aboard. They finally arrived at Kurfuda, where Von Mucke met a Turkish travelling official and his wife. The official organised the charter of a large Zambuk. The old boat was abandoned and the entire landing party, official and wife boarded the new boat.

All went well as far as El Lith, but here they found out it was no longer possible by sea as all ports blockaded and all ships including Zambucks were being inspected. His only recourse was to return to overland travel, possibly by camel caravan. It was now 4 months and 17 days since leaving Cocos, and the Emden's exploits now world wide news. Also spies had advised the British that a German war party was lurking in the vicinity of Hodeida.

Von Mucke purchased 90 camels and personally learnt how to handle them. Then purchased straw mats, food and water for the journey. Because of previous experience,

all water was boiled. Travelled by night and 4 days out camped at a well, where the Sheikh and police left them, and 18 Turkish police from Jidda joined them.

2 nights later they were ambushed by approximately 40 Bedouin bandits firing from the dunes on each side. They were held back by machine gun fire. When dawn broke the numbers of bandits had increased to about 300. Most of the police had disappeared and the majority of the camel drivers were dead or wounded in the legs and buttocks. The drivers had taken shelter behind the camels and the bandits had fired beneath the camels at the drivers legs. One German was wounded. Due to machine gun fire the bandits withdrew some distance leaving fifteen of their numbers dead. A modern British rifle was found. One third of the camels were dead or wounded.

The wounded were strapped to camels and the caravan moved from the normal caravan route and back towards the Red Sea. All the way they were fired on intermittently and had not gone very far, when they became surrounded. An officer and sailor were killed and Von Mucke realised that this was not a robber band but an organised force. He decided to stop, dig in and fortify, hoping for a relieving Turkish force. Camels, saddles, stores etc were piled up to make a rampart, and the 4 machine guns set up.

During a lull in the fighting, under a flag of truce, an Arab policeman parleyed with the attackers. The Bedouins demanded the Germans to surrender their camels, food and water, and 11,000 gold Pounds. Von Mucke was certain they would be massacred if weapons given up, refused and firing began again.

At nightfall, Von Mucke sent one of his Arab interpreters to Jidda for help. At dawn the Bedouins again attacked but this repelled with the machine guns. The siege lasted for 3 days and by this time the Bedouins had been reinforced making their numbers approx 800. They then made a further peace demand for 22,000 Pounds and Von Mucke could keep his arms, ammo and stores. This he rejected and heavy firing again started.

Suddenly the firing stopped and the Arabs disappeared. Von Mucke suspected a trap, but about an hour later 2 men on camels arrived under a white flag, and advised that the Emir of Mecca was sending help. A short time later a troop of seventy camel born soldiers led by Prince Abdullah arrived. Late in the afternoon, they moved on, travelled all night and arrived at Jidda the next morning.

At Jidda, the wounded were placed in hospital and the others rested. Von Mucke decided then to abandon overland camel travel but misled everyone into thinking that he was organising another caravan. In the meantime he obtained another Zambuck and studied the movement of the blockading British warships.

On the night of the 8th April, after being advised all wounded fit to travel, he loaded the Zambuck and sailed out of Jidda harbour. By day break with favourable winds they were well away from the coast of Jidda, hugging the coast and creeping behind reefs. They stopped frequently at small towns to obtain information on movement of British ships and to buy provisions. Travelled by day and anchored at night.

At the next large port. Sherm Rabigh, they changed to a bigger Zambuck and left again after a few days rest. From then on the journey was uneventful and on April 28th reached Sherm Munnaiburra, a tiny bay south of Elwegh, where they intended to travel by camel to the railroad at El Ala.

On the 2nd of May, in the company of the Sheikh of El Wegh, started their trek through the desert to the mountains, where they travelled by day and slept at night. Remembering

the previous siege, they dug trenches. They finally reached El Ala without further incident. Here they found they were expected and a special train was waiting, together with a German news correspondent and several Turkish officials who had come from Damascus, a 2 day journey.

The train immediately left for Constantinople, via Damascus and Aleppo, where new naval uniforms and many gifts were waiting. Also a message from the Kaiser informing the award of the Iron Cross First Class to Von Mucke, plus the Saxon Johanniter Order and the Bavarian Cross. The journey to Constantinople took 17 days, due to the many stops for parades and ceremonies. At Damascus they changed to a German train with sleepers, sheets and First Class travel. At Constantinople the official mail from Germany was waiting, which announced that each member of the landing party had been awarded the Iron Cross.

They finally arrived back in Germany in June 1915. The journey from Constantinople was uneventful after their amazing adventures. At home they were received as heroes and once again feted wherever they met. They were eventually posted to other naval duties.

COCOS - World War II

When the Japanese entered World War II, Cocos again became a target, but with the advent of wireless it did not have such an important role as was the case in W.W.I.

One night a Japanese warship shelled the station which did some damage, but did not send a landing party to the island. Also planes dropped bombs and strafed the island on regular occasions but with few casualties. The Station Manager sent a dummy message to London that considerable damage had been done to the station and that it was to be abandoned.

From then on, the bombing ceased but Jap planes appeared regularly about twice per week to inspect the Island. They always appeared between 9 00 am. and 11 00 am. When a plane appeared the small British garrison did not fire on them and all persons on the island were instructed to stay in their houses or shelter under trees. The diesel motors were stopped to prevent pilots from seeing the exhaust and washing was not put out on the lines until after 11 00 am. Quite often the planes flew very low and those under the trees could see the pilots quite plainly.

NOTES AND INTERESTING INFORMATION

Material for the above narrative was obtained from the following sources:-

Telstra - OTC Archives. (Numerous documents & books)

Navy League HMAS Sydney Museum - Snapper Island.
(Courtesy Mr. W Mierendorff)

AWA Radiogram (Staff Magazine)

The following stories have appeared in previous Newsletters:-

Details and History of 'Ayesha' - Oct 1980
Story by Emden survivor Hans Heinz Harms-Emden - Nov 1988
April 1989
Story by Sydney survivor Len Thorndike - Last Newsletter

The Story of the Sydney/Emden battle was the subject of an interview by me with Andrew Olle on his radio show on Station 2BL on Anzac morning. (Incidentally Andrew's father is John Olle, A Beam Telegraphist from 1928 to 1948 - John made a career in the permanent Army where he was a Major. Also, Armour 'Mac' McCollum was Andrew's grandfather. Mac worked during the whole of his career in the Coastal Radio Service.

A couple of different stories appeared in the material. One story stated that the 'Ayesha' captured a British steamer and sailed to Arabia as against the use of German ship S.S. Choising in this story.

HMAS Sydney served in the Royal Australian Navy from 1912 to 1929. At the end of her service she was sold to the Japanese and broken up alongside Snapper Island. The keel was floated to Cockatoo Dock for the final demolition.

All members of SYDNEY's crew and staff on Cocos Island at the time of the battle were presented with a silver medal, which was based from a Mexican silver dollar. One of these medals is on display at Snapper Island and another is held by Mrs. A Sommerville who resides in the Mowll Village. She is the daughter of Cresswell Hall the operator who transmitted the S.O.S.

The majority of the crew of 'Sydney' were trained on the training ship 'Tingara'. 'Tingara' was previously a prison hulk named 'Sobroan' and was used by the Navy as a training ship from 1912-1927. Later training of youths as potential Naval crews was carried out by the Navy League which started out in Drummoyne in 1927 but moved to Snapper Island in 1931. A number of the 'Tingara' old boys attended a ceremony on Cocos in 1960 to commemorate the battle. A plaque was laid on the Island by the W.A. Governor and named the 'Tingara plaque'. HMAS Diamantina called in to Direction Island for the ceremony.

Relics of the Sydney and Emden are located:-

Navy League HMAS Sydney Museum, Snapper Island, Sydney Harbour.

This museum contains an extensive range of relics and souvenirs from Sydney - 1000 items from other Naval ships - 600 crests and badges from Australian and British ships - Model of HMAS Sydney - Model of Emden - Top portion of SYDNEY's original foremast - (Snapper Island is in close proximity to Spectacle Island, Armament Depot, and visits have not been encouraged. This should change with the proposed move of the Armament facilities to Victoria.) Binnacle from the Emden

Bradley's Head

The tripod mast from Sydney is located on the foreshore. (This mast was not on the ship at the time of the battle.) Bradley's Head also features a tribute to all four Royal Australian Navy ships which proudly borne the name Sydney. The current Sydney is a guided missile frigate. (The tripod mast stood at Cockatoo Island for a few years until purchased by the RSL and by arrangement with Mosman Council was placed on Bradley's Head, in 1933.

Milsons Point

Bow of Sydney incorporated in harbour seawall.

Hyde Park

Gun from Emden situated in Whitlam Square on corner of Oxford and College Streets.

Yagoona Bowling Club

A bell made from a piece of tube from Emden. However date of battle engraved as 1915.

OTC Museum, Oxford St Paddington

A Malay kris made from steel from Emden. (Donated by Brax Horrocks who served on Cocos Island in World War II.)

Town Beach Port Macquarie

UNITED SERVICES CLUB, Watts Street, Newcastle. Clock from SYDNEY

The salvaged bow plaque of the Emden was returned to Germany by Australia as a gesture of good will in 1933. Reichpresident Paul von Hindenburg Personally accepted the name plate of the ship that the old Kaiser had at one time described as "filling all German hearts with pride".

In the 1920s a film was shown at the Prince Edward Theatre titled "the Exploits of the Emden". When I was a young boy my mother took me to see this film, and then we went down to the harbour to see the 'Sydney'. This film could be in the Australian Film Archives.

In 1976 Cocos Island struck three postage stamps, one each depicting 'Sydney', 'Emden' and 'Ayesha'.

In 1989, on the 75th Anniversary of the Battle, another four stamps were struck, each depicting, the SYDNEY, Naval Crest & SYDNEY, EMDEN's steam launch, and EMDEN.

Because of its successful cruise in the Indian Ocean in the early part of World War I, Kaider Wilhelm II, by special act of Cabinet granted permission to the surviving members of the crew to adopt as their surname - Emden. In 1931, the German Government repassed this Act to propagate the name through the ages. (A recent report in the Press stated that an Italian court formally charged a former German Army Officer, Wolfgang Lehnigk-Emden with ordering a massacre of Italian civilians during World War II.)

During the sinking of 11 ships by Emden not one life was lost. Captain Muller always made certain that the merchant crews were safely away in lifeboats or had been transferred to the Emden before sending their ships to the bottom. Nicknamed the 'Gentlemen Captain' by his early victims, he was also known to be devious. Using other ships' call signs, a signal would be sent out saying 'Understand Emden is in these waters - suggest meet at dawn and proceed to Singapore for safety'. On one occasion, six ships turned up; five were sunk after the entire crews had first transferred to the sixth ship. They were then told to 'be good boys, and proceed to Singapore'.

The Sydney/Emden battle is the only known duel between light cruisers.

It has to be remembered that the landing party were sailors. They were not trained in desert warfare in blistering heat over very difficult sandy terrain and one can only marvel at their incredible powers to endurance and the high standard of morale which enabled them to fight their way back to their homeland.

Cocos was born as a cable station when 40 acres of land on Direction Island was leased from George Clunies-Ross. On 6 August 1901 cable staff and supplies arrived on Direction Island from Singapore on the vessel Giang Ann. For the first two years the staff and telegraph station were housed in temporary buildings. The cable was landed on 3 October 1901 and opened for traffic the next day. A cable connecting Cocos to Perth opened on 1 November the same year, and to Java in 1908.

A story in Cable & Wireless magazine Mercury dated 1982 quoted "In the long mess were photographs of the landing party approaching the jetty, the smashed-up office and one of the staff and Germans sitting on the ridge of the long mess roof watching the battle. Of

this last photograph, one noted that the staff and Germans all had a glass in their hands and a mess boy in attendance".

It was quite amazing that Australia was able to recruit three Divisions and New Zealand one Division and have them trained and ready for embarkation on the convoy within three months of the Declaration of War. Had the convoy been damaged by Emden, Gallipoli and history may have been a different story.

There is a full album of photos in the OTC Archives of the damage done to Fanning Island by the 'Nurnberg'.

Cable Staff serving at Cocos Island at the time of the battle were:-

Superintendent	D.A. Farrant
Supervisors	A.E. Cherry, R.A. Gowen, C.M. Preshaw, C.E. Shields, R.J. Saunders, H.S. Rowley, G.H. Lahauze.
Operators	R. Cardwell, A.M. Griffin, A.R. Senthall, M.M. Stewart, E.J. Munro, T.A. Redfern, J.S. Triggs, K.M. Campbell, A.D. Peskett, F.P. Poltock, R.H. Green, P. Croft, C. Hall, J.S. Radford, F.B. Essington, A.W. Peake, E.G. Beauchamp, C.W. Burnett, A.E. Gollhard.
Engineer	J.V. King

Albyn Gregory was serving on the Island, but went on leave to Singapore on 2nd November, 2 days before the battle, and returned to Cocos in December 1914.

Greg died in 1985, aged 95. The only other member of the staff that I knew was Spencer Rowley, who died in 1975, aged 90. Both Greg and Spencer were members of the NSW Veterans Association.

Following the broadcast on 2BL, Mrs Audrey Sommerville, who resides in the Mowll Village at Castle Hill, contacted me and advised that her father, Cresswell Hall, was on station staff at the time. She was delighted to hear the broadcast and to know that we were interested. Audrey has given me a copy of her fathers diary of the action. (This will most likely appear in the next Newsletter), a copy of a certificate of appreciation, and a copy of the Army magazine Reveille, which contained a story of the battle written by a member of the Burwood RSL.

The Certificate of Appreciation was issued as a joint venture by the Secretary of State and the Committee of Lloyd's. One can see why it was issued considering EMDEN sunk 30 merchant ships and at the time of the Cocos battle 78 ships of combined allied navies were looking for her, and not available for other duties.

The Certificate is headed by a photo of the station, a drawing of SYDNEY, a drawing of EMDEN, and lists the names of the staff.

The story in Reveille mentions the Veterans and the Settlement to Satellite Exhibition.

Audrey also has in her possession a medal issued to all the staff and crew of Sydney, a Malayan kris in a wooden holster (the kris made from the steel of Emden by one of the

Malay staff), and three photograph albums, two of the albums contain photos of the battle and damage to the station. The third album was taken in 1919.

The Editor
O.T.V.A Newsletter
C/o Telstra O.T.C. Australia
GPO Box 7000
SYDNEY NSW 2001

9 Blake Court
Padbury
Western Australia 6025

30 May, 1994

Dear Jim,

Thank you for your letter of 23 May giving permission to reproduce material from the O.T.V.A NEWSLETTER.

I am enclosing a brief account of the Cable and Wireless Ltd Australasian Classes of '44 50th Anniversary Reunion held in New Zealand in April which may be of interest to members of O.T.V.A.

Best Wishes,

J.P. Bairstow
Member Australia Class '44

The Cable and Wireless Ltd Australasian Operator Classes of '44 which trained at Adelaide S.A. and Auckland N.Z. held their 50th Anniversary Reunion at Paihia, Bay of Islands, on the East coast of the North Island of New Zealand in April.

The party gathered at the Autolodge Motel during the afternoon of the 14th where by arrangement, they had been accommodated together on the ground floor of one wing and gab fest began immediately.

Unfortunately, the planned cruise around the Bay of Islands on the 15th had to be cancelled due to inclement weather. Nevertheless, reminiscing continued apace, photograph albums were exchanged and stores told and embellished. During the evening, a buffet style dinner provided a wide selection of delicious NZ fare and ended with Toasts to The Queen and Absent Friends.

With the return of sunshine the next day, the "Cream Trip, " originally run to service farms around the Bay, was restored to the program enabling the party to board a ferry to enjoy the spectacular and ever changing seascapes of the Bay of Islands as the vessel sailed from island to island delivering stores, collecting produce and picking up and setting down passengers. All the time, participants sought to bridge the intervening years; many having parted in Colombo in 1945 when TELCOM teams left for the Malayan invasion beachhead, Singapore, Penang, Batavia (Jakarta), Surabaya, Bali and Hong Kong to restore telecommunications interrupted by the wartime Japanese occupation.

The morning of the 17th came all too soon and reluctantly the group dispersed; overseas visitors taking the opportunity to enjoy more of New Zealand's magnificent scenery and the hospitality of its friendly people before returning home.

Attending from.....

Canada	Basil and Cathie Chambers
Australia	Jim and Pat Bairstow, Roger and Nina Bardwell, Joyce Bell, John and Margaret Chancellor, Geoff and Jean Cox, John Coulson, Ian and Barbara Dawson, Heb Farrar, Bruce and Margaret Gall, Sydney and Joan Sherwood, Colin and Pat Stubbs
New Zealand	Ken and Joy Clark, Ray and Josephine Connolly, Denis and Maureen Erson, Dick and Sylvia Fray, Mike and Barbara Fulton, Graeme and Beverly Hawken, Kelvyn and Margaret Healy, Mack and Cathy MacDiarmid, Jack and Dorothy McKenzie, John and Gina Todd, John and Ethel Walker, Brian and Joan Wallace.

From Canada

Hal Le Quesne of the Canadian Quarter Century Club reports that a Christmas Stamp issued in Canada commemorating Christmas in Australia shows Santa riding on the back of a Kangaroo which has deer antlers. The following is recorded in a handout with the stamp "Australia's Santa Claus" has the best of both worlds; he arrives from the North Pole in December in his sled loaded with toys, and then gets to enjoy the heat of Australian Summer. His warm red suit doesn't seem to bother him. Santa and his reindeer have been known to cool off at a stream or under a eucalyptus tree with the Kangaroos, or to relax at a beach, where many Australians spend Christmas Day.


Father Christmas, as he is also known, has a big job to do in the vast outback, and because of the differences in climate and terrain his unique methods of travel include boat, plane, train and even his own feet like an outback traveller.

Mr G Cupit
President O.T.V.A
Telstra House
231 Elizabeth Street
SYDNEY NSW

 Dear Gordon,

Some members may be interested in the enclosed pages from the manuscript of my latest book which will be published shortly.

Endeavours will be made to find an Australian publisher, if not successful copies of the book may be obtained by writing to my Canadian publisher:

 Sono Niss Press,
1745 Blanshard Street
Victoria B.C.
Canada. V8W 2J3

Best wishes to all members.

Yours,

Bob Scott

Gentlemen on Imperial Service

A story of the Trans-Pacific Telecommunications Cable

Told in their own words by those who served
by R. Bruce Scott

Preface

This is the story of the Trans-Pacific Telecommunications cable, a link in a chain of submarine cables connecting Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Canada to the United Kingdom. Containing historical, technical and human interest material, it outlines the development of the system from simple manually operated instruments to modern technological improvements. It relates the experiences of members of the staff who served in isolated stations in the South Seas, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Canada. Their services are typical of those provided by other cablemen.

It covers the Pacific Cable Board era through subsequent administrations of Imperial and International Communications, Cable and Wireless Ltd, Australian Overseas Telecommunications Commission, Canadian Overseas Telecommunications Corporation and Teleglobe through World War I, the influenza epidemic of 1918 to modern times.

It also provides a behind the scenes view of what was involved in the transmission and reception of overseas messages, and of the lifestyle of that era.

Having spent my whole working life, 1920 - 1960, in the trans-Pacific Cable service, and as one of the few surviving members of the Pacific Cable Board, I feel that it is incumbent on me, in the latter years of my life, to write what I know, and have learned through research, about this important, strategic project - especially since its story has never been told before.

Born in Australia in 1905, R. Bruce Scott has lead a remarkable life of adventure, discovery and distinction. At thirteen he was forced to leave school and take work as an office boy and department store clerk (selling buttons), in order to contribute to the support of his widowed mother and the other members of his family. After two years of odd jobs which offered no challenge to him, an advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* caught his attention. "Wanted, boys fifteen years of age to learn submarine telegraphy and serve overseas." He applied at once to the Pacific Cable Board and was accepted.

For the next Forty years he remained in the service "and never regretted it".

Bruce Scott's personal achievements are almost legendary. He became an expert cable operator at various stations in the South Pacific and in 1930 was transferred to Bamfield on Vancouver Island where he remained until his retirement in 1960. A highly respected historian, Mr. Scott has written four books about the south west coast of the island: *Breakers Ahead*, *Barkley Sound*, *People of the South West Coast of Vancouver Island*

and *Bamfield Years*. His new book, *Gentlemen on Imperial Service*, tells the complete story of the trans-Pacific telecommunications cable - for the first time. This saga-like history is written with the author's characteristic integrity, restraint and humour. It brings to life not only a great twentieth century enterprise, but also the people who made it happen, the places where it happened and those vanished times it describes.

Continuing - Tribute to Ted Bishton

During the years 1928, 1929 and 1930, I was either working at Rabaul or Bita Paka which is about 30 miles from Rabaul. The social side of life during this period was good, but rather hectic. There was plenty of dances and balls. Flo Gilmore had the hotel at Wunawutung, which was about 10 miles by road from Rabaul on the north coast.

Nearly every week, there would be a dance at Wunawutung. One night, Len Coleman, who belonged to AWA, and I were going out to one of these dances. I was driving and thought I saw a bom bom (Coconut frond) lying across the road. I was just about to run over it when I suddenly stopped to discover it was a native who had been attacked by someone with an axe. His head was practically severed, but he was still alive. I asked Len to stay there while I went on to Wunawutung to get a doctor. I arrived back with a medical assistant but the native was dead. Len and I have spoken about this incident since and he told me he had never felt so much alone as he did on that night sitting alongside a decapitated native. He said he had visions of the murderers creeping up and giving him the same treatment as the native had received. It never dawned on me that he would feel that way. As far as we knew, the murderer or murderers were never apprehended nor were Len or myself ever questioned about the case.

There were two racecourses, one at Rabaul and one at Kokopo. The latter was on Kingaunan plantation which was owned by the Catholic mission. The mission allowed us to cut out several coconut trees to make a circular course and many a great day we had. I was the official starter at Kingaunan and on one occasion I had to start a race from the four furlong post. Owing to some misadventure someone had removed the four furlong post and as I and the assistant drove round to the starting point the horses were already waiting to start. We had no barriers and all races were started by the 'walk-up start' method. I got out of the car and lined up the starters and let them go. I got back into the car and as we passed the starting post I noticed it was marked 3 furlongs. I had started them from the 3 instead of the 4 furlong post. It was near the end of the day and everyone had been imbibing rather freely and no one seemed to have noticed the mistake, only the time-keeper told me they had broken the race record.

The missionaries were very keen on the races. They generally had a hundred or more horses running around the plantation and anyone could approach them for a horse to run in the races. Of course you had to more or less break it in and train it. We used to have 3 or 4 meetings at Kinagunan each year and the same in Rabaul. There was generally an extra meeting in Rabaul whenever a tourist ship or a navy ship arrived. On one occasion when the navy was in Rabaul, a race meeting was arranged and a special race for naval jockeys. seven horses started in this event, but only one finished, the other six lost their riders. The one that finished, after passing the post, took charge of his rider and careered back to the horse stalls and bucked the naval jockey off when it ran into it's stall. There was always a lot of excitement at these race meetings and a good time was had by all.

In 1931 I again went to Sydney on leave. It was always a thrill to get back home to see my family. From the time I was sixteen they had not seen too much of me, but I never failed to write home at least once a week. My mother kept all my letters and some time after she died, my sisters asked me what they should do with them and I told them to burn them. I have been sorry ever since as they would have been very handy in compiling this record.

Returning to Rabaul on the Burns Philp steamers was always a hectic trip. The bar would open about 6 am and most of the drinkers would be drinking gin slings and by the time the breakfast gong sounded at 8 am, quite a few of the imbibers just went back to bed. There was always a big game of poker going and generally a fancy dress ball the night before arriving in Rabaul. On this occasion I was dressed as a bride.

The ladies got me dressed and by the time the parade was finished I was feeling very sick. The liquor was flowing very freely and I had overindulged and was heaving my heart up over the railing of the ship, when one of the seamen sidled up to me and asked if he could do anything for me. I thanked him nicely, then beat a hasty retreat down to the safety of my cabin.

On my arrival in Rabaul I was sent out to Bitu Paka where time was fully occupied by work. There was always a few of us wireless chaps off duty during the weekend and on these occasions we went to Kokopo where there was a hotel, which at this time was run by Jack Gilmore or Syd Young. There was always a crowd there from Rabaul and the time was spent playing cards, tennis, billiards or swimming. After leaving the goldfields I went into partnership with Hall Best in a small plantation just out from Kavieng in New Ireland. It was about this time I received a letter from Hall Best telling me of a chap named Errol Flynn who had been a guest of Hall's for some weeks and had done him an injury. In his letter, Hall said that Flynn was on his way into Rabaul and asked me, when I met Flynn, to punch him on the nose for him. My first meeting with Flynn was at the Kokopo Hotel. Flynn and three others were playing poker and the stakes were rather high. There were a few of us looking on and an argument started between Flynn and Fred Dengate. Dengate was a well built fellow, over six feet tall and weighed about 16 stone. He jumped to his feet and made a swing at Flynn, who cleverly side stepped and then made a smashing right to Dengate's jaw, which dropped him like a stuck bullock. I straight away forgot Hall Best's request to punch Flynn on the nose.

Errol Flynn was very good company and was very popular around Kokopo. He excelled at tennis, swimming, running, fighting and any sports in which we indulged at Kokopo. He just seemed to have the edge on everyone else. Several planters invited him to stay at their plantations, then their trouble started trying to get rid of him. Eventually he wore out his welcome around Kokopo and Rabaul so he transferred himself over to the goldfields. I lost track of him then, but I heard he left a lot of people lamenting the fact that they ever loaned him money. Then he became famous as an actor in America, lots of people wrote him reminding him of the money they had loaned him. In most cases he would send them an autographed portrait of himself, but never any money.

About this time someone from Bitu Paka had to go to Aitape to relieve the wireless operator there, who was due to go on furlough. Jimmy Twycross said Michael O'Sullivan would have to go as he had never served on an out station and it was time he did. Poor old Sully came to me almost in tears and implored me to go to Aitape in his stead. Aitape was a very unhealthy place and very lonely. I had been there twice before and was not very keen to go, however it was only for 6 months or so, I told Twycross I would go in Sully's place. Ward Oakley was the District Officer at Aitape at this time and his wife, Gwen was the only white woman in the Aitape district. The Administration staff consisted of the D.O., a clerk and a Police Master. Wally Hook had a place a couple of miles out where he conducted a recruiting business with a chap names Gough. While I was there a recruiter names Exton was murdered while on a recruiting trip somewhere behind Wewak. Later Charlie Gough was also murdered in the same locality. Wally Hook had a chap from Annam whose wife was bathing in the Aitape River one day when she was attacked by a crocodile. Hearing her screams, her husband rushed into the water and dragged her ashore, she was badly mauled, but eventually recovered, though very much scarred.

One time, when I was going over to Wally's place, the small beach I had to pass over was covered with millions of small crabs. The natives on Silio, Tumlio and the other islands just off Aitape were very busy every night catching these crabs. I forget how long the

crabs were running, but it was for some nights. Wally Hook was a very fine chap, and I was very sorry to hear he had been murdered later by the natives.

I was relieved by Cyril Urquhart and returned to Bita Paka. Soon after returning from Aitape, I met my future wife, Irene (Babe) Maunsell of Queensland. We were married on 14th November, 1933, and lived in Rabaul. Our daughter Margaret was born on 21st August 1934 and most of our time was occupied looking after her. There were always plenty of balls and dances about this time, but we always made sure of having a good reliable baby sitter if we went to any of these functions. Paddy Dodd was generally the baby sitter and I'm sure Paddy wished there were more functions or that we attended more of them, because he thought the world of Margaret and baby sitting was more of a pleasure than a task.

We sailed from Rabaul for a holiday in Sydney the day Margaret was one year old. We left late in the afternoon and the sea was rather calm, but during the night a strong wind came up and by morning a rather high sea was running. Margaret was as bright as a button, but Rene, my wife was down to it as she was not a very good sailor. As I had to look after Margaret, I got her bottle ready and got her on my knee and started the feeding operation. She had not been on the bottle long before I noticed her turning a sickly grey, so I reached for a strawberry box and she retched into it. Poor kid, she was a very sick baby for a few hours, but then she was as bright as ever and crawling around the cabin floor. Poor mum was not so fortunate and was very sick for a few days. Fortunately we came direct to Sydney, which only took six days, otherwise I would have run out of nappies, for as fast as Margaret dirtied the nappies I threw them out the porthole.

Rene had never been to a Melbourne Cup, so we decided to attend the 1935 Cup. I could not have backed the winner because I can't remember which horse won it. On our arrival back in Sydney, we noticed Margaret had a lump on the side of her neck, which developed into the size of a pigeon's egg. We took her to several Macquarie Street specialists and eventually two of them decided to cut it out. The operation seemed a success, so we returned to Rabaul in June, 1936. After some months in Rabaul, Margaret's neck began to suppurate so Rene took her back to Sydney. The specialists fixed her neck all right, but she contracted pneumonia, so Rene brought her back to Rabaul as soon as possible. They arrived, I think on the Tuesday before the eruption, which occurred on Saturday, 29th May 1937. Margaret was very thin and sickly. Her little legs were like matchsticks, but we thought the warmer climate would do her good and there was no doubt she was getting stronger every day.

Then 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 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 5 am on Saturday 29th the tremors were so bad we thought the house was going to slip of it's 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 tables and everything in the house was shaking and rattling. I was on duty at the wireless station from 6 am 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 4 pm. 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 to pick him up. Al rushed into the barbers 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 north coast 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 4:45 pm 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 Bunney's 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 7 pm 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 lightning 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 daybreak 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 muck 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 and 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 12 to 20 feet deep in places, 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 Bunneys, 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 during the blackout. A most peculiar thing was that as soon as daylight came, the explosions and 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 blow out 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 mouthful - 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 Mordup 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 various 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 4 am Tuesday morning, then collapsed on the floor of the wireless cabin.

This was the first time I had closed my eyes since about 6 am 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 Bita Paka which is about 9 miles from Kokopo, so we were living there and used to go into Kokopo daily. I had 5 or 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 Bita Paka and I used to go out there for the 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 3/4 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 the 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 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 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 parts 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 Bita 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 of 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 every time it rained, the water came down from the surrounding hills like a wall of waters. 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 and 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 upon me to get a transfer, so I saw Jimmy Twycross and he transferred me to Kavieng in February, 1938. We left Rabaul on the Burns Philp vessel Montoro for Lae, where we stayed just long enough to discharge a few hundred tons of cargo. It was some years since I had seen Lae and I was surprised at the growth of the place. Our next port of call was Madang which had also grown a lot since I had last seen it. Madang is a very pretty place and, I think, at that time, the pick of the Territory.

We then went to Wewak which had not altered much since I had last seen it, then our next port was Kavieng, where we arrived safe and sound. Kavieng is the capital of New Ireland, situated on the north west tip and in my estimation, ranks next to Madang for beauty. There are no earth tremors and no volcanoes so my wife was now happy and we settled down to a life without fear.

We arrived early in 1938 and soon fitted into the life of the town. The district officer was Bert Jones, my old friend from Manus, where he was the medical assistant. Horrie Niall was the Assistant District Officer, and Bill Livingstone the Police Master. Jos Holmes was the manager for W.R. Carpenter & Coy, and Arthur Ray was Manager for Burns Philp & Coy. Bill Seale was one of the Patrol Officers also Colin McLean and Doc Holland the Medical Officer. Sister Mary was in charge of the hospital. Frankie Saunders and his wife Enid seemed to be the social leaders of this community. Frankie had several plantations and seemed to be interested in anything where money was to be made. The locals were all very pleased to welcome us to Kavieng because there was some talk of closing the European school, owing to lack of pupils. Paddy McGuire was in charge of the school and prevailed upon us to let Margaret go to school to save the situation. Most of the population played golf every afternoon on a 9 hole course right in the centre of town. After golf, everyone adjourned to the Kavieng club where the women drank on the front verandah and the men drank at the round table out of sight of the piercing eyes of their wives. Most of us went home to dinner about 6 pm, except the bachelors who stayed on till any old hour, sometimes till early morning. The round table could accommodate about 15 - 20 men and it was a recognised thing that no one shouted at the round table. Everyone bought their own bottle of beer and arrived and left whenever they wished.

To be Continued.....

Next Newsletter should Conclude Ted's Epic Tale

Communications in Antarctica

It was fifteen months since I had been home, and as I had a couple of months leave. Holidays were planned. I had only been home a few days when a letter arrived from O.T.C. advising me when to return to work. This was a couple of months away, so I threw it aside and intended to forget all about work for a while.

For a while it was strange living in such a new environment, the evenings were so dark and one had to become accustomed to handling money once more. When one went into a shop, one had to remember to pay instead of just walking out with the article.

Time passed and I returned to work. O.T.C. at this time was at Martin Place and the computer was in operation. It had been 21 months since I had left so I was sent to the school for a couple of weeks for refresher training.

It was difficult settling down to this type of work again, especially as it was now all computerised. I tried various jobs but still had difficulties in adjusting. It was one day towards the end of November when I received a sudden call from Melbourne asking if I would consider going to Mawson. They had a sudden drop-out in their radio staff.

I would be sailing in two weeks time. This was all a bit sudden, so I refused, but this got the old brain cells thinking. I thought that I might have been too old, and after discussions with my wife I applied later next year to go south again. Consequently I was accepted, going through the whole routine of medicals etc again, waiting with apprehension for the results, the training in Melbourne and then eventually the day of embarkation on the Thala Dan.

The ship had been refitted since last sailing on her, more ballast had been added, consequently it did not roll quite so much. The dining room had been moved to down below deck level with the water line. This was not particularly good when the rough seas were encountered and we were still finding our sea legs. From our cabins we had to go down about three flights of stairs, the further down we went the more we got the hot oily smell of the engines. This smell was not the best for sea sickness. Other big changes were satellite navigation, weather maps and computer control of the ship. It was strange to see no one at the helm, only an officer to watch, until we entered the pack ice.

As I returned to the Antarctic on one other occasion after this trip I will combine these experiences.

With the advent of weather maps being available every three hours we could avoid, to some extent, the bad weather. On one occasion we went practically due south from Melbourne until we came to about 55 degrees south thereby minimising the affect of the extreme weather in the roaring forties.

At the base we had new radio receivers in the radio room. The transmitters were still the old Collins ones from previous years. We had difficulties at times changing frequencies. sometimes we had to go to a higher frequency and then come down to the required one.

Bringelly often told us we were off frequency but we could do nothing about it at the time as the transmitters were all remotely controlled.

Another innovation was with water carting. An electric element had been installed in the lake so the hard work of digging through the ice to get to the water was a thing of the past.

On the inland trips tractors were installed with electric sump heaters so the days of crawling out in the dark, cold, freezing morning to man the 'Herman Nelson' were history.

The year passed much the same as other years, a different group of men with differing personalities, but basically underneath much the same as all Antarctic men.

In the radio room, the teleprinters were now 75 bauds, some of the ships we worked had teleprinters. The work load had increased so these improvements were welcome. In a later year we had TOR and worked direct with head office in Melbourne. The other bases were still as before.

It was in the return journeys home that the greatest variations occurred. One year the ship, whilst at Dumont D'urville, the French base, hit an uncharted rock and it was dry docked at Williamstown for almost a month before it could come to pick us up. There were rumours for a while that we could not be returned and that we would have to spend another year down south, but that did not eventuate. We were a month late leaving that year and returned home via Dumont D'urville.

We travelled around the coast to this base, about a thousand miles, just outside the pack ice. An interesting point is that we must have passed over or very close to the south magnetic pole, as at this time it was just off Dumont D'urville.

It was interesting comparing their type of buildings, the radio equipment, their cooking facilities etc. The living area overlooked the Glacier de L'Astrolobe, a magnificent view out of a plate glass window. I believe a woman came down to the base occasionally during the summer and gave a touch of colour and artistry to the base. A stark contrast to our base as it then was, a purely functional base.

The radio staff made us very welcome. We had been communicating with them for the past twelve months and knew them well. We would arrive at their radio room about ten in the morning. We lived on board the ship anchored about half a mile from the base and the first thing they would greet us with was "have a whisky", or "how about a Rikard". A whisky seemed a bit strong at ten A.M. so we thought a Rikard would do, an unknown drink to us. A clear looking liquid, water would be added and it turned milky, tasting of aniseed, very pleasant tasting, and after that "have another one" which we did. It had a slow insidious effect so that when it came time to return to the ship for lunch we had great difficulty negotiating the steep icy slope down to the LARC taking us back to the ship, not to mention climbing the rope ladder up the ship's side.

The next day we were much more wary of their hospitality.

The base was situated on a rocky island just off the coast. Their heavy machinery was parked on the mainland during the summer and the ice broke away during warmer weather.

We were there for a week unloading supplies from the ship. When we left we travelled to Commonwealth Bay intending to visit Mawson's hut only a few hours sail to the east, but because of strong winds we could not land so, disappointingly, we headed home to Hobart where we arrived about a week later and flew home from there after a few days in Melbourne.

I returned to the Antarctic on one more occasion, I will cover this in the next and final episode.

Telstra Annual Report

By Gordon Cupit

The Telstra Financial results recently highlighted in the press left out some amazing facts. These were featured in the 1993/94 Performance Record now released.

Financial

The record profit of \$1.7 billion was an Australian corporate record. The dividend was \$738 million (fully franked.)

Revenue growth to \$13.4 billion (plus 5.6%) was achieved in highly competitive market conditions.

Return on Equity before abnormals improved significantly to 18.3%.

Strong Balance Sheet with debt ratio reducing to 36%.

It would be interesting to know how many Export dollars were earned by IBU. This should have been highlighted as IBU has always been a source of good dollar revenue with its overseas contracts. Private companies have also benefited in this regard for contracts associated with IBU activities.

Together with income and indirect taxes, Telstra contributed over \$2.2 billion to its owners for the year.

Overall, prices dropped by 4.5%.

General

Total network growth was 3.5 per cent, bringing the number of telephone services in operation at the end of the year to 8.85 million.

13 billion calls were handled for the year (about 36 million per day).

The use of mobile phones surged. Connections to the analog network passed the one million mark in March.

94% of Telecom's 58,000 pay phones working at any one time.

Phone card sales now match coins collected from pay phones.

\$1.927 billion was spent on network capital investment.

Australia's biggest single investment in telecommunications announced - a \$3.3 billion network modernisation program.

The Telstra Board approved \$710 million to make available the fibre optic and coaxial cable network - the so-called information superhighway - to 1.1 million Australian homes by the end of 1996.

International

Continued to position itself as the pre-eminent telecommunications provider in the Asia Pacific region.

Telstra's leading investment position in Vietnam was consolidated with a \$270 million capital investment commitment.

Cable laying for the final stage of the 16,500 km South Pacific Network was commenced with 7,048 km Sydney-Guam Pacrim West optic fibre cable being installed.

Telstra entered the Korean telecommunications market through a joint venture, and opened offices in Korea and India.

Activities were consolidated in Kazakhstan by the commissioning of a high performance earth station to improve internal services.

Telstra became only the second foreign carrier to receive a licence to operate in the United Kingdom's domestic market.

Telstra's contribution to the Australian Economy

\$2.5 billion to the Government Revenue (Commonwealth & State.)

\$2.85 billion to salaries.

\$5 billion for raw materials, goods and services and other items purchased.

Rabaul Volcano

By Gordon Cupit

The recent eruption in Rabaul brings to mind the stories published in the Newsletter and written by Jack Burgess, Philp Geeves, Ted Bishton and John Lennon. Unfortunately all these gentlemen are no longer with us.

The new eruption seems to be very similar, but communications and other conditions, including early warning, are far more advanced. In 1937 they had no warning of the danger, none of the experience learnt in 1937 and since.

The 1937 eruption started on the 27th May and continued until 10th June. The radio facilities had only recently been transferred from the old German site at Bita Paka (in the mountains about 30 miles away). The new transmitting station was just 2 miles from town and the receiving station in the centre of town.

Staff at the transmitter were Chas Sturgeon and C. Alexander. At the town office were Ted Bishton, Bill Thomas, Tommy Thompson, Len Coleman, Mr Doherty, Les Farnsworth, Jack Burgess, Hughie Taylor, with Jimmy Twycross in overall control of both stations.

Norm Odgers was the operator on the Burns Philp Steamer "Montoro" which was in the area.

The first indication of anything amiss was earth tremors, but business was carried on as normal. The next day the tremors became more severe with the frequency of the tremors increasing to one every two minutes and each lasting at least one minute. That night the rain came with heavy lightning.

About 4:15pm on the third day Vulcan Island blew its top and the staff hastily evacuated. The AWA staff were directed to go to Bita Paka or Kokopo. Some were a bit slow off the mark were slowed down by falling pumice and bad visibility, windscreen wipers would not operate, and they were obliged to seek shelter on plantations on the way. That night was a nightmare as besides pumice, rocks and dust, they had continuous lightning and thunder accompanied by torrential rain causing severe flooding. Many were trapped on the plantations for days due to the flooding. Ted Bishton claims the water over the road was up to 3 metres. Food was short and the water supply contaminated.

On the fourth day, the wind changed and Alexander and Burgess managed to get into town. They found the town covered by up to 2 feet of pumice. The electricity supply out of action. After some effort Jack managed to get the emergency supply working and they were on the air. However, Sydney had given up listening for Rabaul and were working to Townsville trying to get news. As Rabaul's call sign was close to the ham band, Jack decided to put a CQ out in the hope that a ham might hear it. Hec Moore, Supt CRS, happened to be listening and alerted La Perouse.

An American ship "Golden Bear" was in the harbour but without a Radio Officer, who had been killed in the eruption. A Mr Faulkner of W.R. Carpenter & Co. worked the ship's radio for a time and he was the only means of communication in the early part of the eruption. The Montoro was off Kokopo where Norm Odgers kept in touch with the Golden Bear. Later Jim Twycross joined the Montoro, but the two ships were too busy evacuating the town and running the gauntlet of pumice, rocks etc that they could not be

used for communication to Australia. Norm Odgers did however lend a small transceiver to the station at a later stage.

Following contact with Sydney on the emergency equipment, Burgess and Alexander, with the repair of the auxiliary power supply, got the transmitter up but were having trouble at the receiving station due to lack of batteries. With the blessing of the Admin, they 'looted' or commandeered batteries in stock in the shops.

That afternoon (fourth day), Matupia exploded and again the staff hastily beat a retreat.

The following day they were able to return to the station where they found that no damage other than pumice, was done. Four had now returned to the station, and were quickly on the air. Ted Bishton was given some equipment and despatched to Kokopo to set up another station. The three still in town carried on for the next four days, taking all the traffic down by hand as the typewriters were jammed with pumice until the rest of the staff were able to get back.

Then came the big clean up, plus repair and maintenance of equipment. Although in some parts of Rabaul and in the harbour the pumice was up to 10 feet deep, they only had two to three feet on the roof and around the station. On one occasion in the harbour a ship loading copra dropped a sling into the harbour but the load did not go through the pumice.

The above is only a short outline of the suffering and work of the AWA staff and families. More detailed stores of their experiences have appeared in previous copies of the Newsletter.

Casualties of the 1937 eruption were 507 killed, mostly Natives. One can only visualise the terror of those days as unlike the recent eruption, it was not expected, nor had happened before.