

NEWSLETTER

Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association (Australia)
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2003-4

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Please mail all subscriptions (\$10 p.a.)

& address changes to;

OTVA.

PO Box 8.

Georges Hall. NSW 2198

Visit our Web Site:

www.otva.com

OTVA XMAS Social.

When:

Friday 28th November

Time:

12.00 Noon for 12.30 PM

Where:

The Mandarin Club,

Cnr Pitt and Goulburn Streets

SYDNEY

Cost:

\$27.00 per head

***Buffet Luncheon: Chinese and
Western Dishes.***

Bookings by 20-11-03 Please to;

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or

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***Please check your envelope to ensure you are still financial. 5/03 on the first line indicates
your subs are now overdue.***

Our President's Message.

In looking over past Christmas messages, it appears that our social scene has changed very little. The media covers wars, starving millions in Africa and other places with China now Australia's biggest trading partner. Despite all this there are still positive elements and we must nurture this if we are to go forward.

As an OTVA Member, we give thanks to all our members for their support. Times are a changing and as an organization we must move with them and look to the future, our dwindling membership is of concern to all of us. We appeal to anyone with ideas as to how we may better serve you, to bring them forward for consideration.

This Newsletter, because of circumstance, is brief and we apologise for this. We hope to bring forward some new features from our next issue onwards. I do appeal for contributions, as it's a joint effort.

At the close of 2003 may I take this opportunity to wish all members and their families

"A Merry Christmas and a Joyful New Year."

Henry Cranfield.

Social NEWS.

2003 Xmas Function

This is scheduled for the 28th November at the Mandarin Club, Goulburn Street Sydney (on the corner of Pitt Street) and will be a "Buffet Lunch" with Salads, Chinese or Western food available. Due to rising costs the charge is \$27 per person. We look forward again to a good attendance. Further details on the newsletter front page .

Book early and **PLEASE** cancel if you book and then find you cannot attend. If you don't cancel before final numbers have been advised to the Club, your meal has to be paid for .

Spring BBQ.

Due to the day being cold and blustery; attendance at our Kokoda Park function was poor. Those hardy souls who ignored the weather had an enjoyable BBQ.

As we cannot control the weather we hope for better conditions next time and a sincere vote of thanks to all who attended

Autumn 2004 Function.

The first new year function is a " Bring Your Own" lunch time BBQ at Kokoda Park, Concord.

Please mark next years diary as the date is set for Saturday the 20th March 2004.

This BBQ is open to all, not only OTVA Members and their families but this invitation is extended to all those interested in a get together with current and old workmates. We have booked the BBQ area and look forward to a good attendance. More details on the venue facilities will be provided in the next Newsletter.

OTVA Banner:

Bob Murray has arranged for the donation of a banner to display at our functions.

While the original one suffered in the wind at our recent BBQ he has promised 2 more sturdy ones for our future use. Our thanks to Bob, it is much appreciated.

WebSite News.

We are always trying to improve www.otva.com with links to other sites such as www.exotc.com and also provide more up to date news and information.

Robert Brand is putting together a Historical Record of OTC activities. Here is an extract of a note Bob posted on the exotc.com web site recently.

"Here is a common problem - how to attack the huge number of pictures in your collection that make up our OTC history.

I would suggest that you tackle it in 2 ways.

First if you have a few representative of a site or station, scan them and send them in.

Just make the name of the file the description, add the date and the author

e.g. Broadway ITMC 1985 by Robert Brand.jpg

Second if you have a story. Add a few pictures and words to a MS Word file and send it to rb@rbrand.com . I will create a PDF file and add the story to the site. I would ask that you send the photos separately also with the above naming method. See some of the recent stories on the site for a guide.

Little by little, I expect that we will know more about OTC that we ever knew then - the big picture that is. Regards, Robert”

This is a most worthwhile project and apart from official photos not been attempted previously. He would also welcome slides. The idea is to put them on to a CD.

Newsletter,

Bob Lions our new editor has some new ideas for improving the presentation of our Newsletter but due to present study commitments these will have to wait till 2004. This newsletter by the old team.

We are always on the lookout for contributions so all you budding writers please do submit material.

There is also a proposal to scan all available back issues of the newsletter and have these available on a CD in perhaps a pdf format. The scope of this project is under consideration by your committee and it seems we may need a special scanner and software to complete this project

Any information or suggestions from readers would be appreciated .

West Australian Visit

During his recent visit to W.A , President Henry Cranfield took the opportunity to contact “W.A Vets” President. Des. Kinnersley and Secretary Derek Walker, who reported they have 25 active members and only meet once at year at “The TELSTRA Gngangara” communications center. This now has only 3 Ex-OTC employees. Reg Jones ex Maritime who is the “Facility Manager;” Rod Percich who is the INMARSAT director for a Dutch company and also responsible for its Amsterdam facility

operation and thirdly Kevan Bourke who works for Rod Percich. The Inmarsat operation world wide is monitored by 2 staff working in Inmarsat’s London UK office whilst the INTELSAT TT&C is run remotely from Washington D.C USA. My how technology has changed telecommunications operation. There are also two satellite antennas supporting a Japanese satellite programme. There are still ! 2 Marconi H.F transmitters (Ex OTC) with receivers at RAAF Bullsbrook, running two “Telegraph on radio” circuits for a US company. These are also remoted to the US. Telstra are also trying to purchase land adjacent l to the site to keep “Noise Levels” at the present figure. Interference caused by motor vehicles has caused the front entrance to the building to be moved with the car-park at the end of the building in lieu of in front.. In the area formerly occupied by the “Nortel” exchange is now an “Alcatel System 12” node with 70 thousand plus subscribers connected to it Reg Jones has retained all the old OTC plaques etc, which are on display as well as the satellite models ex OTC Head Office (What happened to the Mitsubishi antenna Model?)”

The Samarai Saga.

If you have ever been to Samarai (Papua) you will know what I mean when I say it is an island paradise. It is only about a mile square with a pinnacle hill set in the middle. A stroll around the island takes only about 20 minutes but diagonally, because of the hill, a lot longer.

This is the story of two intrepid technical types belong OTC who came to the Island during my term of service there in 1962. For some unknown reason OTC decided that their coast stations warranted the need to install the newfangled Codan receivers. What a noisy lot they were, I preferred the low volume hash and mash reception that one usually meets in these tropical climes.

The two technical officers in this instance were Ray Hookway and Eric Norris, both of whom you no doubt you have met over the years. Well Ray and Eric arrived one fine day in Samarai and after locating them in our little PNT house at the bottom of the hill proceeded up the hill to

the coast radio station. The callsign escapes me at the moment.

Thus for the next week or two these chaps worked extremely hard installing the equipment all the time keeping a wary eye on the calaboose bois who were cheerily cut the grass on the slope of the hill with razor sharp scarifs - I think you spell it like that. The reason for the wary eye was that both Ray and Eric had only recently been informed that there were murderers and headhunters among them and they had no desire to present the bois with long white pig kai during their stay in Samarai.

There was a little drama however when Ray Hookway decided to fly out at the completion of the job things went astray. At this particular time the Catalina flying boat from Moresby direct to Samarai was being repaired and all flights were being directed through the Gurney Strip at Milne Bay. Eric was to fly out at a litter date. Unfortunately for Ray the strip was fogged in for a week. On that first day Ray was dragged out of bed at 4am in time to meet the 8am flight out of Milne Bay but as the plane did not turn up he had to do another 4 hour small launch trip back to Samarai. Ray was in good spirits during dinner that night as he related his misfortunes of the day.

The next day Ray was up bright and early to say his goodbyes and gave a cheery wave as he departed once more for Milne Bay. He found the 4 hour launch trip invigorating and arrived in time for the plane's departure. But, unlike today's smart system of communication, neither the launch nor Milne Bay had means of contacting either Samarai or Port Moresby and Ray was once again left stranded as the plane was cancelled due to fog over the strip area. A very weary and disgruntled Ray it was who joined us for dinner that night. Following dinner with a hump and a grunt he shuffled off to bed early in order to repeat the performance again the following day. He had settled into the routine by then.

Of course, my family and Eric thoroughly enjoyed the drama as I was not only the PNT man but also the OTC and DCA contact and always aware of the foggy strip condition through contact with Port Moresby and the aircraft. But, as I said before, there was no

onward contact with the launch or Milne Bay and hence the experience for Ray must have been a little trying.

To make a long story short I think Ray, whether he liked it or not, went through the routine about three times until, finally, on the Friday it was Patair's turn to do the route. Patair's pilots used to put the TAA boys to shame all throughout Papua and they simply overcome the fog problem by flying out to sea until they found a gap in the cloud and then they would turn and zoom into the strip at a low level below the cloud until they located the strip, Territory flying at its best, and so Ray eventually made it out of Samarai and Milne Bay. Had he been forced to make another eight hour futile trip again I think he would have settled in Milne Bay among the friendly natives with their bare chested wives and daughters.

That's all for now chaps.

BWW. 1/11/03

Our Treasurer Bernie White is on the move.

Further news and his contact information in the next issue.

Our address for all mail is still:

OTVA.

PO Box 8.

Georges Hall. NSW 2198

(This will change later.)