



Newsletter

Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association (Australia)

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"Our"WEB ADDRESS" is
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Editor Henry Cranfield
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[November 1999]

COMING SOCIAL EVENTS, NSW, WA and VIC.

NSW XMAS FUNCTION
When: Friday 26th November 1999.

Where: THE ORIENTAL ROOM
THE MANDARIN CLUB
PITT ST SYDNE Y.

Time: 12.00 NOON
Cost: \$ 25.00/ HEAD

RSVP by 22/11/99

Please note the following:

All members who register to attend a function MUST pay the price of entry. Anyone not able to attend should submit an apology prior to the event to avoid payment. We are sorry but there is no alternative if we are to remain financial. For our Xmas function we regret to advise anyone NOT BOOKING will not be admitted as "The Mandarin" require exact numbers prior to the event.

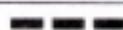
ALL BOOKINGS to:
Keith McCredden by phone to 9342.0009
Laurie McIlfree 9339.6923
Eamonn Fitzpatrick 9792.1791

All these are work numbers.

Yearly \$10 Subs payments to :
Laurie McIlfree
C/O Telstra
363 Oxford Street PADDINGTON . NSW 2021

In this issue:
Fale., Des Vanreyk, Fred Jamieson.

Feature articles by :
Tom Barker , Derek Moore & Gordon Cupit.



Oscar



Tango



Victor



Alpha

A Christmas Message from our President Tom Barker.

As this momentous year draws to a close, on behalf of the committee of OTVA, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all veterans a Joyous Christmas and a Healthy and prosperous New Year/Century/Millennium. [as you feel appropriate]

As an association, we have experienced a year of consolidation and development, which our committee can contemplate in retrospect, with considerable pride. It would be an exaggeration to say our financial worries are over, but we now know that the OTVA can survive and even prosper on its own resources provided that our membership continues to give their basic financial support through annual subscriptions. Our reunions and AGM have been well attended and our membership is expanding as more and more old colleagues become aware that they are eligible to join our association. I encourage all Vets to spread the word amongst their old friends and workmates whenever they know of potential new members.

I would like to make a special appeal, at this time, for more contributions to the Newsletter from OTVA members and office bearers {where they still exist} living outside NSW. The fact that the smaller State Branches may not have the numbers to support a self-funded organisation should not mean that contact is lost with these old friends and workmates. I am aware that some Newsletter contributions have gone astray during our transitional phase, but I would ask you to forgive us for those unfortunate occurrences. Henry Cranfield, our new and intrepid Newsletter editor would be delighted to receive any contributions from Veterans everywhere, so please let him hear from you. Once again best wishes for the Festive Season from all our committee.

Tom Barker President OTVA

Vale:

We hereby record the passing of the following member of our organisation since our last issue. Fred Jamieson and Des Vanreyk

Des passed away last month. Ex C&W Sri Lanka. Des worked In SOR and Telex.

Fred Jamieson joined O.T.C from the RAN where he served as a Chief Petty Officer. At the dedication of the Madang PNG lighthouse known as "The Coastwatchers Memorial Light" in 1968 Fred was the O. I..C of the Naval Guard of Honour party at the ceremony. The tower, which is made of white concrete stands at the entrance to Madang Harbour and the light is visible for 36 Kms to seawards. In order to achieve the brilliant white colour of the tower, special white sand was imported by ship from Australia, The ceremony was attended by Lt Commander R.td Eric Feldt, who was the commanding Officer of the group. Also present on the day, was (Gwaibo the indigene Senior Technician from the Madang P&T transmitting station, who was awarded 'The George Medal "for his part in serving with the Coastwatchers. It was a most moving occasion and the names of all who served are cast in bronze plaques fixed to the base of the lighthouse.

Fred served OTC as a "Plant Officer" at Carnarvon and Moree Earth Stations as well as Broadway and Head Office.

Member news..

Peter Whisson entered the SAN hospital for a double bypass operation on Wednesday 8th September.

Branch Christmas Functions Western Australia and Victoria

Derek Walker our "Man in the West" advises that they are having a BBQ, details being;

When; Tuesday 30th November 1999 Where; Telstra Station Gnangara.

Time: 1230PM Any enquiries to Derek Walker please

From Robert Hall we have been advised the Victorian Christmas function will be held on the Monday 29th November at the Adult Education Centre 256 Flinders Street. 5-Spin.

RSVP to Robert please.

Transfer Traumas*

*I" wounds or injury, whether physical or psychological"

by Derek Moore, CRS 1964 to Maritime 1991

During the "good old days" in CRS transfers from one station to another which in most cases meant moving interstate were regular and comparatively frequent occurrences for many in the Service. I had six transfers in the space of eleven years back in the 60s and 70s and my family suffered a trauma of some kind each time whether as a consequence of being in the wrong place at the "right" time during the transfer, whether due to the conditions of the transfer itself, or whether due simply to Head Office wallahs apparently not having a clue about Australia's geography! Each of my transfers had its moments! Afterwards of course one would often laugh about the hassles but at the time they added a distinct edge to what were major family upheavals in any case. Perhaps some of the episodes I hope to relate over a few issues of the Newsletter will trigger 'fond' memories for CR5 members, or those from other work areas, who also went through traumas of their own as a consequence of being transferred! Wouldn't be at all surprised if others could tell even more horrendous stories than mine. Anyway, here's an account of my family's first Transfer Trauma:

This transfer involved going from VIS Sydney to VIA Adelaide in 1964: My family at the time comprised my wife, Wendy, and two small boys aged 1 and 2. I drove across to Adelaide alone while Wendy and boys stayed back in Sydney so her parents could look after the boys when the removalists arrived at the flat we had been renting and picked up our effects. Wendy was due to follow by air about a week later than me by which time our effects should have arrived and we could then settle into our new home. an OTC staff house, either immediately or at least within a day or so. Seemed a good plan: I didn't have to worry about fractious children in the car on the long haul to Adelaide, Wendy had a clear go to clean up the flat before vacating, her parents minded the boys, and when the family arrived Wendy and the boys would soon move into the OTC house. What could go wrong with that?

I moved into the McLaren Vale pub where I was given a warm welcome including a roaring fire in the guest's lounge -just as well as it seemed to be freezing in South Australia (early October) in comparison to Sydney, although the old iron double bedstead and squeaking saggy springs in the bedroom which by the way had no form of heating didn't bode well for when or if my wife joined me there!

The day my family was due, I drove out to Adelaide airport early afternoon to meet them only to be told by airline staff they had missed the plane in Sydney and they might be

arriving on a later flight that evening and to come back then. This sounded odd and very unlike Wendy to miss a plane so I started to worry about what might have happened. It didn't occur to me to check whether the scheduled flight had actually arrived from Sydney. This was a Sunday and back in the '60 's in SA. there was absolutely nothing open, no cafes, not even a pub as 6 o'clock closing Mon-Sat and closed Sundays was still the law in those days. I don't think there was anything open at the airport either except maybe when a plane was due. So with nothing to do in town, I drove back out to McLaren Vale to pass the intervening hours. Out to the airport again several hours later - after this time phoning to check the arrival time for the flight. The plane and my family arrived, about 930pm I think from memory with two very tired little boys and a cranky wife.

Then I found out what had really happened: My wife's original flight left the terminal at Kingsford Smith on schedule. A young hostie on her first flight - they were still called hostesses back then - had been given the task of helping to mind our small boys during take off and was sitting alongside Wendy as the plane, a turboprop Viscount, lifted off.

As the plane started to rise off the runway Wendy looked out of her window and remarked to the hostie: "should that be happening?". They were seated over a wing and she could see flames and chunks of metal streaming from one of the engines. The hostie turned a delicate shade of Grey and her eyes bulged. Wendy didn't fish out a mirror to see what colour she was at the time. Then the pilot had to fly around using up fuel for a couple of hours and proceeded to give all his passengers good views of Sydney as he flew back and forth, out to sea and back again.

Wendy said she was getting ready to scream with claustrophobia when the pilot finally decided he'd used up enough fuel and they came into land with fire engines and ambulances racing along with lights and sirens ago go. They landed safely and the episode featured widely in the Sydney media at the time

My family had now arrived safely in South Australia Wendy looked askance at the aforementioned bed at the McLaren Vale pub and said she hoped we wouldn't be having too many nights in that! The hotel licensees, the Vandeleur family, and staff, couldn't have been more kind but they just weren't geared up at that time to provide other than casual accommodation, usually for single blokes.

The removalists had told Wendy we would be told when our effects arrived in Adelaide and we could then advise where and when to have them delivered. My predecessor at VIA and his family had already moved out so the house was vacant. Although furniture was provided by OTC in those days this did not include basic essential effects such as beds & bedding, cutlery. crockery etc - staff were expected reasonably enough to provide their own

Daily I'd ask the OIC. Jim Banks, if there was any news of our effects - "no" quote he. The firm which had picked up our effects in Sydney did not have a depot in Adelaide and we didn't know which company in Adelaide were the local agents for the Sydney company. Interstate phone calls were not as commonplace then as they have been now for many years and it required very great urgency for an OIC to make a phone call to another state, in this case to NSW. He usually relied on letters! It was also very much frowned on for mere staff to use the phone at the stations at all, and certainly not for "expensive" interstate calls. It was largely a case of waiting for information rather than being able to chase it.

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I found out in due course that most staff going to any station on transfer usually got there well before their effects arrived. Emergency kits of essential effects comprising enough to get by on were organised later, although when and how comprehensively this happened seemed to depend on the initiative of individual officers in charge. Head Office had to approve their purchase but it never appeared to occur to anyone in Head Office to make emergency kits standard for all the stations where OTC provided furnished houses, all CRS stations then I think except VIS, VIP and VIH.]

Anyway, to bring this particular saga to an end. After more than a week Jim managed to track down which company in Adelaide was holding our effects. These had been there for at least ten days and they had been waiting for us to contact them on where to deliver. For an employee in telecommunications it was a sobering moment as I pondered the state of communications in the outside world - especially the removalist industry. Other Transfer Traumas of mine to be described in later Newsletters. Perhaps the above will spur other Vets to recount their own horror stories when they were transferred [willingly or unwillingly] across the country?

Recovery of OTVA Archival Materials to La Perouse

From Tom Barker

In March, this year, I wrote to the newly appointed CEO of Telstra, Dr Ziggy Switkowski, to congratulate him upon his appointment, make him aware of the existence of the OTVA and its activities and also to seek his "moral support" in our efforts to recover and preserve the archival materials which were previously held in the OTC museum, at Paddington, from Telstra Carlingford exchange to their present, secure location at La Perouse (Sydney Radio)

I have since received a reply from Mr Doug Campbell, Group Managing Director, Wholesale and International of Telstra, thanking me for my letter to Dr Switkowski and assuring me that Telstra is supportive of what has been done by the OTVA to preserve these important Historical mementos of Australian telecommunications for posterity. With this official reassurance from Telstra, I am now hopeful that we may eventually be able to recover those documents and photographs which were part of the Paddington exhibit and are now held either at Ashfield exchange or in other Telstra offices, so that they may one day form part of a permanent exhibit of international telecommunications history at La Perouse, which would be available for public viewing and educational purposes. I realise that this objective is still a long way off and would require a considerable amount of money to achieve (a question (which has not yet been addressed) but I believe it is a worthwhile, long-term ambition for the OTVA and one which would be in the interests of the wider Australian community.

I trust that all veterans agree with me in this

Tom Barker.

History of International Communications Part 1

By Gordon Cupit. [Due to space considerations this will be presented in several parts, Ed]

When Australia was first settled in 1788, the only communications with the outside world and the U.K. in particular, was per ship. In those early days a communication and reply could take up to 3 years. Wars were fought: and finished before Australia even

heard of the hostilities. Ships coming to Sydney did not immediately return to London but roamed the world, particularly the East, searching for return cargoes, usually spices. Significant reduction in this time developed over the years with the introduction of clipper and later steamships. This situation remained until 1870.

It was not until the 1860's that successful undersea cables were developed and these were laid rather rapidly from then on. In 1870, a cable through the Mediterranean Sea travelling east was extended -to Bombay. This allowed news to be sent from London to Bombay by telegraph, and then by ship to Sydney, reducing the time to three or four weeks, providing a ship was available.

In 1872, the Bombay cable was extended to Darwin through Java. At the same time the Overland, Telegraph line from Darwin to Adelaide was laid. The tyranny of distance was now beaten, and Australia now had direct telegraph communication with the outside world. Unfortunately, cable techniques were in their infancy, and telegrams had to be received and transmitted by operators at each relay point. (15 along the Overland Telegraph section alone). The above, together with the fact, that all telegrams between China and London, and from all countries in between, had to use the one-telegraph cable, meant delays of up to 3 weeks from Australia for non priority traffic. Federation was still far off, and the different states,(then known as colonies) created a great deal of in-fighting to get priorities for their Telegrams.

The situation had no change until 1902, when a new cable company, known as the Pacific Cable Board, laid a cable from Vancouver to Sydney via Fanning Island (Gilbert Islands), Fiji, Norfolk Island, and Southport. This cable had great problems not encountered with the Darwin cable, in that landfall on the islands was over great sea distances. Power could only be inserted at the relay points, and these being thousands of miles apart. Large banks of batteries were required, and due to resistance of the cable by the time the signal reached the next relay point it had diminished to a matter of a couple of milli-amps. Such a small current was not sufficient to activate sounders, buzzers or other receiving devices normally used in the early morse era. Cable engineers found that this minute current was however, strong enough to twist a very thin copper wire coil. A miniature mirror was therefore attached to this coil and a beam of light reflected from it onto a graduated scale. This device became to be known as a mirror galvanometer. By using the positive side for dots and the negative for dashes, operators were able to read the morse from the graduated scale. This being quite a skill in those days.

With the passing of time, technology developed devices to amplify the signal to activate sounders, paper tape recorders and later to enable the relay of signals. This reduced transmission times and caused a tremendous saving in manpower which brought about lower charges to the public. In comparison with today developments were very slow.

To be continued..

SEPTEMBER 1999 REUNION ATTENDEES

Jim Anderson John Bennett, Tom Barker. (George Madren, Dave Bourne. Charlie Maiden. Brian Brennan. Keith McCredden, Brian Callaghan, Laurie McIllree, David Charrett. Peter Mills. Bruce Collett, Peter Roberts, John(Glendinging. Mick Quinlan, Henry Cranfield, Ross Smith. Peter Dean, Bob Swinney, Tony Ebert, Ken Theaker, Jack Edwards, Roger Thompson. Eamon Fitzpatrick, Elsie Thornley. David Harkess. Robin Tuckfield, Pam Helps. Bernie & Evelyn White. Jeff Hinwood. Peter Hitchener. Dave Wicks, John Hodgson, Mick Wilden John Hughes, Len Wylde and Colin Kelly.

