



Newsletter

Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association (Australia)

VOLUME 5. PART 6. PAGE 596
NOVEMBER 1995

MEETINGS AND REUNIONS

NEW SOUTH WALES	REUNION Friday 24 November 1995 12 noon to 3.00pm	TELSTRA HOUSE 12th Floor Conference Room 231 Elizabeth Street Sydney
QUEENSLAND	REUNION Tuesday 14 November 1995 12 noon to 3.00pm	THE IRISH CLUB Tara House 175 Elizabeth Street Brisbane
VICTORIA	REUNION Tuesday 5 December 1995 12 Noon to 3.00pm	COUNCIL OF ADULT EDUCATION Level 2A 256 Flinders Street Melbourne
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	REUNION Thursday 23 November 1995 12.30pm to 3.00pm	TELECOM CONFERENCE CENTRE 2nd Floor 26 Flinders Street Adelaide
WESTERN AUSTRALIA	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Tuesday 28 November 1995	PERTH INTERNATIONAL TELECOM CENTRE 620 Gnangara Road Landsdale

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 arrangements can be made for catering.



OTVA (QUEENSLAND)
20TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

At noon on Tuesday 23rd May, 1995 Queensland veterans gathered at the Queensland Irish Association for their 20th A.G.M.

Prior to the start of the meeting, members and visitors gathered in the main area of the club to partake of a few drinks, hors d'oeuvres and to renew old acquaintances.

Those attending the meeting were:

Jim Banks	Harry Blount	Kev Bobrige
Ana Bobrige	Blue Easterling	Laz Eliou
Joanna Eliou	Allan Jones	Colleen Jones
Alma Laws	Deane Laws	John Norris
Mildred Norris	David Rogers	Jack Silcock
Vince Sim	Joan Sutherland	--

Visitors were:

Glenys Baldwin ex OTC Brisbane office who now works with the Trunked Radio section of Telecom,

Bruce Collett who was on one of his many pilgrimages to the sunshine state, and

Brian Woods in transit prior to travelling to the upper reaches of Queensland.

Apologies were received from Ted Bastow, John Bowes, John Taylor and John Toland (travelling overseas).

At 12:45 those present moved to the Shamrock room for the start of the 20th Annual General Meeting.

In the absence of our secretary, John Taylor, who was in Sydney Jim Banks assisted President Kev Bobrige by keeping notes on activities during the meeting.

MINUTES OF 20TH A.G.M.

The meeting was called to order at 12:48 with President Kevin chairing the meeting. He welcomed those present and our valued visitors to the meeting. He then informed the assembly it appeared invitations, which were mailed from Telstra Sydney, were not sent out to those members who names began with A and B. This information was discovered a week before the due date of the meeting when the President was chasing up advice from members who had not responded to their invitations.

Minutes of the 19th A.G.M. were read and it was proposed by Allan Jones, seconded by Laz Eliou they be accepted. Carried.

Next the financial statement, prepared by Secretary/Treasurer John Taylor was read to the members. At this point President Kevin Bobrige advised that on the Friday prior to the meeting, the WHICH BANK had hit the account with 4 months account keeping fees and after a deal of bartering the Bank decided it would not charge the Association fees in the future however those charges already deducted would stand. It was moved by Jim Banks, seconded by John Norris the financial statement be accepted. Carried.

The President then presented his report for 1994/1995 making mention of the sad loss of Queensland veterans Eric Norris, Keith Vincent and Bob Hooper during the year. A minutes silence for OTVA members who were no longer with us followed.

President Kevin also recorded his appreciation of the assistance given by Pam Help N.S.W. Secretary and the Telstra organisation. He finished his report by advising the assembly that as both John Taylor and himself had been in office for 5 years, neither of them would be standing for re-election. He thanked members for their support during the previous 5 years.

Next on the agenda was the election of officers for the forthcoming year.

For the position of President, Kevin Bobrige nominated Deane Laws and this was seconded by Brian Woods. There being no other nominations, Deane was unanimously elected President.

Calling for the position of Secretary/Treasurer, Kevin Bobrige nominated John Toland, seconded by Jack Silcock. There being no other nominations, John was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

John Norris was again nominated as Auditor (nominated Kev Bobrige, seconded Jack Silcock) and retained the position he has held for many many years.

Outgoing President Kevin congratulated the committee and invited President Deane Laws to take over the Chair for the rest of the meeting.

General business then followed. Kevin Bobrige informed the assembly N.S.W. veterans were raising the issue of number of qualifying years for membership to the OTVA. This matter had been raised in Queensland a few years earlier when it was decided 20 years was a suitable period. There was no move away from this decision by Queensland veterans. The issue of bank fees was then raised and suggestions such as Credit Unions and Building Societies as suitable alternatives to Banks were mentioned. It was left for John Toland to investigate a suitable type of account following his return from overseas.

Deane Laws closed the meeting by advising the venue and date for the 21st Reunion would be left open, however it was considered likely to be the last Tuesday in November again to be held at the Q.I.A.

The A.G.M. closed at 13:18.

The Irish Association then proceeded to serve up it's usual well presented lunch together with Reds and Whites which were well received by all present.

By 15:00 most members had dispersed although a few die-hards were still left consuming the last of the good vintages on offer including one visitor who had a long trip in front of him the following day. Hope you made it safely Brian.

Kevin Bobrige
May, 1995.



VALE - CHARLES IVENS BUFFETT,
M.B.E. O.B.E. LL.B. JP.

After a long illness we lost "Potts" last Saturday, 21st January, 1995, Dr. John Duke officiating at the funeral which departed from the home "Unna" in Taylor's Road with service at Kingston later that afternoon.

Potts was born March 1914, one of the sons of Gertrude and Peter Buffett and grandson of Kathleen and Allen Buffett who landed on Norfolk Island from Pitcairn with the descendants of the mutineers of HMS Bounty on 8th June, 1856.

He went to school on Norfolk and had to go to Sydney to get his Intermediate and Leaving Certificates as there were no provisions for pupils to obtain same on Norfolk at that time. His name is on the Honour Board at NICS as a Queen Victoria Scholarship winner.

He commenced work with the N.I. Administration as a Junior Clerk. It was necessary in those days for him to be appointed by the Governor-General of Australia who happened to be Baron Stonehaven under the provisions of the Norfolk Island Act 1913. He was then, and up to the beginning of World War II, the only permanent clerk or officer working for the Administration. He went through a very thorough training in the Administration, learning many facets of administration and ultimately held the positions of Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages, Registrar of the Court of N.I. and associated offices, Accounts and Payments Clerk, Registrar of Companies, Collector of Customs, Lighterage Manager of the Administrations' lighterage services, Master-in-Lunacy, Registrar of Motor Vehicles and Registrar of Lands.

Enlisting first in the CMF (in part of Military Intelligence), he transferred to the RAAF and under the Empire Air Training Scheme saw service in England, India, Burma and Siam (Thailand).

After the war, he graduated as a Barrister-at-Law from Sydney University and was admitted to the Bar of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. He was later also a Barrister-at-Law of the Supreme Courts of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Christmas Island (Indian

Ocean) and the A.C.T. He was the first Norfolk Islander to graduate and be admitted to the Bar.

In 1952 he was appointed Official Secretary to the N.I. Administration and served as Administrator two periods 1952/53, and again in 1958 and 1975. He was the youngest Administrator ever appointed.

In 1956 he was awarded the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his services to the Norfolk Island community; in 1959 appointed Australasian Official representative in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands; 1966/68 appointed as the Australian Official Representative in Christmas Island and at the end of 1968 returned to the Department of External Territories in Canberra where he carried out the duties of a Senior Investigation Officer until 1972. Then he became Administrator of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands relinquishing that office in 1982 and retiring to Norfolk Island.

He was the first Boy Scout to be sworn in on Norfolk Island and the first Scout Troop Leader; was in charge of the N.I. Broadcasting Station which commenced in the 1950's and established a Broadcasting Station on Christmas Island in 1967.

In 1982 he was awarded the O.B.E. in the Queen's New Year Honours List for his services to communities in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

And these are only a few of the offices which Potts (as he was always called) held during his long career of service.

He and his wife Vanda had one son Charles who was tragically killed in a car accident on Norfolk Island some years ago. There is another son Peter by a former marriage.

We know that Potts did not want any mention to be made of the services he has rendered to communities of Norfolk Island, Cocos and Christmas Islands, but with such a lifetime of dedication and honour he brought to Norfolk Island could not without comment.

A man with a tremendous charisma, he was to many friends and relatives quite often referred to as "our beloved Potts"; his wit, his infectious laugh, his discernment of people all made up the man we proud to have known and worked with.

Our loving thoughts go out to Vanda, Peter and family, Potts' two brothers and their families and to all relatives and friends in their sad loss.

.....
Mrs Vanda Buffett c/o Post Office Norfolk Is



OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS' ASSOCIATION (S.A.)

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The Editor/Secretary,

The Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Assoc. N.S.W.

Dear Jim,

Herewith a brief report of the annual general meeting of our South Australian branch of the O.T.V.A held on the 25th May 1995 in the Conference room, 2nd floor, 26 Flinders Street Adelaide at 12.30pm.

Those present were Fred Reeve, Harry Stone, Bob Imrie, Denis Maher Dave Herbert and Ern Barrett. Apologies were received from Geoff Cox, Dick Inwood, Max Lang and Sam Pfeiffer. A minutes silence was observed for one of our senior members George Rowe who passed away on May 5th 1995 aged 85 years. George had been unable to attend our meetings over the past couple of years due to ill-health but was always bright and cheerie when tendering his apologies on the telephone. News of his passing was not received until some weeks afterwards and so President Fred Reeve & myself were unfortunately unable to attend his service.

The main purpose of the A.G.M. was carried out by the re-election unopposed of the President Fred Reeve and Secretary/Treasurer Harry Stone. A general business discussion was held as requested on the time qualification for membership of the O.T.V.A South Australian branch and Twenty years was the agreed period. Subscription fees was also discussed and \$10.00 was voted in (\$5.00 each for the AGM & the Xmas meeting) This should hopefully bring us into line with our other sister state branches.

Subscriptions of \$5.00 was duly collected from the six members listed as present totalling \$30.00 and so our financial state is as follows;

Subscriptions collected	\$30.00
Petty cash in hand	18.10
Bank Balance	<u>21.91</u>
Total	\$ 70.01
Less Refreshment Costs for this meeting	<u>24.00</u>
	\$ 46.01

The meeting was declared closed and those present participated of the refreshments and sandwiches provided. The christmas gathering was set for the 23rd November 1995 (Thurs 12.30pm) and the venue hopefully the same, ie, 2nd floor 26 Flinders Street Adelaide. Whilst those of us who are left, understand the problems and changes that take place with the passage of time in organizations such as we were privileged to help build up over the past seventy years, (OTC etc) it does tend to make one feel like the veteran with the face as bold as brass quoted in that ribald poetic masterpiece "Twas Christmas Day in the Workhouse".

I'm sure that you know what I mean Jim! I'm very pleased to have received very welcome letters from very dear friends and old colleagues Wilf Atkin (AKTUG) Lisle Gowanloch, Jack Whittaker, Les Brown, Ray Moyes. Yes! those were the days THE SALAD days. Cheers Jim

Harry Stone.

601

1/43 Bangalow St.,
ETTALONG BEACH 22
29/5/95...

Pamela Helps,
H/Secty OTVA NSW

Dear Pamela,

After reading this would you please onpass to Jim Anderson.

Firstly, I will be attending the AGM together with old colleague Horrie Young who will be rejoining OTVA.

Read with great interest the latest Newsletter and would like to comment as follows re the article on Cyclone Tracey. Assume the reference to the AWA people was a typing error.

I am not irate at the lack of reporting as to how facilities were restored at Darwinradio as this was an in-house OTC affair- very effectively handled. My hostility is directed at the media who repeatedly- particularly on the 20th anniversary- state that as an aftermath of the cyclone, Darwin city was cut off from outside communications. This is an outrageous lie and denies appropriate credit to the Darwinradio, and other Coast Radio staff involved in providing communications over the most critical period. To briefly recapitulate: Coincident with Darwinradio going off the air I ascertained from Perthradio that the freighter "Nyanda" was about to berth at Darwin (after riding out the cyclone), and I immediately contacted the captain, through Sydneyradio, and asked and was given permission for the Darwinradio staff to use the ships' radio facilities. When 'Nyanda' berthed, Darwinradio staff took over the radio room as a stand-by Darwinradio, which included, of course, direct radio contact with Sydneyradio. It was this pipeline that linked Darwin city to the outside world and was used by the authorities, other officials and the media until Telecom facilities were gradually phased in.

Consequently, for the satisfaction of the OTC/CRS people involved over that crucial period it is hoped that in future reporting of the aftermath of cyclone Tracey, Telecom/Telstra publicity staff will ensure the media report the facts.

(Incidentally, I have a video copy of the ABC TV evening news on the day of cyclone tracey which was filmed at Sydneyradio as, after establishing communications with Darwinradio staff aboard 'Nyanda', I hastened to Sydneyradio to supervise operations and arising from passing updated information to the ABC newsroom I agreed they send a news team to Sydneyradio to record events as they were happening.)

Regards

Phil Chapman

Jim Anderson- Hi Jim looking forward to seeing you the 9th.

Phil

MINUTES

39TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

O.T.V.A. NSW BRANCH

HELD ON 9 JUNE 1995

1. President Gordon Cupit opened the meeting and gave apologies for the official guests who were unable to attend. They were:-
 - Warren Grace - Managing Director, IBU
 - Daryll Smith - General Manager, Mobile Satellite & Radio Services
 - David Henry - National Education Manager, Corporate Affairs
 - Peter Shore - Chief Operating Officer, Commercial & Consumer Bus.Gordon welcomed the new members. A total of 109 members attended our 39th Annual General Meeting.
2. Apologies

A total of 23 apologies were received from members.
3. Fraternal greetings were acknowledged from our intrastate members.
4. The Secretary read a letter from Harold Le Quesne in Canada, ex President of The Quarter Century Club of Teleglobe Canada, expressing fraternal greetings to all OTVA members and wives and wishing everyone good health. Harold and his wife Katherine hope to make another visit to Australia before too many years pass.
5. One minute's silence was observed to mark the passing of the following members -

Ted Turner, Arch Barrie, Keith Vincent, Arthur Purtill, Jack Gray, Jack Thomas, Ken Springbett, Kath Morgan, Eddie Trezise, George Rowe, Bill (Willy) Chant, Cec Mills, Eric Norris, Harry Devine, Len Mason, Chris Tancheff, Bob Hooper, Cec Gray, Bob Fisher, Cyril Manning.
6. Sick List

Harry Stone has suffered a series of minor strokes but we are pleased to report that he has made an excellent recovery.
7. Balance Sheet and Annual Accounts

There being no discussion on the Balance Sheet, it was carried unanimously that the

Auditor's Report be accepted.

8. There being no matters raised for discussion from the last Minutes it was moved by Tony Ebert and seconded by Ron Waugh that the Minutes of the 38th Annual General Meeting be adopted.
9. In the absence of the Treasurer, Mick Wilden, the Secretary read a report from him tending his apologies and stating that "there were no abnormal items in the accounts. Telstra Corporation Limited management continue to support our organisation by providing the venue and subsidising our Annual General Meeting and Annual Reunion Functions, together with assistance in typing, printing and mailing of the six-monthly newsletters.

Without this support the Committee would find it very difficult to continue the service it does to its members."

10. The President thanked Telstra management for the facilities and help in the printing and postage of the Newsletter. He also thanked the Committee for their work throughout the year and Hugh Brislan, Functions Manager, for the catering.
11. Election of Officers

The President declared all offices vacant and called for nominations for Returning Officer to conduct the annual election. The nomination for Brian Nell by Tony Ebert was seconded by Ken Howe and Brian Nell was 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
Committee Members	Mr Jim Anderson Mr Laurie McIllree Mr Brian Peacock Mr Martin Ratia
Auditors	Mr Ron Connolly Mr Peter Roberts

12. General Business

- a. The President noted that in the Queensland report on their 20th Annual Reunion

• which appeared in the last Newsletter mention was made of the possible formation of a National Committee. He advised the meeting that due to tight budgetary controls the expense of flying members interstate for meetings would prohibit the formation of such a Committee.

- b. Discussion took place on the number of years which should constitute eligibility for membership, bearing in mind that the other States had already indicated their preference for 20 years. A vote was taken for both 25 and 20 years and members voted to retain 25 years for Full Membership with a minimum of 15 years in overseas telecommunications for those joining in retirement or following retrenchment.

However, it was agreed to seek approval from the other States to amend the Constitution to allow Associate Members to join after 20 years with a minimum of 15 years in overseas telecommunications for those joining in retirement or following retrenchment. Associate Members would not be eligible to vote or wear a badge.

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

Pamela Helps
Honorary Secretary

SICK LIST

Lyle Gowanloch was hospitalised in August for surgery. We understand he has made a good recovery and our best wishes go to him and his wife Aileen.

RETIREMENT MOVE

Bert and Eva Waugh moved to Minkara Retirement Resort, Bayview 2104 on 30 June 1995. Bert who is 83 years old fell off a roof in September 1994 and it was about that time that he decided he had better give up driving. Realising he needed a car to stay where he was he decided to move to Minkara.

CAN ANYONE HELP?

We recently received an enquiry from Bill Macmillan whose father A B Walfred Fowler Macmillan was part of the naval expeditionary force off HMAS Encounter from July 19, 1915 to July 25, 1916.

Bill would be most appreciative if anyone could supply him with photos or information of the naval force at Fanning between 1915 and 1916. He can be contacted at 30 Alma St. Clontarf NSW 2093 - Telephone (02) 948.4928.

T.V. STARS

On Anzac Day careful observers saw Darryl Hegarty (ex Training Section) bending at the knees carrying a Naval standard.

On 1 July Phil Chapman appeared in a repeat of the Darwin bombing story.

Also seen latterly were Louis Challis (aircraft noise), Noel Plumb (Greenies cause) and Neil Tuckwell Austel policies.

BAD LUCK

On a recent visit to Hong Kong to see his son John, Harry (Baldy) Stone in company with John, was set about by some Triads and severely mugged. Since the assault Baldy has suffered a couple of minor strokes. but thankfully he has made a good recovery. Trust all is now well Harry.

RABAUL

G Cupit

Recently met a character named David Bates who was brought up in Rabaul. His father was Administrator at the time. He knew Bill Luke very well and would like to hear from any of the old AWA boys who served in Rabaul and who knew either David or his parents. David can be contacted on (02) 528.2080.

TED BISHTON'S GRAPHIC STORY

G Cupit

Looking back on Ted Bishton's story, he had a very good memory, although his story was aided somewhat by his mother keeping letters he sent to her. In the story he named 257 persons and 113 places and plantations. Papua/N.G and the Solomon Islands could not have been a healthy place to be and it is surprising that he survived. His narrative names 11 persons murdered by the Japanese in the early part of the Pacific War, 13 murdered by natives, 4 suicided, 3 were lost at sea and 5 were killed in accidents.

TELECOM MUSEUM

The rumour that the Telecom Museum at Ashfield closed has been squashed by a Telstra Executive who is in the know. This has been confirmed by Archivist Mark Kitchener who advises that the Veterans' archival material has now been moved to Ashfield. The Museum is open to the public during restricted hours and anyone wishing to see the exhibition should ring Ashfield Post Office for opening times.

VALE

JACK McGRORY

That well known Melbourne character Jack McGrory passed away in Mid August. He spent 46 years in the service. Jack started work with Cable & Wireless in Melbourne in 1934 and held a number of clerical positions with C & W and OTC. He was promoted to Officer in Charge, Clients Accounts in 1960, to Traffic Accountant in 1971 and to Admin Supt. in 1976. Unfortunately Jack suffered a serious illness in 1979 and was invalided out in 1981 after spending 2 years on sick leave.

SHADDY MEYNERT

Shaddy retired from C & W in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and came to live in Australia. He was well known to OTC Head Office staff where he worked in the Records Section. He retired many years ago and sadly he passed away on 27 September following a prolonged illness.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Warren Grace, Managing Director IBU, on his recent appointment to the position of Director-General Inmarsat. We wish you well in your new job Warren.

It would appear that Satellite organisations have a high regard for Australian talent. Others who have gone to these esteemed organisations in the past have been Gus Berzins, Dick Christoffersen, Len Dooley and John Hampton. Other OTC people have served on the Board of Governors with distinction.

OFF SHORE ACTIVITIES

Gordon Cupit

'Transit' over the last couple of years has kept us up to date with the International groups overseas activities. OTC/IBU/Telstra is to be congratulated with its success in this field,

not only in earning valuable overseas currency, but in the number of contracts gained by Australian manufacturers for the supply of equipment for the contracts.

Credit must also be given to Australian companies who are exporting, and to those who are manufacturing overseas. They all earn valuable dollars. Although I am not up in financial matters, this seems far better for Australia than those companies seeking overseas finance or those selling out to overseas organisations. I know that this creates jobs, but if it gets too much of a hold we will find that Australian workers are really being enslaved to other countries.

VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC

by Gordon Cupit

It was great to see VP Day celebrated as most oldies in Australia played some part directly, or indirectly in the defence of our wonderful country. But do the younger people really know the full picture.

Looking back I remember the number of friends, neighbours, acquaintances and colleagues in uniform and away from home for 6 years, which is a long time in those late teens and early twenties. In my first year in the Army I celebrated my 21st birthday. The next one out of uniform was the 28th.

The high essential taxation to pay for munitions etc. Even servicemen were taxed out of their miserable 5 shillings per day.

The manufacturing effort building planes, guns, tanks and munitions, not forgetting clothing and feeding the troops and population.

The farmers and the land army girls producing the food.

The guys too old for service, enlisting in the VDC (Volunteer Defence Corps) manning strategic places and guard duties on bridges and other points that could have been the target of saboteurs. The elderly firewatchers every night on city buildings.

The essential rationing and coupons.

Digging air raid shelters and Victory vegetable gardens.

People employed in essential services working long hours.

Blackouts, petrol rationing.

In our industry, a number of our colleagues served in the armed services having enlisted in the early days of the war. The authorities soon realised that this could not go on and declared the communications services as essential services under the Manpower Act. Those who did serve were in all branches of the armed forces. Those not returning from active duty were Peter Field (lost in battle for Britain), Jack Radnidge and Don Kirkwood, both RAAF aircrew, lost in the Pacific theatre, and George Cope, of whom I do not have details. Laurie Mostran (RAAF) taken prisoner in North Africa, and Lloyd Stennett (AIF) taken prisoner in Singapore. We were very lucky as to the number who survived the war.

A number of Veterans and colleagues served in the Merchant Marine, whilst all members of the Coastal Radio Service were given Naval status, in the event of capture by the enemy. Many stories from these people, especially those who were serving in New Guinea and Papua, have appeared in Newsletters. Notable were the evacuations from the Papuan/New Guinea stations and the bombing of Darwin. On the evacuation of Rabaul, Manager Dutchy Holland stayed at his post and was captured by the Japs. Unfortunately he lost his life when the prison ship he was on was torpedoed by a US Sub. Others rendered mighty service as coast watchers, evading the Japs and reporting aircraft movements.

Staff in the operating rooms worked very long hours and I am told that they undertook 12 hour shifts each day, with 1 day off every 6 weeks. No wonder they looked pale and haggard to those returning from active service.

AWA factories had many important defence contracts and the staff also worked long hours.

At the end of the war Marconi School of Wireless, run by AWA was given the task of training those we knew as the Rehab boys. They were ex servicemen mainly RAAF and Army who were given training in fast wireless techniques. They were posted as Beam Telegraphists on completion of their training.

VP Day drew the Nation's attention to the overall effort by the whole of Australia, and just what can be achieved when the chips are down. The amount of war materials and food, clothing etc produced was phenomenal. Taxation was high, luxuries non existent, rationing was drastic, everything was regulated and controlled, but we survived, against our common enemy.

Today, we also have common enemies such as our overseas debt, crime, unemployment, drugs etc. It is time that some of the old fashioned values and disciplines were re-introduced even if it means higher taxation and essential regulations and controls. Politicians should forget party lines and pull together in the common interest, and to make this country what it deserves.

Sorry, if I have run off the rails a bit here, but VP Day did have some strange effect on me.

REMEMBERING - BY WILF ATKIN

Here in Queensland during the football season they think they have 'footy fever' particularly if the Broncos are doing well. Compared with Melbourne it is only a mild rash. Down there they're crazy. It IS fever.

In July 1928 I left my ship the 'Iron Master' at Williamstown and travelled to the city by train, arriving at Spencer Street Station at mid-afternoon on a Saturday. My first thought was a pot of beer so I slipped into Carlyons pub on the corner and satisfied my thirst before catching a cable tram to Queen Street where the Beam office was located. When I emerged from the public bar with my suitcase a paper boy with a few early editions under his arm approached me and said "What's the score mister?" I said "what score?" "The

footy" he replied. "Who's playing?" I said. He gave me a queer look and sidled away. He must have thought he was talking to an idiot.

I WOULD HAVE BEEN THE ONLY PERSON IN MELBOURNE (PERHAPS VICTORIA) WHO DIDN'T KNOW THAT COLLINGWOOD AND RICHMOND WERE PLAYING IN THE AFL GRAND FINAL.

When in the pub I had noticed a small crowd listening to a radio but surmised they were listening to the races.

With a few breaks in S.O.R. I enjoyed my eleven years in MO.R. for they were a friendly bunch and even coming to work was an adventure. We weren't overworked and on many occasions due to a complete atmospheric blackout it was not unusual for a draw out of the hat to be conducted and half of the staff were allowed to go home. Of course, most of us didn't. Some went to the pictures, some to the pub and a few would spend hours sitting on a seat in Collins Street admiring the well dressed women passing to and fro.

In the Melbourne Operating Room we had a few junior clerks and one of them, Charlie Bates, a good looking dark slim youth, was a real 'character'. He owned a couple of whippets which he used to race at White City. The meetings were held at night and on one occasion when Charlie was on night duty he sneaked them in the back door of the downstairs despatch room, up the back stairs and left them in the ladies toilet and shut the door, intending to collect them when he knocked off at 6.00am. However, he hadn't reckoned on the 'cleaning ladies' who started at 5.30am. You can imagine the commotion when one of the cleaners, opening the door of the toilet, was bowled over by two whippets who sprang at her and then dashed down the stairs and into the laneway. Of course the incident was reported to the Supervisor who questioned the staff, but like in S.O.R. (our President will confirm this) when any trouble arose a 'mafia' type wall of silence became evident. No-one knew who had whippets and so Charlie's escapade was never brought to book.

Charlie left shortly afterwards and came to the Gold Coast and I heard he went into real estate. How, I would never know, but when he died a few years ago aged 83 he lived in one of the best suburbs in Surfers Paradise akin to Toorak in Melbourne and Darling Point in Sydney. By a strange coincidence his house was across the road from Lou Heggies and Mrs Heggie told me that when Charlie and Lou got together there was always roars of laughter so apart from the whippets episode there must have been others of which I know nothing and I feel a bit 'miffed'. If the whippets are still wandering around looking for their owner they must be badly in need of a paw retread for that was 65 years ago.

FOREWORD FOR THE KNUCKEY STORY

OVERLAND TELEGRAPH

In regard to the following story the conditions at the time should be recognised.

Firstly, the first submarine cable was not laid until 1850. This was across the English Channel and broke only five miles from shore. Another cable was laid in the same year and messages were exchanged for 6 days before it broke from rock abrasion. In the next

few years a number of short distance cables were laid, and it was not until 1866 that the first successful cable was laid across the Atlantic.

The timetable of lays after that were:

1868	Malta to Alexandria.
1869	Aden to Suez.
1870	UK-Suez-Aden-Bombay. Madras to Singapore. Singapore to Batavia
1871	Java to Darwin.
1872	Overland Telegraph Line completed.

In 1858 serious consideration was given to the cable connection between UK and Australia. Initial planning was very slow as communications between the two countries was by ship and took months. This improved in 1870 with the cable from UK to India, with ship transport from there. However it was still slow and depended on ship sailings.

Another problem was the fact that the Australian States were separate colonies, and there was much in-fighting and State interests. The main contenders being South Australia and Queensland. South Australia wanted the cable to terminate in Darwin and Queensland wanted it to come into the Gulf. Full details of these issues can be found in Edgar Harcourt's book "Taming the Tyrant" and in Peter Taylor's book, "An End to Silence"

The story was submitted by Victorian Veteran Alan Vagg who is a descendant of the Knuckey family. Two of his great uncles (his grandmother's brothers) were surveyors on the Overland Telegraph Line.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The start of the Knuckey story gives a record of the family history which is interesting enough, but the main interest to NEWSLETTER readers will be the story and insight into the Overland Telegraph Line to Port Darwin 1870-1872.

It is my intention to publish this account in serialised form. Should any of our readers require the detailed family history supplied by Alan Vagg this can be done in the final episode.

The copy provided to me has, in a lot of cases, omitted the first character or two in some lines. For example, one paragraph reads -

"In order to supply the officers and men with fresh
eat, a small party under Mr. Harvey was fitted out with
000 sheep to take charge of a receiving and forwarding
epot on the Finke River."

I know that the second line, first word is meat, but the third line with 000 sheep could be anything from 1000 to 9000 so far as numbers are concerned. I have opted to use my imagination where this is concerned. Anyway, here goes.

THE OVERLAND TELEGRAPH LINE TO PORT DARWIN
1870 - 1872

Mr Todd in his report states:

The route selected for the line was traversed by Mr John McDouall Stuart in his successful exploration through the continent. As the only information we possessed of the country was that supplied by Mr Stuart, I felt it necessary to fit out and dispatch an exploring expedition in advance of the construction parties under the command of Mr John Ross, with Mr Harvey, Surveyor, as second-in-command. The other members of the party being Mr Alfred Giles, Mr T Crispe and Mr Hearn.

Mr Ross left Adelaide in July 1870 and after proceeding to the centre of the continent returned to the construction parties with full information as to the nature of the country.

Subsequently he went through to Port Darwin, and returned on October 5th 1871. Mr Giles later on rendered valuable assistance in connection with the construction of the line.

The work was planned out and arranged as follows:

First section. Port Augusta 500 miles southwards to latitude 27 degrees was let by contract to Mr E M Bagot at 41 pounds per mile. This was completed by the end of March 1872.

Second section from latitude 27 degrees to latitude 19 - 30 degrees. This was known as the Central section, and being the most difficult was divided into five sub-sections and carried out by the Government with the following officers in charge:

Section A. R R Knuckey, latitude 27 degrees to 25 30 degrees

Section B. G R McMinn, latitude 25 30 degrees to 24 degrees

Section C. W W Mills, latitude 22 30 degrees to 22 30 degrees

Section D. A T Woods, latitude 22 30 degrees to 21 degrees

Section E. E W Harvey, latitude 21 0 degrees to 19 30 degrees

These parties were supplied with 15 horse wagons, seventeen bullock drays, one bullock wagon, and five express wagons, in all about 165 horses and 210 bullocks.

In order to supply the officers and men with fresh meat, a small party under Mr Harvey was fitted out with 1,000 sheep to take charge of a receiving and forwarding depot on the Finke River.

I may mention that the Finke River was named by John McDouall Stuart after Mr Finke, a partner in the firm of Messrs John and James Chambers, who fitted Stuart out on his first expedition entirely at their own cost.

It must be remembered that in order to carry out the work, a certain amount of minor exploration had to be done before the survey could be made. It was first of all necessary to find permanent waters and telegraph poles to build the line.

In making these minor explorations, although at times carried out under great difficulties and trying circumstances, it must have been a very great satisfaction indeed to the officers when they made discoveries of permanent waters, springs and hills, to have the privilege of naming them after their friends in Adelaide.

Mr Knuckey gives a very interesting account in connection with this part of the work.

THE FINDING OF DALHOUSIE SPRINGS

Mr Knuckey writes: On our arrival at Ross's water hole we found the Macumba Creek ran nearly east and west instead of north-west as Ross informed Mr Todd in the first instance.

The Macumba (native name) is formed by the junction of the Alberga and Stevenson Creeks. The Alberga comes from the west and the Stevenson from the north-west.

We followed a small creek coming in from the north and on the second day camped on a very large waterhole, native name "Arril-Currullina". Whilst camped at this place Mr A T Woods tried to find suitable country for a road to Marchants Springs on the Finke River, but the country he travelled was too sandy and full of clay pans for a good road.

McMinn and I explored the country to the east for mapping purposes only. Mr Woods told us on his return that on a point from a low range of saddle back hills, since named by me the Hawden Range, he thought he detected the sheen of soda flats, and therefore if his premises were correct, mound springs would be found there.

On my net trip I picked up Mr Wood's point of observation and followed his bearing. At about 2 miles we found the soda flat and a small spring. At about 1 mile we came across another mound spring with good reeds growing around it. I named that spring "Bee Spring" after Mr Tom Bee, McMinn's cadet. About 1.5 miles from there we came across the main body of springs. As far as the eye could reach reeds showed the presence of springs. To the north they were bounded by a low range of saddle back hills, and to the westward the same range extended, terminating in a point named Mt Crispe. The reeds where we struck the creek (I measured one) were 17 ft high and as thick as your finger.

We could hear the stream gurgling among the reeds, and as we had to camp there that night, the horses had to be watered, so we cut down some reeds, and made a corduroy road of them, and led our horses to drink into as pretty a spring as a bushman could wish to see. About 3ft wide 18 inches deep, clear as crystal, and fresh and sweet as the mountain dew. We found the head of the spring. It was what we called a mud spring, that is the water (natural artesian wells) contained no sodium or magnesia and therefore the overflow left no sediment.

Now before we left Adelaide, Lady Edith Fergusson, wife of Sir James Fergusson, Governor of South Australia had presented each of our parties with a bunch of books. These boxes contained all the standard novels of the day. Each box was different and there were six bibles and prayer books among them. Now we decided among ourselves that we name the most important find after her, and these springs came up to our expectations. They are the greatest area of springs in Australia.

There is any kind of water in them, salt, magnesia, hot cold and fresh, so that afternoon December 21st 1870, I christened them the Lady Edith Springs.

As I was the nearest section to Adelaide, I sent to our chief, Mr Todd, the maps of the country as far as we had gone.

Mr Todd showed my map to Lady Edith, who wrote thanking us and asking us to change the name to her family name. Lady Edith was the daughter of the Marquis of Dalhousie, and that is how the Dalhousie was named.

Mr Knuckey further relates his experiences after the discovery of Dalhousie Springs until the discovery of Charlotte Waters.

After leaving Dalhousie Springs the party followed a small creek running between a gap in the Rawden Range. Two prominent peaks on the south side I christened Mt Eva and Mt Jessis. The peak on the north side had been named by Mr Ross after Mr Tom Crispe, one of the members of his party.

On December 25th 1871 The three parties, Woods, McMinn and Knuckeys had their Christmas dinner at Possum Creek, so named because Charlie Musgrove had shot a possum there: needless to say they did not have much Christmas cheer.

McMinn and I were still keeping Marchants Springs as our objective, went ahead and picked up Harvey's camp XIII, now named Woolaumpa, about 30 miles east of Charlotte Waters, but the track was no good so we returned again. Then we went out again and tried a N.N.W bearing which brought us to the Coglin, 10 miles west of Charlotte Waters. From there we struck north and picked up Stuarts track near Mt Daniel and Mt Townsend, and the Goyder Creek. From this we forged ahead and struck the Finke River at a point named Crown Point by Mr Woods. We followed the Finke for about 5 miles and found Marchant Springs with the tree marked J.M.D.S. but we had not found any permanent waters between Bullocky Creek and Marchant Springs. So we started back again, and then, as usual, every man is wise after the event, only a difference of a few degrees in the bearing, and we would have struck Charlotte Waters eight miles from Bullocky Flat. Traversing back, we missed the point again and nearly got landed in trouble as our horses had been without water for two days and our own supply was exhausted.

We struck the Coglin again. This creek has a trick of spreading itself and making itself again. We followed it all day. It was Sunday January 10th 1871, and about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, McMinn said "It's no good Knuckey we'll camp until night, our horses are done, we will make for Bullocky Flat by the stars". So we unsaddled and let our horses go. About sundown we noticed some Bronze Winged Pigeons overhead and keeping an eastern course. We knew that these birds always go for water in the evening, so we saddled up again and kept in the direction of the creek, and after travelling for about 5 miles I caught sight of some reeds. My horse "Bonnie Dundee" the quickest walking horse between Port Augusta and Port Darwin forged ahead and I caught sight of the water first, but it was so clear that my heart went down to my boots for I was afraid it was salt. I jumped off my horse and tasted the water, and you can imagine my delight when I discovered it was fresh.

We watered our horses and made some Johnnie Cakes. They consist of flour and water mixed with a little salt. They are generally called "Beggars on the coals".

Whilst cooking them, Mr Knuckey was so delighted at finding fresh water, broke out into poetry with this result:-

The greatest enjoyment under the sun
Is to sit by the fire till the beggars are done.

After our meal we solemnly filled our pannicans with water and I named the waters "Charlotte Waters" after Lady Charlotte Bacon, sixth daughter of the Earl of Oxford (Byrons Ianthe). And this is how Charlotte Waters was found and named.

On returning to camp I decided to make Charlotte Waters my headquarters and the site for one of our four telegraph stations. After fixing the starting point of my section, latitude 27 degrees - a quarter of a mile north of the Coglin, I started the survey, the men commenced cutting poles and erecting the line.

ENCOUNTER WITH THE BLACKS

So far we had not come in contact with the blacks, but we knew they were watching us all the time as whenever we rode to the top of a hill to take bearings, we could see smoke signals going up all around us.

An amusing incident occurred. Mr Aldridge and I were riding along the Finke River looking for telegraph poles when we came across a black fellow having a drink of water at

a waterhole. His spear was stuck in the ground and his shield was lying beside it. The tramp of horses roused him. He jumped up and stood for fully ten seconds like a statue carved from ebony. I began to get off my horse, but as soon as I lifted my leg from the saddle he gave one yell and left spear and shield, and we could not see the way he went for the dust he threw up. Mr Knuckey learned some time afterwards from the blacks, that it was the first time this black had seen a man riding a horse, and when Mr Knuckey started to dismount the native thought it was an animal dividing itself and this proved just too much for him.

After starting operations McMinn and I proceeded northwards to fix the latitude of the junctions of our two sections. I then returned to Charlotte Waters and on my arrival I learned that the blacks had become more troublesome. They used to come prowling around at night and eventually stole a tarpaulin which covered our flour, also an axe.

We kept watch the next night but they did not come in. Next morning just after daylight, 20 or 30 of them appeared on the opposite bank of the creek with all their war paint on. Our camp was 150 yards away. They were led by an old chief who tried his best to make them rush us but they hung back. The three of us were armed with revolvers, and I had a snider carbine. I walked towards them and made signs of peace. The old chief walked towards us and when about 80 yards distant, he fixed his spear in the woomera and threw it at me and struck me on the right elbow. I thought it was my turn now. I fired and hit him in the shoulder. He jumped in the air and they all ran down the creek like a pack of wild goats. The injured black came into the telegraph subsequently and died some 12 years afterwards.

In 1911, after an absence of forty years, I was again at Charlotte Waters and when in conversation with the Postmaster (Mr Kiernan) an old blackfellow came up saying that he knew me and told the Stationmaster that I had built his wurlie (the telegraph station). He also gave a very graphic description of the fight. How I had hit the old chief in the shoulder and how frightened they were. Now it was over 40 years since that black had seen me but he had recognised me at once. It can be readily understood that it was the first time the blacks had heard the report of a rifle, and the hit on the shoulder would have left a lasting impression on their minds.

MR FITCH'S TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE

About August 1871 I was camped on the Abminga Creek, about 16 miles south of Charlotte Waters, building the southern of my section, when we ran out of salt. I took Fitch with me and two pack horses and went to Dalhousie Springs for a supply. There was some very fine salt there. We got there alright and filled our bags. That morning I aroused Fitch to bring the horses, but found he could not move. He had caught a severe attack of rheumatic fever and was perfectly helpless. I had to empty my bags again. One of my horses was very quiet so I saddled him and led him to the creek. I managed to get poor Fitch into the saddle where I securely strapped him and then rode towards home.

We had to travel very slowly. That day I got to Possum Waterhole and camped there that night. The next day I got as far as Bloods Creek. I intended to leave him there and ride into Abminga only 11 miles away but just as I made him as comfortable as possible I looked down the creek and saw a lot of blacks about a mile off. They were out rat-hunting and I was afraid they would come up the creek early in the morning and find him there before I could return with a trap to fetch him back. He was so bad that I couldn't carry him any further. He used to beg me to shoot him and put him out of his misery.

In the morning I waited until I saw the blacks going eastwards and then I made for Abminga as fast as I could ride. Fitch was laying on his back. I made a shade over him and placed my revolver by his side and his own within his reach. As soon as I arrived at Abminga I sent my cadet Mr Aldridge and another man with the express wagon filled with grass on which to lie him and to bring him in. We fixed up a tent and bed to make him as comfortable as possible.

Mr Aldridge was not away long and he told me that when he got to Fitch he was in a frightful condition. The ants were crawling all over him. They were in his eyes and mouth and he couldn't lift a hand to ward them off. The crows had gathered around. He managed to fire his revolver and had killed one and that frightened the rest away.

He told me afterwards that if he had been able to raise his hand he would have shot himself.

Each of the parties had an electric magneto machine and I gave him some very severe shocks. In the medicine chest there was some medicine for rheumatic fever and these combined brought him round. He was ill for two months but got alright again. The last time I saw him he was a letter carrier at Gawler.

Anyone who has not had experience of Central Australia can hardly imagine the difficulties the men had to contend with in a country almost waterless, without bridges and roads, and in many cases, miles of sandhills and spinifex, but these men were determined to succeed and when the hardest work is never too hard, success is assured!

(To be continued)