



# NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 PT. 6

APRIL 1981

## GENERAL SECRETARY

The only nomination received within the prescribed time for the position of General Secretary of the Veterans' Association of Australia was from Charles Carthew. No doubt the reason for his being the only nomination is due to the dedication and the manner in which he has carried out the duties of this important office since its creation.

The nomination will be considered at the next Annual General Meeting of all State associations and there is no doubt that confirmation will be formally approved.

## EXPRESSION OF THANKS

On behalf of all Veterans' Associations throughout Australia, the General Secretary, Charles Carthew, wishes to express through our Newsletter his sincere thanks to O.T.C.(A) for helpful courtesies and kind co-operation, particularly to the General Manager, Bill Schmidt, and Commission Management for permitting use of O.T.C.(A) property and facilities for functions and reciprocal representation at O.T.V.A.(Australia) reunions also the opportunity to visit colleagues in retirement who are ailing and to widows of departed members.

O.T.V.A.(Australia) is also grateful to the Eastern Extension and Associated Companies Retired Officers Society - Marconi Trans-Oceanic Guild - Teleglobe (Canada) Quarter Century Club - U.K. Marconi Operators Society - Society of Wireless Pioneers of America - Cable and Wireless Limited London and O.T.C.(A) for inclusion in their complimentary mailing lists.

## CONGRATULATIONS

Once again to N.S.W. President, Philip Geeves, this time for the publication of his book on The Early Days of Sydney. Philip was in attendance at the Angus & Robertson book stores autographing copies. Philip is overjoyed in that the first edition was a complete sellout.

## HISTORICAL DONATIONS

Historical donations were received from Ron McDonald, Len Vella, Cec Watson, Rus Welbourn, Cliff Birks, Matt Jobson, Bill Jenvey, Rocky Gordon and A.W.A.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

H.E. Solomon, Hon. Secretary, Marconi Trans-Oceanic Guild, writes-  
 quote "I fully appreciate your sentiments Charles, regarding the steady loss  
 of pioneers in the ranks of overseas pioneer telecommunicators. Our membership  
 covers only those employed in the merger of 1929 and therefore irreplaceable.  
 Nevertheless, out of a membership of around 600 in 1952, when the Guild came  
 into being, our present mailing list is around 120 of which about one third more  
 or less still manage to get to town for the annual reunions, which are now  
 luncheons to assist travel arrangements as most people come up from the Provinces.  
 It is good of course, to see the pioneers and spend a few hours as you say,  
 living in the past "Good old days". At 73 I'm a youngster, comparatively, but  
 life one way or another is very full - very few dull moments and lots of happy  
 memories. Our next Reunion Luncheon will be 16 May, 1981, a Saturday, when  
 London isn't so busy from every point of view, so the next Newsletter will go  
 out by mid-April as usual" ... unquote.

INTERNATIONAL LIAISON

The world wide edition of the Society of Wireless Pioneers Inc. of  
 America contains a comprehensive coverage of all members, several thousand  
 in fact, listing Name - Handle/Wife - Hamcall - Phone - Address ... also an  
 Honour Roll and Information Sheet. This, in addition to the regular publication  
 of their "Sparks Journal", is evidence in itself of dedication plus and an in-  
 spiration to morse operators everywhere.

"Teleglobe", the Canadian equivalent of "Telecom", issues "Spargo" -  
 a bilingual staff paper in English and French giving coverage to the "Quarter  
 Century Veterans Club" activities.

The English staff paper "Mercury" and magazine "Zodiac" keep us informed  
 of U.K. cable happenings whilst "Mariner" reports on wireless movement.

In like manner, O.T.C.(A) "Transit" and "Contact" comprise local content  
 read with interest both here, at home and abroad.

The Australian U.S.A., U.K., N.Z. and Canadian veteran newsletters fit  
 into this global interchange of goodwill and fellowship.

ILLNESS

Word has been received of the following having suffered illness over  
 the last six months: Bert Waugh, Ken Springbett, Brian Morrell, Marie O'Hanlon,  
 Ken Stone, Murray Johnson, Bob McConchie, Bob Wright, Lyle Gowanloch, Murray Hill,  
 Horrie McInnes, Brax Horrocks, Frank McCay, Arthur Green, Ron Taylor, Don Tippet,  
 Hedley Tyler, Jack McGroary, Ron Roger and Al Boord.

We wish them and any others who have been ill a complete and fast  
 recovery.

VICTORIAN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 24th Annual General Meeting of the Victoria Association will be held on Friday 29 May, 1981 at O.T.C. House, 382 Lonsdale Street, commencing at 5.30 p.m. Secretary, Charles Carthew would appreciate notification of attendance or otherwise (telephone 544-2514). Interstate visitors most welcome.

One of the subjects to be discussed at the meeting is that future Annual General Meetings be held during the afternoon to save the late travelling home on cold winter nights.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The South Australia Association will be holding their Annual General Meeting on Thursday May 28, 1981 commencing at 7.30 p.m. The venue will be the Public Service Club and visitors welcome. A prior call to Bert Dudley on 298-6337 would be appreciated. Unfortunately, host Brax Horrocks will be hospitalised on that date and unable to attend.

QUEENSLAND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Queensland Association will hold its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 12 May, 1981 at O.T.C. offices, 380 Queen Street, Brisbane. Visitors most welcome. Contact Jim Banks on Brisbane 221-6250 (Area Code 07)

NEW SOUTH WALES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

N.S.W.'s meeting is on Friday 29 May, 1981. Venue - O.T.C. Staff Cafeteria, Hosking Place (at rear O.T.C. House). Meeting starts at 6.00 p.m. with doors opening at 5 p.m. for the early birds to have a chat. Visitors from other States will be very welcome. Contact Gordon Cupit, Sydney 230-5840.

VALE

KEVIN NICHOLSON

Kevin Nicholson passed away 14 October, 1980. Kevin served with A.W.A.(A) Limited January 1940 to 1970 in the Commercial Division and then transferred to A.W.A. Thorn. Kevin's widow, nee Joyce Caldwell, also served with A.W.A.(A) Limited as a telephonist.

SID ZUBER

Our oldest veteran, Sid Zuber, passed away late last year at the age of 95. In his young days, he decided on a career in communications and joined the Pacific Cable Board where he was trained in the then mysterious techniques of cable operating. He served at a number of stations and during his career, passed these techniques on to many a young gentleman in his role of Telegraph School Instructor.

Sid was always a most popular character and the highlight of the 1973 Annual Veterans' Reunion was the attendance of a number of operators who had been students in his school. These included: Jim Vasek (Sydney), Fred St Julian (new emigrant from Canada), Dixon Hawkins (on visit from Canada), Doug Passmore, Morris Bramley (Tuross Lakes), Charlie Bardin (Long Jetty), Charlie Swinney and Jack Guthrie from Sydney. These had all worked with one another at various times in their careers and the majority has not seen Fred and Dixon for 40 years.

A typical indication of Sid's character was a statement made by his family and presented by the minister at his funeral:

*"A good and wonderful father. A man who above all loved his home and family, a christian who believed in God and whose greatest wish on departing this life was to be reunited with his wife. He was an intelligent man, interested even at his great age of 95 in world affairs, a great follower of sport, (played bowls until he was 88), an admirer of all the arts; and good music was a source of great enjoyment to him."*

JOHN CLARKE

Victorian member, John Clarke, passed away as a result of a sudden heart attack on 16 January, 1981 at the age of 69.

He served with A.W.A. Marine from 1941 to 1967 and in retirement made it a habit of playing a regular weekly two rounds of golf.

WAL JONES

Wal joined A.W.A. in August, 1928 as a young boy and worked his way through various positions in the Sydney Central Radio Office and later O.T.C. Sydney Operating Room to the position of Shift Controller. For the very old-timers, Shift Controller is a new term for the old Supervisor. Unfortunately, Wal was retired by invalidity in June 1975.

RAY BAILEY

Ray died late last year after a long illness. He joined A.W.A. in January, 1924 and served initially in the marine and coastal radio services followed by technical duties at La Perouse and Bringelly. Ray retired in June 1958.

FRANK OUVRIER

Another pioneer, Frank joined A.W.A. in May, 1920 and retired in December, 1962. The majority of his service was in the Coastal Radio with the later years being in the Island Room at Head Office.

NICK HASSOU

Nick joined Cable & Wireless in Cairo in 1928 and served in that city for the next 20 years. In 1957, Nick decided to migrate with his family to Australia and took up duty in the Sydney Operating Room as a telegraphist. He was retired in 1976 due to ill health.

MATT JOBSON

Matt died suddenly in January only two months after retirement. Up to this time, Matt had excellent health. He joined A.W.A. in 1939 as a Marine Radio Officer and for the next seven years served on various ships in the Marine Service. In 1946, Matt came ashore and took up the position of Superintendent of A.W.A. Marine Service. This post he held for the next 22 years. In 1968, Matt was promoted to Staff Officer, A.W.A. Head Office group and in 1972 obtained the position of Industrial Officer, Marine and Aviation Divisions. In 1975, Matt took over as National and Personnel Manager of the Broadcasting Division which also had attached to it Industrial duties of the Marine Service. Not satisfied with just doing his normal day job, Matt undertook part-time Instructor duties for a number of years at the Marconi School of Wireless.

Matt was an ardent bowler for 20 years with the Seaforth Club and was responsible for arranging promotion of the 2CH 8 pin awards and annual 8 pin championships sponsored by that Station. In his club, he served as Financial President, Publicity Officer and Social Director and organised regular social activities and other indoor games. He was a member of the successful Number 3 Pennant side which won the Metropolitan Flag in 1970. He was also successful in winning his Club Pairs Championships and Handicap Pairs.

CHRIS RITCHIE

Chris, one of the well-known twins passed away last year. Unfortunately, he has suffered poor health for a number of years. Chris and Bert joined A.W.A. as messengers in the early 30s with Bert going to the Operating Room and Chris to office duties. Bert of course went from success to success in aviation finally becoming General Manager of Qantas, a position from which he only recently retired. Chris on the other hand, remained with A.W.A. for a number of years and subsequently joined Qantas and became Manager of Fijian Airways. He later returned to Sydney's Qantas office where ill health caused his early retirement.

HILTON ROBERTSON

'Robbie' passed away in February after a short illness. Originally a member of P.C.B., he joined the Beam when that service was originally started by A.W.A. in 1927. A fairly versatile character, Robbie was for many years the Senior Services Clerk and many of us well remember the P.E.s he issued. He was also a most competent counter officer and telegraphist. A not forgotten trait was his benevolence and he was always ready to help any of his colleagues and friends. Because of this characteristic, he was appointed by O.T.C. as Welfare Officer in 1962, the position in which he served until his retirement in 1968. During this period, Robbie was also the Secretary of the N.S.W. Veterans' Association.

A good family man, he enjoyed his retirement with his wife and three daughters, one of whom lived on a grazing property at Glen Innes where he spent many happy months on the farm with an added interest of dabbling in stock buying and selling.

KEITH ROBERTS

Keith, who joined the Eastern Extension Cable Company in Adelaide in 1922, died recently at the age of 77 after a long illness. He initially served at Adelaide followed by Perth, Adelaide, Sydney, Adelaide and finally Melbourne. At the time of retirement in 1964, he was the Supervisor of the Accepting Office.

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Regret to advise the passing of the widows of Teddy Edwards and Charlie Barden.

HERE AND THERE

Mrs Inglis, widow of our late esteemed Colleague Bob, phoned and wished to be remembered to old friends. Mrs Inglis, now 85, is staying with her daughter at Ringwood and enjoys reading O.T.V.A. newsletters and extended thanks for being kept on the mailing list.

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Wagga weekenders in the 1950's will remember our late highly esteemed colleague, Frank McCormack. Mrs McCormack gathered the family together at Christmas including 23 grandchildren.

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Congratulations to Geoff Day on becoming a grandfather - twin grandsons is okay for a first.

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Bill Jenvey's friends will be pleased that he is far better these days and has finally settled with his son Randall at 130 Katharina Street, Noosa Heads, QLD 4567 (telephone 071-474 215). Bill's ham call sign is VK4AZO.

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South Australian veterans please note that Bert Dudley can now be contacted on telephone 298 6337.

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Sympathy to Les Brown on the death of his father and hospitalisation of his wife Nina late last year.

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Also late in the year, Bert Hartley involved in a car accident and his wife taken to hospital.

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Congratulations to Howard Newson who recently shared first prize in Tatts.

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Doug Batten back at work after a long period off due to illness.

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Welcome back to Sydney for Trev Hughes after many years of retirement at Crescent Head on the N.S.W. North Coast.

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At the Sydney Annual Reunion, another interesting suggestion came to light, quote "Why not have an O.T.V.A. tie?" unquote.

The idea is there but how can the tie be distinguished without being too flamboyant? The Eastern Cable veterans have their own tie ... so, too have the Trans-Oceanic Marconi Guild ... also the Marconi Operators just to mention a couple of instances. Suggestions are invited accompanied by a diagrammatic sketch of the tie remembering to keep it different from the already popular O.T.C. design - perhaps the O.T.V.A. Badge on a grey tie?

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The Marconi School is no more! After so many years as the "OPEN SESAME" for the 1st Class Radio Operators Certificate of Proficiency - which has now attained Diploma status. Time marches on!

#### MISLAID

We have had an enquiry as to the whereabouts of the widow of A.N. (Blanco) White who served for a number of years in the S.O.R. workshops.

Newsletter sent to Harry Green has been returned undelivered, anyone knowing his whereabouts please advise Gordon Cupit.

#### VICTORIAN REUNION

Melbourne 24th Annual Reunion held in O.T.C. House, Melbourne on November 14, 1981. The attendance was good and visitors included Sir Gregory Gowans, Sir Albert Chadwick, Jack Curtis, Gordon Cupit, John Norris and Mervyn Gildea.

##### Present were:

D. Chambers, A.U. Stewart, G. Russell, A. Vagg, S. Bright, A. Lake, E. Turner, M. Wilton, R. Lane, C. Allison, J.T. Cooper, R. Roger, H. Newsome, C. Benson, S. Harvey, V. Caboon, E. Trezise, V. Findlay, Audrey Bright, Mervyn Fernando, W. McGuinness, A. Green, A. Arndt, D. Humphries, J. Cornish, J. Hunter, W. Bentley, F. James, J. Norris, C. Carthew, V. Molineux, Sir Gregory Gowans, J. Curtis, F. Dunstall, J. Bennett, D. Launder, G. Cupit, C. Tancheff, J. Robinson, Sir Albert Chadwick, W. Shea, Pearl Peat, J. Bedford, F. Ash, E. Lovell, A. McLean, W. Ferguson, J. Gowans, F. Patrick, S. Silver, Q. Shepley, L. Foley, Jean Edwards, D. Batten, D. Crabtree, Ian Reed, R. Hall, M. Gildea, Ted Read, Arthur Green and Bob Symes.

Jean Edwards, nee Constable, made and donated the now traditional reunion cake - the second tier for Norm Seabrook. Another pleasant surprise was the presentation to Vi and Charles Carthew of a special Golden Wedding Cake, also prepared by Jean.

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIAN O.T.V.A. CHRISTMAS MEETING 1980

The Adelaide Branch of the O.T.V.A. held their Christmas meeting on November, 25 - it had been changed from the 27th as the Public Service Club were unable to let us have the use of their rooms on the Thursday, then at the last moment we were informed that they could not accommodate us on the Tuesday, so Brax Horrocks arranged that the meeting be held at his home at Unley Park.

##### Present were:

George Rowe, Norman MacKay, Ron Ward, Dick Evans, Ken Springbett, Hugh Taylor, Randy Payne, Ken Collett, Bert Dudley, Graham Little,

con'd...



Charles Smith, Cliff Birks, Ralph Matthews and Brax Horrocks.

Apologies were received for absence from:

Geoff Cox, Keith Cox, Eric Symes, Rocky Gordon, Keith Parker, Jerrold Shaw, Claude Whitford, Harold Oates, Max Lang and Fred Reeve.

Since our last meeting we were sad to learn of the death of Keith Roberts, he had been ill for a long time including many months in hospital.

We were very pleased and indeed honoured to have Randy Payne of Sydney as a visitor. He gave us a most interesting talk on developments in communications.

This being our business meeting, we had an election of officers for the coming year. President Brax Horrocks and Secretary Bert Dudley were re-elected.

Fraternal greetings were received from the Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth Branches and as usual we had timely letters from Pat Sykes of Perth and Bruce Sutherland of Nelson, New Zealand.

QUEENSLAND ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REUNION

Another successful Annual Reunion of the Queensland Association was held in the office of the O.T.C. Manager on 27 November, 1980. This Association is not particularly large and unfortunately a number of the members could not attend for various reasons.

Present were:

George Scott, Jim Banks, Denis Moorhouse, Alan Jones, John Marshall, John Ponsonby, John Clendinning, Jack Clark and Alf Gooby.

Welcome visitors were:

Veteran General Secretary Charles Carthew from Melbourne, and Merv Gildea representing O.T.C.

Ponto kept the veterans amused with his many jokes and yarns of past times. He also brought in two of his inventions, a method of joining railway lines (which was beautifully made and according to Ponto narrowly missed a world patent which would have made him a millionaire!) The other invention was his famous "perpetual motion machine" which he claimed would work if he could get it properly constructed. This machine had Ponto's usual ingenuity of thought behind it.

Charles Carthew was also in his usual good form but had difficulty in keeping up with Ponto. Charles never gives up in his ambition to do as much as possible for the Veterans' and this was evident at the Reunion.

Although small, the Queensland's functions are typical Veterans' meetings with good fellowship and well worth a visit if in Brisbane at the time.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Western Australia Association held their sixth Annual General Meeting in the Imperial Hotel, Wellington Street on 25 November, 1980. Unfortunately, due to illness the attendance could have been better.

Present were:

Fred James, Ron Cocker, Des Else, "Trig" Trigwell, Gerry Tacey, Doug Lancaster, Derek Walker, Pat Gray, "Sandi" Sandilands, Ron Fisher, Harold Burdett and Jack Thomas.

Fred James was re-elected as President and naturally Brian Morrell as Secretary/Treasurer. N.S.W. members will be interested to note that the meeting agreed that wives be invited to attend future meetings/reunions. Unfortunately our Western colleagues are having financial difficulties and anyone wishing to make a donation will find it readily accepted by Brian Morrell.

NEW SOUTH WALES ANNUAL REUNION

The New South Wales annual Reunion was an outstanding success. The date was brought forward a couple of weeks to coincide with the visit to Sydney of Hal LeQuesne, Vice President of the Teleglobe Canada Quarter Century Club. He and his wife Katherine were guests of honour and presented with life membership and an O.T.C. tie by President Philip Geeves. In response, Harold presented to the Australian Veterans' a magnificent book which contained a pictorial of Canada during the four seasons. Members of the Quarter Century Club autographed the flyleaves. Not only will this book be of interest to our members, but will be an important part of our historical records. Other guests included Mr. and Mrs Bob Somervaille, Chairman of O.T.C., Marjorie Reed, Betty Greenless, Thelma Guthrie and Charles Carthew (General and Victoria's Secretary). Murray Johnson aged 91 came 300 miles and is still in excellent condition both mentally and physically. It is a real pleasure to the members to see Murray and John Mulholland at the Reunions. Les and Hilda Doubleday came on their annual pilgrimage from Rockhampton. We trust they continue this habit. The Reunion was also a time to farewell Ron McDonald who retired on that day.

Present were:

John Mulholland, Kath Morgan, Bill & Phemie Day, Hal & Katherine LeQuesne (Teleglobe Canada Quarter Century Club), Philip & Leona Geeves, Charles Carthew (Vic.), Orm Cooper, Edgar & Erica Harcourt, Cec Bardwell, Ron Godfrev, Marjorie Reed, Margaret Dobson, Brian Woods, Geoff & Rita Day, John Lee, Don Montgomery, Alec & Betty Griffiths, Jack Burgess, Roy Doohan, Bill Luke, Percy Day, Keith Burbury, Alf & Win Culloden, Russ Welbourn, Betty Greenless, Elsie Thornley, Annette & John Taylor, Ted O'Donnell, Ted Bishton, Mick & Betty Wood, Bill & Betty Chant, Bill Chant, Reg Towner, Bill Sanders, Marie Casey, Jack & Evelyn Davis, Jack Chant, Norm Harris, Jack & Jean Whittaker, Gordon Cupit, John & Lyn Hodgson, Bob Fisher, Graham & Diana Gosewinkel, Bernie & Lina Needs, Ray & Joan Baty, Thelma Guthrie, Trevor & Phyllis Thatcher, George & Mary Maltby, Lou & Elgin Brown, Lyle & Aileen Gowanloch, Stan & Fleur Gray, Joe Hawkins, Max Dwyer, Toby Perrett, Tom Hughes, Gray & Bev MacDonald, Bill Danaher, Claude Dalley, Len Rourke, Ray Moyes, John Creswick, Charles & Molly Raecke, Joe Holmes, Harry Stone,

Cont'd

Ken Walker, Jim Bevan, Randy & Dixie Payne, Ron Turnbull, Alban Gregory, Alec Cilia, Jack Creswick, Alf Agius, Neil Donoghue, Jack Hansson, Jan & Ken Howe, Keith & Loma Oxley, Ron & Phyllis Beecham, Matt & Von Jobson, Murray Johnson, Jim & Joyce Anderson, Les & Hilda Doubleday, John & Betty Toland, Charlie & Gwen Maiden, Tony & Mary Ebert, Cyril & Maisie Vahtrick, Bruce & Ena Collett, Bob & Mrs Somervaille, Charles & Esma Watson, Joe & Hazel Collister, Jack & Doreen Edwards, Des & Irene Woods, Ron McDonald, Tony & Doreen Hanson, Ron & Norma Smith and Arthur Oliver.

#### NEW ZEALAND REUNION

The Annual Meeting and Reunion of the Auckland Veteran Cablemens' Association was held in the rooms of the N.Z. Netherlands Society on Friday 5 December, 1980.

#### Present were:

Ron Carter, Bill Craig, Les Gladding, Oliver Crossley, Les Davison, Tom Condon, "Jake" Jacobs, Hugh Evetts, Peter Greenwood, Harry Fox, Axel Mortensen, Fred Studman, Allan Miller, John Todd, Bob Martin, David Thompson, Colin Nielsen, Peter Cowleshaw, Tom Meredith, Len Sedman, John Walker, Jack Potter and Denis Erson.

We were pleased to welcome as visitors Norman Jones (ex P.O.) and Allen McCullough, both one time employees in Auckland Cable Station.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the visitors. It was noted with regret the passing away of Bob Marchant on 4 December, 1979. Bob was the sole surviving member of the Doubtless Bay Cable Station prior to removal to Auckland. He was also a World War I Veteran. Wellknown Aucklander John Stubbs also passed away this year during his retirement to Queensland.

A long interesting letter was received from the daughter of the late Bob Marchant, written by him the day before he died. Overseas Newsletters from U.K., Canada and Australia also received together with numerous acknowledgments for the gift of Christmas cakes by nineteen Auckland staff widows last Christmas.

Brief reports were given by Les Gladding and Fred Studman of their trips overseas this year, including a visit to Mercury House, London, by the latter.

Then followed two hours of exchanging of news past and present over liquid refreshment, and an excellent supper provided by two of the ladies. Despite our comparatively small membership, those present expressed their sincere appreciation of the opportunity to gather together at least once a year.

#### LOST AND FOUND

A lady's brooch was found after the Sydney Veterans' Reunion in November. Would the loser contact Gordon Cupit.

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

It is pleasing to record that all our Veterans are in reasonably good health, although perhaps some have slowed down a little after mild attacks of flu in the winter months.

Ronnie Carter has just published his third book entitled "A Yachtman's Memories of Long Ago". His other two books "Little Ships" and "The Glory of Sail" are now museum pieces and I know of a copy of "Little Ships" that changed hands for \$50.00.

Fred and Kath Studman recently returned from a three months visit to the United Kingdom where they had an enjoyable holiday visiting relatives. Fred found time to call at Mercury House during his stay in London. Les and Gladys Gladding also toured overseas to Honolulu and Seattle where their son lives.

A very interesting visitor from Adelaide was the inveterate traveller Dick "Longun" Evans. Dick, who has been around the world six times since he retired, delights in visiting "out of the way" places. Starting with Afghanistan and Alaska he has been right through the alphabet down to Zanzibar. So he came to sample New Zealand scenery and to renew old PCB friendships. He was manager on Fanning Island during the last war.

After a lapse of many years, Norfolk Island will shortly have a new cable station; but how different from our old office - a few cabinets, flashing lights and automatic switches.

VETERAN TRAVEL NOTES

Jean and Guye Russell off again in August for a good look around England, Scotland and Wales.

Ted O' Donnell liked his trip across to Perth in the Indian Pacific also the return via Adelaide. Ted telephoned when in Melbourne and was keen to read the interesting New Guinea service record of Ted Bishton.

Bill and Barbara Henderson recently spent their first holiday since retirement taking in Japan and Hong Kong.

Don Dunstall back from Peru on a visit to his parents and looked in at the Melbourne Office and managed to meet up with several old colleagues.

Ellis Smellie, having toured overseas and then travelled by caravan and car around Australia is now off on a trip to New Zealand ... like his old colleague Dave Fleming, our Ellis sure gets around despite nearing the nineties.

MORE ON TRAVEL

For N.S.W. veterans there are now two travel organisations specialising in holidays for the retired and elderly people. These have contacted the editor who is passing the information on but not having used their service, unable to give any guarantee.

The first is the Golden Age Holidays and Travel Club which is situated in the George Arcade, 304 George Street, Sydney. The arcade is right opposite Wynyard Railway Station. They have a number of package deals and for those joining the Club, there are quite good discounts. The Manager is Mr. Phil Reid, telephone 233 4496. He will be most keen to forward details of his Club.

The second organisation is known as the Tourist Newsfront which is situated at 3/22 Playfair Street, The Rocks. They will give information on holidays and trips and the contact is Molly Gregory. You will find Molly not only helpful but very agreeable.

#### HISTORICAL INFORMATION

One of the proposals in the new Pacific Cable Scheme is building of a station on Norfolk Island. It is proposed that the station be built in a style somewhat similar to the old station. In addition, the Faculty of Archaeology, Sydney University is undertaking an archaeological study of the site. Because of these activities, we have had requests for photographs, list of staff members history and any other artifacts. Any members who could supply any of these either on a permanent basis for our historical records or on loan would be appreciated. With regard to photographs, copies will be made and the originals returned to the owners if required.

In addition, the old radio station at Broome has been given to the Broome Bowling Club and they are asking similar information on the old building with a view to restoring it and also having a permanent historical display.

Over the last few years, there is an up-surge in requests for historical information and any similar information etc; on any of our stations would be most welcome.

#### ANNIVERSARY

On 12 October last year, there was an event held at the Sydney Opera House celebrating the time, 50 years ago, when Marconi sent a radio signal from his yacht "Elettra" which switched on a display of colour lights at the Sydney Town Hall.

Veteran, Murray Johnson was an engineer with A.W.A. at that time and arranged the Australia end of the demonstration for a radio and electrical exhibition which was being held at the Sydney Town Hall.

Murray was the guest of honour at a recent Opera House function where approximately 200 guests were invited to commemorate the event.

On this occasion at 8.50 p.m., the Italian Minister of Posts and Telecommunications sent a radio signal from the wreck of the Elettra at Eolagna. The signal switched on the lights of the Opera House and the harbour bridge, and triggered a spectacular fireworks display on the harbour.

The latest event was broadcast live in Italy in a 40 minute satellite television link-up which featured Pope John Paul II in Rome and the Australian Governor-General Sir Zelman Cowen at the Opera House.

ANOTHER COMMEMORATION

On 25 November 1980, a commemorative telephone call was made between Mr. Muldoon, Prime Minister of New Zealand and Mr. Fraser, Prime Minister of Australia to celebrate a call made at 1 pm on 25 November, 1930. At that time, the preliminary call was made between New Zealand's Minister of Native Affairs, The Honourable Sir Apirana Ngata and the acting Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. J.E. Fenton. This call took place in the Cabinet Room in Parliament House. It was followed by a first conversation between the Managing Director of A.W.A., Sir Ernest Fisk and the New Zealand Secretary of the G.P.O., Mr. P. McNamara. Following conversations were between the New Zealand Minister of Railways, W.A. Veitch and Sir Ernest Fisk, Oscar Garden and Kingsford-Smith, then followed by representatives of big business organisations present.

All arrangements for the 1930 call were made by A.W.A. and at the New Zealand end there was a public function held in a large Wellington department store with 50 people attending. All those gathered were issued with earphones to hear the conversations. Newspapers of the day were high in their praise and reported that the conversations were heard with remarkable clarity. Speakers discussed the amazing technical achievement and its possibility for helping with the spreading of peace, harmony and goodwill among the nations of the world.

Interesting to note that a three minute call at that time cost £6.15 compared with \$4.20 today.

CANADIAN VISITORS

The President of the Canadian Quarter Century Club, Harold Le Quesne and his good wife Katherine, spent ten weeks in Australia during October/ November. Like most tourists, they visited places many Australians never bother to see including a ten day coach tour of Tasmania and extensively toured Victoria and N.S.W. One week was spent on a sheep and cattle station at Peelwood which is in the out-back of N.S.W., amongst herds of kangaroos and other Australian bush creatures. Whilst in Sydney, they made headquarters at an apartment at Manly where Hal spent many of his younger years. Time in Sydney was heavily committed visiting relatives and friends and regular surfing on the northern beaches.

Another well known Canadian touring was John Wallace with his wife Kay. Their trip consisted of three months touring the south pacific spending time in Hawaii, Fiji on their way out extensively touring and sight-seeing in N.S.W. and S.A. with calls at Auckland, Western and American Samoa and Hawaii on their way home. After Australia's summer and the tropical conditions of the Islands, their systems took a severe shock in arriving home for the big snows in December.

Both Hal and John were seen in the liquor section of a duty-free shop exchanging the remainder of their Australian currency.

ANNIVERSARY - TELEGLOBE CANADA

Teleglobe Canada on the occasion of their 30 years in existence chose to honour their employees who had a similar number of years with the Company. Such officers were treated to a four-day trip to Montreal to attend the formal presentation in their honour and also to attend the Head Office Annual Christmas Party.

The venue for the main function was the very beautiful Place des Arts in Montreal. The President and Chief Executive Officer of Telecom M. Jean-Claude Delorme presented those officers being honoured with a 'Seiko' gold watch and to their wives a silk scarf designed by a prominent Canadian artist which incorporated both the corporate colour and the logo.

# PRIEST OF KING ISLAND

Your editor recently observed an article in the Sydney Morning Herald headed 'The Strange Story of the Priest of King Island'. The article stated that there is a story told on King Island which is situated in Bass Strait about a Catholic priest there during W.W. I who locals say set up a wireless mast and secretly sent information to the Germans.

The priest mentioned was a Sydney priest, Father Archibald Shaw, who was the centre of a political scandal 62 years ago. A federal minister and a Tasmanian senator were forced to resign because of him. His remarkable case is being re-examined by a Father John McMahon of the Sacred Heart Monastery, Kensington, for the purpose of writing a book. The implications of the King Island story was that Father Shaw, an Irish nationalist was transmitting details of shipping movements through Bass Strait. On investigation, the story was proved to be almost entirely fictitious.

The wireless mast at King Island was designed by Father Shaw who in his day was one of Australia's leaders in the new science of telegraphy. The station of King Island was one of several he helped build around Australia for the Federal Government between 1911 and 1914. He never lived on King Island and certainly did not spy for the Germans.

Research by Father McMahon revealed that Archibald Shaw obtained his position as post office telegraphist possibly at Goulburn. His brief post office training seemed to have been his only formal education in wireless technology.

When he was 21, Shaw set off for Papua New Guinea to help at a Catholic mission. He returned to Sydney in 1898 and was ordained as a priest in 1900. Later he was appointed procurator for the Island Missions of the Sacred Heart who were installed in a house at Randwick. It was at Randwick that he turned his hobby of tinkering with radios into a sizeable business. It is claimed he established a wireless station and workshop behind the Mission's house which in a few years grew into a factory employing 160 people. In 1911, he floated a company called Maritime Wireless Company (Shaw System) and was soon winning lucrative contracts from the Government.

He designed and built a new fire alarm system for the N.S.W. Fire Brigade, experimented with the production of electricity by windmills and designed an electric car and remote-controlled submarine. When war broke out, his company was quick to get into munitions. All the time he was running his company, he lived and dressed as a priest and retained his job in the Sacred Heart Mission.

Father Shaw died in 1916 at the age of 43 and after his death it was found that although a brilliant scientist and inventor, he had difficulties with the financial side of the business and resulting from his government dealings, the Government set up an enquiry which found that a senator and a minister had excepted bribes to influence the Government to buy his wireless business.

Father McMahon says that surprisingly little has been recorded about Father Shaw and nobody today even knows what he looks like for it appears no photographs have survived. It has been ascertained that Father Shaw had one leg longer than the other.

Should any of the veterans have any information on Father Shaw and/or his wireless activities, please contact Gordon Cupit on 230 5840.

RANDOM NOTES FROM THE DIARY

It was always hard to explain just why operators could read the buzzer note with comparative ease yet found the telegraph sounder difficult to master.

Similarly, cable signals on tape could be interpreted expertly by the experienced cable operator but proved so essentially different in respect to the otherwise untrained eye only able to transcribe spaced dots and dashes formed by the beam wireless undulator ... separate systems with expertise restricted to each.

Taking the Rugby Press from London via Beam Wireless on the sounder meant the use of two typewriters each containing many carbon copies so that when the first operator completed his session the relief would nonchalantly carry on until the changeover became routine to the end of transmission. This rostered duty was accepted with characteristic aplomb despite the clatter of circuit sounders and other extraneous noise.

The change from transcribing ten letter code to five proved beneficial all round enabling better rhythm, less fatigue and minimising error. A contributing factor to overcome tiredness on night shift was the changing round each hour from one duty point to another. Working as a team lead to natural esprit-de-corps.

COLUMN 8

Recently, it was noticed in Column 8 of the Sydney Morning Herald that A.D. Gregory, Sydney veteran and older brother of that famous test cricketer, Jack Gregory was wondering whether anyone in N.S.W. has a grandparent born before his grandfather Edward. Albyn was born in 1880 and his grandfather in 1805. He was wondering if it was possible that someone alive today has a grandparent born in the late 1700s.

SMITH AND ULM

by "Recorder"

In May 1928, it was reported in Suva that the Australian aviators Kingsford Smith and Ulm were about to attempt a flight across the Pacific. They were presently in California and had secured a tri-motored Fokker plane which they had named the "Southern Cross". So, in the first few days of June, there was intense excitement in Suva when it was known that the plane had left Honolulu and was bound for Fiji.

In the only suitable landing field, Albert Park near the Grand Pacific Hotel, there was considerable activity as workmen removed several trees near the centre of the park and prepared a diagonal run-way of several hundred yards



from the North-east corner to the South-west corner, where the last hundred years had a slight rise - just where it would be needed if the plane should have any landing difficulties. Howard Ellis and Clive Joske, two well-known Suva businessmen who had been pilots in the first World War were directing operations.

Unfortunately, I was on duty in the cable office when the Southern Cross flew rather low overhead, enroute to the park, but once it had landed safely, I lost no time in dashing along to inspect the machine. By the time I got there, the official welcome was over and the crew had departed to the Grand Pacific for a well-earned rest after their long thirty-three hour flight from Honolulu.

The following day it was decided to give the airmen a "Ball" at the Hotel and it was indeed a great success. There was little formality on this occasion, for the airmen had only their flying suits with them and the local people entered into the spirit of the occasion. There was long and prolonged applause as the aviators were carried shoulder high into the ballroom where the dancing commenced. It was a marked contrast to the usual formal affairs held in the Grand Pacific. Unfortunately, the hospitality of the Suva citizens was a little too much for the two Americans, Messrs Lyon and Warner and we were obliged to carry them upstairs and put them to bed, long before the end of the party.

As Albert Park was too small for a fully laden plane to take off, it was decided to fly the nearly empty Southern Cross to Naselai Beach some twenty miles away, where there was a long straight stretch of hard sand. Consequently, drums of aviation fuel were delivered to this beach in preparation for the next flight to Brisbane. Clive Joske was invited to join Smithy in this short flight to the beach.

There was no intercom system on the Southern Cross and a huge fuel tank separated the two Australians from the American navigator and the radio man. Communication was by means of a forked stick holding a written message and this stick was passed to and fro over the top of the tank. Ulm came into the Cable office one morning to send a message to Australia and while chatting with Reg Henry, our supervisor at the counter, he inadvertently dropped one of these messages on the office floor. After Ulm had left, Reg found the crumpled paper which bore Ulm's message and Lyon's terse reply.

Couched in picturesque and descriptive Australian and American terms, it definitely raised the eyebrows of Reg and was the source of many chuckles long after the plane had continued on its flight to Brisbane. The note indicated that in the early part of the long flight the Aussies, Particularly Ulm, were extremely doubtful of the ability of the two Americans to navigate or even to keep the plane on the correct course. Lyon did not agree and said so in equally forceful language. No doubt, when the Fiji group was sighted some hours later, all four were thrilled at the prospect of an early touch-down and any doubts forgiven and forgotten.

Some time after this, I had a short flight in the Southern Cross in Australia and I could appreciate the hardships Smithy and Ulm endured in their long flight from Hawaii. The roar of the engines was simply deafening and after a flight of less than an hour, it was some time before I could hear anyone speak, even when one yelled at me.

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A REUNION MILESTONE

The O.T.V.A.(Vic.) quarter century Annual Reunion is scheduled for the second Friday in November, 1981.

Foundation President, the late Bob Freeman, at the end of twelve months in office, nominated the late Harry Rowe as his successor and added the hope that future presidents come from the Committee year by year and pre-1947 A.W.A. Limited, O.T.C.(A) and C.&W. be represented in turn.

The late Malcolm Tregenza followed and then the late Joe Gilligan.

In each instance, nominations were seconded at the Annual General Meeting and carried by acclamation and the 24 names on the Presidents Board is fitting testimony of approval for a popular and well established tradition.

O.T.C. BOWLING GROUP

It is proposed to hold a Bowls Day at Corinthian Bowling Club, Oak Street, Ashfield, on 28 June, 1981, as the guests of Stan Wright.

The Club can accommodate both ladies and gents and the alternatives of the games are:

- (i) Game between O.T.C. Bowling Group men in morning, ladies social with Corinthian bowlers.
- (ii) Game against Corinthian bowlers as mixed or men only in morning and/or afternoon.

Lunch will be provided at a nominal cost, intending players are asked to contact Keith Vincent, 230 5836 work, 76 8861 home.

TO PASTURE

Les Reynolds

Les recently retired as Manager (Melbournradio) where unfortunately he has lately not had the best of health. Les's father, George, is well known to the old pioneers as he was also in the Marine and Coast services. Being a chip off the old block, one cannot expect anything other than Les joining the Industry in 1938 and subsequently transferring to the CRS in 1945. During his career, Les served at Townsville, Melbourne, Darwin and Brisbane. He was promoted to Station Manager in 1967.

Ron McDonald

Ron recently retired after serving for 46 years. Like Les Reynolds, he also followed in his fathers footsteps, being the son of "A.S." who was Chief Engineer

of A.W.A. and O.T.C. Ron joined A.W.A. in 1934 as a Cadet Engineer and served in A.W.A. and O.T.C. as an Engineer until 1968 when he became the Traffic Operations Chief. Full details of Ron's history were in a recent copy of the 'Transit'. No doubt in retirement, Ron will extend his hobby of bluewater sailing.

#### Ted Gunning

No doubt another casualty of shift-work, Ted retired recently due to ill health. He initially joined the Cable Service in Adelaide in 1944 and after three years in that city, was posted overseas where he served at Colombo and Batavia. This was followed by another term at Adelaide, then four years at Suva and finally in 1953 to the Sydney Operating Room. For the last 12 years, Ted has been employed in the Investigation Section and at the time of retirement was a Senior Investigation Officer.

#### ADDENDUM

In our last Newsletter we gave a history on Pat Gray in the 'Pasture' columns from when he joined the Commission. It has now been ascertained that Pat joined the Royal Navy in 1937 when he was a mere lad of 15½. He remained in the Royal Navy until 1953 seeing service in WW2 and the Korean War. During his service, he was in the Signals Department and on discharge held the rank of Chief Petty Officer Telegraphist. It was because of his naval service that Pat was snapped up by O.T.C. for the Coast Radio Service. It was 14 years after Pat joined the Coast Radio Service that your Editor first felt the blast of Pat's power with the pen. He unwittingly notified Pat of a transfer to Darwin and when Pat strongly objected, naively under advice from a superior officer told Pat he had never completed a tropical term. You can imagine your Editor's red face when on checking the records ascertained that of Pat's 14 years service, 12 had in fact been at tropical locations. It was true that he had not completed a full term at any station as Pat was always moved to another station before the end of the term. Sorry Pat for the omission of your 16 years naval signals history in the last Newsletter.

#### CHARLES SANDELL IN ANTARCTICA

As notified in the last Newsletter, Charles Sandell, the last surviving member of the Mawson Antarctic Expedition died in Esperance at the age of 93.

The following interesting story has since appeared in the 'Albany Advertiser':

"A notice in an Esperance newspaper announcing the recent death of Charles Albert Sandell probably caught the attention of only those who had known him.

But behind the notice and not picked up by any other news media in Australia - not even the local Esperance newspaper in which it appeared - lies the story of Charlie Sandell, the last surviving member of the 1911-14 Sir Douglas Mawson expedition to the Antarctic.

I first met Charlie Sandell when he was a strapped 85-year-old, hale and hearty, just as he was right up to a few days before he died at the age of 93.

During the years 1911-13, Charlie lived in a tiny shack on Macquarie Island, transmitting and receiving messages by telegraph. For this and for his other exploits he received the Antarctic Silver Medal in the 1916 honours list, writing his name in the annals of the history of the Antarctic.

Charlie was born in Somerset, England, in 1887 and came to Australia in 1909.

With a developing interest in the new radio and telegraphy techniques, he joined what was then known as the Wireless Institute of N.S.W.

It was through the institute that Dr. Douglas Mawson (later Sir Douglas) sought interested radio operators willing to accompany him to the South.

Charles applied and was accepted, soon finding himself on the way to the land of penguins and icebergs, aboard the sealer Aurora, a 600 ton sailing ship fitted with engines.

Later at his home in Taylor Street, Esperance, Charlie kept many mementoes of his three year stint on Macquarie Island and of his friend, Mawson.

In his possession were two complete autobiographies written by Mawson and giving an account of his expeditions. These were personally signed by the famous explorer.

Charlie also had a complete diary of his own exploits in which he faithfully recorded every moment of his stay, including many of the telegraphic messages sent and received at his lonely outpost on Macquarie.

In his dairies one could read entries such as this:

*"Ever since last year (1912) I have put forward the theory why the boys down south at Mawson do not hear us from Macquarie. It is because the magnetic South Pole, which is somewhere to the east of Adelie Island causes the interference. I do know that when the Southern Lights are showing in the sky, the radio is practically useless."*

A tragic entry was dated 4.12.13:

*"Aurora (Captain Davis) was expected to pick us up to return to Adelaide. We received a message last night that Dr. Mawson had not yet returned to base and if the boat (Aurora) does not leave the South before the end of February, there will be great danger of being caught in the ice."*

*It is hoped that Dr. Mawson's party is safe and sound. News came through last night saying that Dr. Merz and Lieut Ninnis were deceased but they did not say from what cause."*

(Later it was verified that Ninnis fell through a crevasse after the first two sledges had gone over safely and Mertz had died of malnutrition.)

*"Poor fellows", Charlie continued, "to find an untimely end down there. Mertz came from Switzerland and was aged 30 and entered the expedition as ski expert, and Ninnis was aged 26 and hailed from London."*

"It seems such a cruel fate to me to allow such fine fellows to die an untimely death in Antarctica and it is appalling, but I suppose the price that science extracts, regardless of individuality.

News has also been received that Dr. Mawson has returned to base."

One of Charlie's most treasured possessions from the Antarctic was the complete wooden propellor of the first De havilland plane to visit the region.

The plane was a failure in those days, oil in the engine iced up and the plane was rendered useless.

So the craft was dismantled and the engine and propeller were mounted on a type of sled - but it lasted only for about 20 km of travel before nosediving into the snow.

Charlie found the prop buried in about 3 m of ice and snow and, when Mawson said to him, "If you dig it out, you can have it," Charles took him at his work, laboriously uncovered it and finally got it back to Australia. It is still at him home in Esperance.

He also has a piston pin and part of the piston from the same plane.

Another prized possession was a vital tide gauge which Charlie retrieved by diving into the icy water into which it had been accidentally dropped.

His ability to withstand such extreme temperatures in the water was probably a factor which contributed to his being a year-round swimmer, a sport he gave up as late as 1970.

I remember him telling me of a time when this type of swimming activity was quite rare. He was once visited by newsmen from the city who got him out of bed one cold, windy, wet morning so that they could get a photograph and story for their papers.

Charlie, always ready to oblige, donned a pair of shorts and raced into the surf while the newsmen clicked happily away with their cameras.

He reckoned that it was warmer in the water than on the beach and said he felt sorry for the guys wrapped up in heavy coats trying to keep out the cold.

For 29 years, Charlie rode a bicycle around Esperance, disdaining more modern forms of transport. He was a familiar sight riding down to the local for a couple of pints.

Macquarie Island, way down in the Antarctic, now has a touch of Esperance about it.

If you consult your atlas, there, down on the west coast is Sandell Bay, named by Mawson for Charlie.

A PLEASANT MEMORY

The first annual reunion of O.T.V.A.(Victoria) was held in Melbourne on 14 November, 1957 and seventy veterans were in attendance.

A beautifully bound autograph book, previously presented to the late E.G. Brooke, Australian General Manager, commemorating 61 years of service with Cable and Wireless, was on view.

This token of appreciation took months of patient perseverance on the part of Mark Wilton to assemble page by page and contained the signature of all cable personnel in the Southern Hemisphere.

SOUND COLLECTION

During a recent exhibition of old cameras in O.T.C. House, the editor made contact with Harold Burtoft who not only is interested in old cameras and photography, but also of old sound and electronic equipment. Harold, now retired, was an electronics engineer with D.C.A. and resides at 114 Links Avenue, Concord, telephone 73 2369. He welcomes persons who are interested to inspect his collection and would prefer a telephone call to make arrangements. One stipulation is that parties be limited to ten as this is about as much as he can handle in a private residence.

MORSE IN ART

Sitting in a happy group at the Brisbane Annual Reunion, Ponto came up with the adamant assertion that he knew of an operator who could read seventy repeat seventy words per minute morse. The following night at the packed Sydney Reunion, another group brought up the very same topic of conversation but this time the accepted peak of morse receiving was fifty words per minute. Now this is quite a controversial point of view based on hearsay rather than positive proof, and the question really is could it be possible to reach 70 wpm? Write to the Editor if you can substantiate the ultimate in morse reception.

TECHNICAL AID FOR THE DISABLED

It is noticed in a recent article in the magazine of Technical Aid to the Disabled (N.S.W.), that in three months they completed 82 new jobs and undertook seven repairs and rebuilds. Some samples of the new jobs are:

*Special chair for physio-therapy, paper feeding aid for typist with no upper limb functioning, light-weight portable folding bed for patient with spinal fusion, spare wheel rack in boot of car to fit wheelchair, extended grip on keys to suit weak hand and one-handed can opener.*

One can see from these examples that any handyman with imagination could be of assistance to this organisation and it would be a worthwhile activity for those in retirement. Engineer, Eric Bachmann of O.T.C. (telephone 230-5264) is the Editor of the T.A.D. News and would welcome enquiries to joining the organisation. Members may remember an article on this worthy cause in a previous Newsletter.

A SPECIAL WORD OF THANKS FROM OUR GENERAL SECRETARY

In view of his impending retirement, permit me to pay a special and sincere tribute to Gordon Cupit in recognition of his dedicated work covering Veteran activity.

When Harold White kindly gave permission to launch the April and October Newsletters, Gordon took on the job as Editor and the ultimate result speaks for itself, for he built up a present day circulation in excess of 500; even extending overseas.

Working with Gordon in complete harmony and with a mutual regard for the overall welfare of O.T.V.A. proved to be memorable - a privilege and pleasure - above all, an inspiration.

CRACKER'S CURE

By "Recorder"

Fifty years ago, in the days before the discovery of penicillin and the sulphur drugs, life on the Pacific Atoll islands was always fraught with the risk of coral poisoning. It became an unwritten law for staff members of the Pacific Cable station on Fanning Island, to carry a small phial of Tincture of Iodine in ones shirt pocket, or if no shirt was worn, in a special pocket in ones shorts. The application of iodine to a fresh abrasion usually prevented any infection, and it was felt that the stinging pain when iodine was applied to an open wound, indicated that it was having some effect and that one might avoid any subsequent infection. Of course, iodine was worse than useless on a wound that was already infected.

When sailing across the lagoon, one frequently came across coral reefs which stretch right across the whole length and breadth, except in the area of clear blue water near the entrance. When a boat became stranded on a reef, it was necessary for the yachtsman to get out and haul the craft over to deep water. Frequently he would sink up to his knees in sharp coral pinnacles and of course, both legs would be scraped and bruised.

One day when out sailing in the station boat, Cracker Houston scraped his shin bone badly on the coral and then discovered that he had forgotten to carry the usual bottle of iodine. Within a few days he had a very bad dose of coral poisoning - a long blue-black wound about five centimetres wide and twentyfive long.

This was indeed very painful and for weeks he was confined to his room. Even when out of bed and sitting in a chair, he was obliged to keep his wounded leg elevated on a second chair. The doctor tried this cure and that cure, but the wound failed to heal and indeed looked blacker than ever. Some new lotions, just received from Germany were tried, but all to no avail.

Cracker was getting desperate - the boredom of sitting in his room all his waking hours was getting too much - the Superintendent was getting rather impatient at the amount of overtime caused by the staff shortage and the doctor had exhausted his supply of lotions, creams and powders. Thoughts of sending him away to Hospital in Honolulu by the next supply vessel were discussed, but that was several weeks away and it was hoped that things would clear up before the ship arrived.

Having read all the available periodicals in the library, including the Auckland Weekly News, The Illustrated London News and the Sydney Bulletin, and having read many of the library books until his eyes nearly popped out of his head, Cracker was a picture of despondency.

Sitting in his chair one day with his wounded leg resting on a second chair, his eyes wandered over to the marble-topped washstand and eventually settled on his tube of toothpaste. Idly reading the label on the tube, he became intrigued by the words:

*"Colgates Antiseptic Toothpaste"*

*"Why not?"* said Cracker to himself, *"If it's antiseptic it's worth trying."*

So he hobbled over to the washstand, carefully pressed the open tube and spread the contents over the wound in his leg. Within ten days the wound had completely healed and he was able to resume duty.

Was it coincidence, was it faith, or was the toothpaste really effective?

NOTE: Present day toothpaste does not carry the word *"Antiseptic."*

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#### COST OF TELEGRAMS - (NEWSPAPER CUTTING FROM LETTERS TO EDITOR)

Could someone tell me why a telegram of 22 words to England costs \$1.80 and a telegram of 20 words to Wahroonga (an outer-Sydney suburb) costs \$5.60?

Mr. Tom Alford, Telecom public relations manager said:

*Your reader has drawn comparisons between different categories of telegrams. The 22-word international telegram to England would have been letter-telegram rate delivery by post the following day at 10c a word, minimum 11 words. This rate has been letter-telegram rate, to England is delivery by messenger within eight hours at 20c a word, minimum seven words. Twenty-two words would cost \$4.40. International rates are heavily subsidised being based on the rates applying in developing countries where the telegraph is the major form of communications. In developed countries the internal cost is much higher because the use of telegrams is declining. In England, the basic charge for a telegram is one pound and ten pence per word plus 15 per cent value-added tax. Twenty words would cost \$7.30 (Australian). In Australia the same telegram would cost \$5.80.*

(EDITORS NOTE: Amazing deduction and we hope Mr. Stephenson who sent the letter understands, as we are confused.)



A REMINDER

One of the veterans when asked why he did not return his lapel name tag year after year just grinned and replied "I save 'em just like people collect stamps!"

THE DIARY ONCE AGAIN

Way back in the early days of Beam Wireless staff, esprit de corps and good fellowship could only be better described as "FAMILY".

When one of the operating staff lost his unopened pay-packet, the full amount was instantly made up by voluntary contribution; on another occasion the prevalence of sickness meant a married colleague going on half pay and when the financial strain became really too evident a "whip round" among the chaps soon helped minimise an otherwise worrying problem. Again, serious illness immobilised a young operator just back from Fanning Island so a "working bee" was organised to paint his house each helper bringing his own brush, etc.

Even today, in their retirement, a group of "Beam Boys" visit each others home every few weeks or so in unbroken sequence over the passing of time.

DARWIN AIR-RAID

Your Editor finds it extremely difficult to get members to put pen to paper, however a recent telephone conversation with Jack Doggett revealed the following story on the Darwin air raids.

Jack was in Darwin at the time of the Japanese air raid, although not a member of the station staff, but in Darwin on maintenance duties on that fatal day. He was talking to a Mr. McNulty who had recently installed air raid shelters and was at the station for payment for the job.

Lou Curnock called Jack to say he had just received a call from the Bathurst Island Mission that large formations of planes, presumably Japanese, had passed the Island heading towards Darwin. Lou immediately telephoned the RAAF Control Centre to pass the message on. Lou then asked Jack to wait outside and give him the word when the air raid sirens sounded. It was a fine clear morning and quiet, and after about ½ an hour they heard sounds like thunder, which due to the clear sky could only be gun fire. Still there was no siren and they then sighted planes coming in and immediately dived for the air raid shelter. This was 9.55 am. The bombing immediately started and they were under continual assault until 10.55, when there was a slight respite, then on again when another wave of planes arrived. The second period of bombing lasted to approximately 11.30.

At the time, there was a convoy carrying troops in the harbour, luckily the troops were ashore and inland. A number of the troop-ships and the wharves were the first targets. After these had had quite a battering, the planes then concentrated on the civilian airport badly damaging not only the air port but the DCA Radio installations. The cable station was damaged, but fortuitously there was no damage to Darwin Radio (VID).

At noon the planes returned and concentrated on the RAAF station. During the quiet period between 11.30 and noon, there was a tremendous explosion when the "Neptuna", an ammunition ship in the harbour exploded. The DCA people came over to VID, quite annoyed having been given the all clear by the RAAF just a few minutes before the civil aerodrome was bombed. Jack is of the opinion that the Japanese did not hit Darwin Radio with the intention of possibly using the station themselves should they invade Australia at that Port.

The next day Jack tuned into a broadcast from Canberra which gave the news to Australia that there has been a slight raid on Darwin with a few casualties, only minor damage to service facilities. Jack said he felt sick at this report when so many of the towns people had been killed and injured.

Jack had previously put in the gear at the Darwin station to communicate to aircraft on the first airmail service between London and Australia and when the airport was bombed, the DCA people were able to use that equipment to continue their operations.

The week after Darwin was hit, Jack was given orders to proceed to Townsville but as there were no planes available for direct flight, he had to go via Adelaide.

In September, 1942 further raids were made on Darwin and Jack was flown over by flying boat to repair the damage to the radio station which was hit on this occasion. At the time the station was in two sections, one building contained the main equipment the other the engine room and power supply. The bomb had fallen through the roof of the engine room causing tremendous damage and parts blown everywhere. Jack was able to get the engine together and once again working with the available spare parts and the help of officer-in-charge Jerry O'Hare. Frank Ouvrier being considered the best carpenter on the staff had the job of fixing the roof. (these repairs which after all were only an emergency must have been relatively well carried out as nothing further was needed at the station until it was moved to Parap in 1949).

On completion of the job, Jack was returned to Townsville and subsequently to Milne Bay where he worked with the Americans. At Milne Bay, he was bombed on numerous occasions and spent many an uncomfortable hour in fox holes.

Jack joined the CRS in 1922, was taken over by O.T.C. in 1946 and retired in March 1961. Being a technical officer responsible for CRS Station maintenance, he was well-known by all the Station staff not only for his technical ability, but for his capacity to drink gallons to tea.

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"IT'S QUITE SAFE", THEY SAID, AND RAN.

(By Tom Hughes)

If my memory serves, the hole was about 20 feet from the slit trench. It was about a foot in diameter and not quite perpendicular: about 8 feet down, in the loose stones and dirt, one could just make out the fin of the bomb. 100 pounds of UXB (unexploded bomb).

Before my time, a twin to this bomb had demolished half the reinforced concrete building; it hit the Fordson engine which vanished without trace and tossed the alternator 50 yards through the roof. It used to take four strong men and a

crowbar to drag that alternator across the floor - after you removed the bolts that secured it to the bed-plate and the concrete engine bed. Frank Ouvrier was inside the building seconds before the bombs came down.

Darwinradio of those days was built in a swamp near the Botanical Gardens and the slit trench was in the only bit of solid ground near the station, and we kept radio watch from it when the air raids were on.

Sitting there alone one would think about that unexploded bomb, so close you might have heard it tick on a still, dark night. And when other bombs landed nearby, (the station seemed to be a target still) there seemed a chance they might detonate the thing. To our simple minds it wasn't a good idea leaving it there and we prevailed on the boss to invite the Navy to remove it.

The boss, Gus Hart, accepted the Navy's advise when they told him the bomb was "quite safe", but when he told us, he found our courage didn't match his own. To save face, this time he called the Army in and I went along to give moral support.

Inexplicably, Frank Ouvrier was there when we arrived, with a pick, shovel and crow-bar extending the slit trench. The only time I ever saw Frank in such a role. A good cook and brewer but outside of that, more of a spine-basher. But, then, he was a most unpredictable character.

The Lieutenant peered owl-like down the hole and claimed intimate knowledge of this breed of bomb. "Quite safe", he said "Dead as a dodo". Frank ambled over, dragging the crow-bar.

"What about the risk of another bomb setting it off", suggested Gus. "Not a change; you couldn't set it off with a sledge-hammer."

"That's what I've been telling them", shouted Frank, lofting the crow-bar and spearing it at the hole. I froze, petrified.

Not so the Lieutenant. When I looked around he was twenty yards away and accelerating. The sergeant was gaining on him.

It took six men two days to dig it out, warily trenching up to it in the stony ground to tenderly, gingerly, defuse it. Frank enjoyed every minute.

Vale, Frank, old timer. I hope there's a good brewer, wherever you are.

#### KNOW YOUR COLLEAGUES

##### WILF ATKIN

Wilf was, and still is one of those active people who came up with ideas and followed them through. Many of the things that O.T.C.'s staff now enjoy are the brainchild of Wilf during his years of service. The first that many of us heard of Wilf was when he obtained his first-class Operators Certificate in 1926 and joined the Marine Service of A.W.A.

It was only a year later in 1927 that Wilf nearly rose to fame, but sound common-sense or something caused him to refuse an offer of high adventure. On this occasion, he was an operator aboard the Royal Mail Steamer "Tahiti" and

on board was Kingsford Smith, Keith Anderson and Charles Ulm who were travelling to the United States in search of a sponsor for a flight from America to Australia in the "Southern Cross". Because of his duties, Wilf became closely associated with these gentlemen and Smithy endeavoured to enlist Wilf as a Radio Officer for that historic flight but he preferred to remain on the ship with the gayer social life. This famous flight subsequently made world news; however, Wilf still feels he did the right thing as, in his own words, he claims he is still around whereas these three airmen have passed on many years ago.

In 1928 with the opening of the Beam Wireless service, Wilf could see opportunities ashore and gained a transfer to the Melbourne Central Radio Office. It was in Melbourne that Wilf took a leading role in forming and running the famous "Loyal Order of Aktugs" which was an extremely active social club. He was also President of the Melbourne Office Cricket Club.

Just before the Second World War, we saw the move of Wilf to the Central Radio Office, Sydney, where he managed to find some time in his social and other activities to carry out his duties as a Senior Telegraphist! Wilf was quickly snapped up by the Sydney staff to be President of the Cricket Club where he organised annual smokos, but not just content with organising, Wilf wrote many of the sketches for these shows.

When General McArthur established his headquarters in Melbourne, Wilf and a couple of the Sydney staff were rushed to our southern office to help cope with the traffic rush. Later when this activity ceased, Wilf was sent back to Sydney where he carried on traffic duties in the Beam (and Wilf incidentally was one of those first-class Tels we had at the time).

In 1952 the Commission stepped up their interest in staff welfare and Wilf was promoted to the Administrative Branch and thus became the Commission's first Staff Relations Officer.

At the inception, duties of the Staff Relations Officer included Secretary of the Social and Sports Club, Editor of the Staff Relations Circular and Secretary to the Staff Relations Committee. In this role, as well as carrying out welfare activities, Wilf was still able to devote time to his special talent of dreaming up ideas for his colleagues and many of the amenities we enjoy today were obtained by Wilf who was highly regarded by management.

Wilf was one of the Foundation Committee of the Veterans' Associations and the first Secretary of the N.S.W. group, he later became President. From a small beginning the Veterans' has developed to a point where we now have 500 members and in addition we have a strong liaison with similar groups overseas.

Another of his achievements, and Wilf considers it the most satisfying, was obtaining a charter for the O.T.C. Credit Union. Not only did he do a great deal in setting up the Credit Union, he was also the foundation secretary of the organisation. Today, the Credit Union handles finance in the million mark!

In the course of his welfare duties, Wilf visited most of the staff sick in hospital and attended a number of funerals of his former workmates. This convinced him that early retirement was most important, so in 1962 he retired which was six years short of his time. There is no doubt that this had paid off as Wilf has spent 18 happy years with his good wife in their home on the Gold Coast.

Retirement to Wilf meant taking an active part in community affairs and becoming an avid bowler. He has kept up his skills with the pen by writing sketches for Bowls Club functions and is a regular contributor to the local newspaper.

Wilf now 78, is still young at heart and is always very happy to see any of his old colleagues should they be passing through Broadbeach.

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#### HONORABLE MENTION

##### DOUBLE CENTURY EDITION

In August 1947 the very first issue of the *Mariner*, then entitled the "MARCONI MARINER", was introduced to Company personnel. It cost one shilling a copy and carried 24 pages. Included were the details of Radio Officers appointments to ships, a feature still as popular as ever with our seagoing staff.

Edition one included an article on the Company's first series radiolocator radars for merchant shipping and reported the successful sea trials of 13 of these equipments - the Seamew radiotelephone being tested aboard the West Coaster in the English Channel, and the trials of the latest Seagraph echosounder on a round trip between Liverpool and Newfoundland aboard Elders and Fyffes' "Corrales".

On the personal side, those at sea include some very familiar names including F.E. 'Oscar' Ashe in the late forties on the staff aboard Mooltan, later to become the Company's very popular staff recruitment and welfare superintendent, retired and now living in Australia.

Over the years, *Mariner* has kept its widely scattered readers informed of the many personalities, places and events with which Marconi Mariner has been associated.

Editorial Note: Fred 'Oscar' Ashe retains that popularity as a member of O.T.V.A. (Victoria).

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#### ENGLISH VISITORS

Barbara and Chris Fox coming back to Aussie for another holiday arriving near the end of March ... spending a few months in the Garden State then up to Sydney before crossing to New Zealand, returning at the end of July or August before flying back home.

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#### PAPUA NEW GUINEA WAR YEARS

Further to the article on Cyril Urquhart's escape from Madang, Veteran Hugh Taylor has come up with the following interesting information (Hugh's story on his escape from Manus appears in the last Newsletter).

Our party followed Cyril's tracks to Mount Hagen and we heard about the horse episode. We were told that the horse used to lie down whenever Cyril dismounted.

When the first air raid on Madang occurred, Cyril realised he could not make it to the slit trench so he gave a ball-to-ball (or rather a bomb-to-bomb) description over the air.

The paragraph about his Ford coil transmitter interested me very much because when I joined the "Montoro" in July 1929, I was in the process of making up a small short wave transmitter using a circuit (Hartley) I found in an American magazine. I finished it before reaching Samarai. I had taken the authors advice and made a higher frequency trembler for the Ford coil. I called up Townsville (VIT) and asked him to listen on about forty metres. He did this and said it was maximum strength and what was I using? When I told him I was using a 201A and a Ford coil he told me I was handling the truth badly but made a nightly sked with me for the round trips.

When I arrived in Rabaul, the OIC of VJZ came down to see me and was very interested in the set and took a circuit of it. I found that the supply of 201As was limited so I got a 210 and it retained its emission for the year I was on the Montoro. I found that the higher the frequency of the trembler (within limits the most M.A.'s went into the aerial) I used 10 volts on the coil.

I joined the Island Radio Service at the end of 1936 and when I transferred to Manus (VJV) in 1938, I found that the type 242 emergency transmitter supplied by A.W.A. was similar to mine except for the trembler which was a Ford type. Mine produced a note like a Telefunken quenched gap. I still have the coil (Sans trembler).

I well remember our arrival at Mount Hagen. The track led us to the end of the runway and as we crossed, the plane flew over our heads at about 20 feet and down into the valley. The Captain (Sims) later said he had grown some grey hairs rather suddenly.

Our small party flew out with Orme Denny on 1 May. I will never forget the 2000 natives tramping up and down the runaway - they shook the earth.

MILLIONAIRES ALL

by PONTO

Undoubtedly O.T.C. employs many brilliant minds - (some have retired) who will readily grasp the possibilities of a scheme I have had in mind for many years, which can only come to fruition when space travel is an every day affair. To channel your minds to the right degree of thinking, let me state a few salient facts. Astronauts have circled the earth in 90 mins compressing 16 dawns and dusks into our one-day of 24 hours. Crossing the international date line at 180 degrees in a westerly direction, you suddenly lose a whole day which you will never regain unless you travel over it in an easterly direction. Had broadcasting stations been operating in the year 0 A.D. giving a description of the Crucifixion, that message despite its speed on 186,000 miles per second would not yet have reached the outer limits of space. If you board a plane travelling at 1000 m.p.h. from Sydney travelling westerly and leave at noon, the sun will remain at standing still.

Now here is my plan. As soon as I know the result of the Melbourne Cup on Tuesday afternoon, I take off in my super space ship flying eastward at 10,000 mph.

leaving at 3 p.m. I am over N.Z. at 5.12 p.m. My clock will show 3.12 p.m. so already I have receded into *TIME* by two hours. If the circumference of the earth is 27,000 miles, I made a full circle in 2-7/10th hours. If I keep flying for 13½ hours, I recede into *TIME* one full day but can put down in Sydney any time Tuesday Morning and let you good folk know what won the Cup that afternoon. Think of the possibilities? Old Midas would be described as a penny pinching old B. I did discuss the proposition with my old friend Einstein, but am sorry to say he was a bit hazy! Too much taken up with his theory of relativity. He did agree that *Time is Relative* which makes the whole idea feasible.

# RABAUl TODAY

(By John Lennon)

Just received the local weather report which says slight continuous rain. That is the norm here! Slight continuous rain for nearly every day. Fortunately, it falls mostly early morning. Settled to the life of course, plenty of tennis, the occasional round of golf and the swimming pool for my daily workout. Activities are what is established with the Rotary Club, the Lions Club, the Buffaloes Lodge and anything else you may want to be interested in. The Underwater Club teaches Scuba Diving and take off practically every weekend for some interesting reef. Our local Tennis Comp is conducted about four evenings per week with one evening for replays. Very necessary when it rains nearly every day.

Temperatures of course, are a lot higher than Moresby. The crater in which Rabaul township nestles precludes many cooling winds and consequently humidity is high. Although there are two seasons namely the South East and the North West, both of them take about a month to become established. The South East trades blow fitfully but by the end of this month, we should be getting a regular input of cooling breezes.

With the advent of independence, most of the Chinese community departed the area for either Port Moresby or Australia. The Australian Government granted them Australian citizenship which in turn gave them an opportunity to shift their money and families south. At present, we have about 400 of them left. According to the pundits, they represent a rather affluent group as one in six, is supposed to be a Dollar millionaire! I do but repeat rumors. Must say, judging from the Two-Up School on ANZAC Evening, there was a lot of coin of the realm being used and changing hands. One chap calculated that one of the big spins something like 4000 Kina involved.

Must add that our local currency is know as the Kina, and the smaller element Toea, written with a small 't'. The names have their origin in shell money. The Kina is part of the currency in which bride price is involved in the Highlands areas. The toea is part of the shell value which applies to the Papuan coast. Nowadays, they still accept it as a thing of value but put greater stress on the printed notes and cupro-nickel coinage of the Western values. Our large coin, the single Kina with a hole in the centre, is a great exchanger. Notes aren't phased out very quickly and you can imagine how they become if either stored in the elongated ear or a small billum bag. Very often buried under the floor of a hut where they share the earth with the bones of the departed!

Rabaul is a very quiet town and as I write, very little or no expansion occurring. A friend of mine, a developer, said in his survey there was no building being constructed in the Township of Rabaul.

Expatriates continue to dwindle. Estimates place the yearly total of "gone finish" expats at 50 permanently. This means 450 at the end of 1979 and 400 at the end of 1980.

Our two volcanoes often get into action and the sulphur is rendolent of Rotorua and other points in New Zealand. However, not as pervasive. Every week they measure the temperatures of both Matupī and Vulcan, who lie within 15 miles of the centre of the town! Vulcan went into action in 1937 when it rose 600 feet into the air and joined the mainland. It started as an island and gave rise to some severe earth tremors.

A.W.A.'s Station was badly damaged and they returned to Bitapaka until repairs were effected. Even now we still have an emergency station at Kokopo, some 25 miles from Rabaul.

In any trouble, we haven't worked out how we would arrive. The coast road has been cut through rather loose compounded pumice and soft rock and even now, with severe gurias (local name for tremors) often breaks away. There is an inland route which I would say will be heavily thronged with people getting away.

The history of the area is very interesting. The old German authorities established the township because of its excellent harbor and proximity to the plantations that throng the Gazelle Peninsula. Today, the streets still follow the old plan, but traces of the German occupation are few. On Namanula Hill overlooking the town, the old Imperial Governor looked down and across the harbour. The site is still there but the house is gone. The bombers didn't give the Japs much chance to enjoy both the view and the site. In 1941, the Commonwealth Bank took over the German Treasury and today opposite the Post Office, the old tough walls of the strong room remain.

The building was destroyed during the war. Yamamoto's bunker is close to the New Guinea Club, and today is the local museum. Somewhere in the vicinity, and underground is the old Japanese Naval Radio Station. It is kept secret, and very few people know where it is. I haven't sighted it yet! The escarpment that lies to our North and West is honeycombed with tunnels. The Japs stored their supplies and kept out of the way of the bombers. Some of the tunnels near the water line were large enough to take their landing barges. Even today, there are four which are a tourist must still standing inside the mountain. The outer two are wrecked and stripped, but the inner most is in good condition. A very active bat colony keeps the tourists away!

Bitapaka, the old site of the German Naval Station, is mainly noted for its beautiful War Cemetery. I occasionally make the pilgrimage but don't frequently visit. Some of my old friends' names are on the Missing Tablets.

The old radio station is only about half a mile from the Cemetery and in the long Kunai the outline of the foundations can be found. One of my Rabaul friends who is interested in the history of the area, has promised himself a trip there. Said he would take me out when he was going. The old mast steps must also be around in the trees and undergrowth.

Kokopo of course, is Queen Emma's old area. The steps to her old house are still standing but once more the War claimed the old house. Where she swept out of the mansion and descended a flight of flowing stairs to take her rick-shaw to her office can still be seen. The stairs to the lower level are broken but easily seen. The Raulam Club, still boasts the entrance posts to the old house.



Kokopo, of course was the site of the original German settlement, and there is even an old German Naval Cemetery close by. The German Far East Fleet, based on Kia-Chou in North China, used the large Simpson Harbour as its southern base.

In Rabaul Harbor itself, the charts still list about 20-odd wrecks, most of them as a result of bombing raids. However, most of them have been explored and anything of value removed.

We still have the old miniature submarine which the Japs towed as a store vessel to their isolated troops. After the war, one of the local citizens used it as a water-barge to ships. It's still in the harbour. The Station, is located right on the waterfront. In 1937, it was the site of the old General Hospital, after its destruction, the authorities moved the hospital to Nonga. It was beyond the Tidal Wave line and out of the volcano area.

O.T.C. acquired the site in the late forties and built the present station. Nowadays, it is purely a Coast Radio Receiving station. Our transmitters are still located closer to the town. With the advent of modern equipment and to assist National officers, the operation has been modified and it is now almost push-button in all aspects. For a small place we are kept fairly busy, and ships bound Japan to Bougainville call frequently. Naturally the area is very beautiful. 150 inches of rain does wonderful things to grass and trees. A handyman is constantly engaged to cut the grass and hedges. Living is fairly expensive and imported foods raid the ante. It's back to frozen meat of course. Actually, my stomach didn't really appreciate the fresh stuff! The local market, or 'bung' (in Pidgin) has a wondrous supply of tropical fruit and vegetables. For about a dollar a day, you can survive as a vegetarian! Pawpaws and bananas abound and in season plenty of pineapples. Entertainment is mainly the movies with Club 16mm projectors well to the fore. Video tapes are also very much available and even got around to see a John Wayne opus circa 1945 or thereabouts! Barbecues are a must of course and the swimming pool has three excellent barbecue stands with the possibility of diving into the cool water on the hot nights. You are never cold here! Cars are cheaper, but petrol is about .29t a litre. Current exchange is K1=\$A1.30.

#### STORY OF LATE CLIFF CUTLER

(from interviews and re-search by Philip Geeves)

Clifford Bertram Cutler was born at Ballarat, Victoria, on 29 July 1883. He came from a family endowed with inventive capacity, manual ability and a penchant for fine mechanical work : his great-grandfather was the inventor of the Cutler-Massey Patent Ship's Log, and his grandfather was a building contractor who erected some of Melbourne's most prestigious residences. CBC was intended to follow his father's trade of watchmaking, at least until a childhood accident blinded him in one eye. Instead, he attended the School of Mines, Maryborough, and studied electrical technology. After gaining his certificate, he was required to do two years practical work before completing his diploma course. Cliff spent those two years in Melbourne where from 1901 to 1903, he worked for leading electrical contractors of that era. He enjoyed Melbourne so much that he never went back to Maryborough to take his diploma. The State capital had too many attractions; Cliff's especial interests were gymnastics, rowing and dancing and he was able to indulge them all to his heart's content.

In 1905 he launched out on his own as an electrical contractor and things looked promising. He had five jobs in various stages of completion when a building

trades strike put an end to his activities. His capital exhausted, Cliff was obliged to seek a job and in March 1906 obtained a temporary appointment in the Instrument Room of the PMG Telephone Branch in Melbourne. From that time forward he remained continuously involved with communications until his retirement from O.T.C. in 1948.

When CBC commenced work at the Instrument Room he met there a man who was destined to become a key figure - if a rather controversial one - in the Australian wireless scene, F.G. (Frank) Cresswell. During World War I, as Commander Cresswell, he bossed the R.A.N. Radio Service and was responsible for all wireless in Australia. At that time, however, Cresswell was merely an instrument fitter and CBC had his first brush with his future naval commander by declining to carry Cresswell's kit bag for him.

Cliff Cutler was married in 1913, little knowing that World War would change the whole tenor of his life.

Since 1911, the development of radio in Australia had been administered by the Federal "Wireless Espoer", J.G. Balsillie, whose special responsibility had been the establishment and equipment of the coastal stations. On the outbreak of war in August 1914, Balsillie had a further load of urgent tasks and in urgent need of an electrician with a sound knowledge of engines, batteries and so Cliff was seconded to his staff.

CBC treasures the warmest memories of Balsillie ... *"a very loveable man, a chap who would never spare himself in helping you. Every hour I spent with him was a pleasure to me"*. Often the pair would be working together for almost 24 hours at a stretch because this was the period when troop transports were being assembled to carry the AIF overseas and the vessels had to be fitted with wireless at short notice. So tight was the installation schedule that on several occasions Balsillie and Cutler were put aboard the pilot steamer as the transports sailed out through Port Phillip heads.

A crisis soon arose over the control of wireless in Australia. The Navy considered that it should have overall control in wartime, so when a Post Office operator unwittingly transmitted an uncoded message concerning a troop convoy, this security breach blew up into a major fracas. During the latter half of 1915, following Australia's shattering losses at Gallipoli, control of wireless telegraphy throughout the nation passed progressively to the Navy, coming under the direction of Cresswell. CBC, of course, went over to the headquarters staff. He recalls that *"all the gold braid worn by the officers of the Radio Service gave the headquarters a highly decorated appearance"*. Cliff's defective eyesight precluded him from becoming a naval officer and left him as a civilian, although with Navy personnel under his control. Cresswell was in a dilemma, and would say *"I don't know what I'm going to do about you, Cutler"*, well-knowing that CBC's abilities and experience were vital. Permanent Navy types were outraged at the very idea of a mere civilian being in charge of uniformed naval personnel and complained to the Navy Board. The upshot was that CBC was informed that he had to accept commissioned rank. His reply was that the physical disability which originally made him ineligible for a commission still existed and thus he could not see why now, a couple of years later, he should go into uniform. This caused him to be called before the Board, a group of high-ranking Navy officers, with their swords on the table in front of them ... *"a rather Gilbertian turnout"*, as CBC recalls. He explained how his disability had debarred him from being granted a King's Commission and could not concede that his eligibility had altered in any way. After due deliberation, the Board decided that it had no jurisdiction over him, so CBC was made a Class E professional engineer.

Cutler agrees with Geeves that the Navy's venture into wartime wireless was less than successful. Following the Armistice, there were insistent demands for wireless administration to revert to the PMG's control: the prospect of losing its radio empire caused the Navy to make some rather irrational statements, such as the suggestion that, freed from naval control, wireless could be responsible for the "position of H.M. ships being known to the enemy at the outbreak of the next war"! (Then followed a long discussion regarding Cresswell's role in the Government's acquisition of the Shaw Wireless Works in 1916, resulting in a scandal which led to the dismissal of a former Navy Minister (Jensen) and the resignation of a senator (Long), who admitted receiving money from Father Shaw. Cutler was called to give evidence before the Royal Commission.

When radio again reverted to PMG control, Cutler came under James Malone O.T.C.'s first Chairman, and that was the situation which pertained when A.W.A. took over the Coastal Radio Service from the PMG in 1922. The Service was then losing about £1,000 per week. At the time of takeover, A.S. McDonald was Cutler's assistant but McDonald was willing to move to Sydney, whereas Cutler wasn't (for family reasons). This led to McDonald becoming Chief Engineer of A.W.A.

Eyesight had prevented CBC from becoming a watchmaker, but his appointment to A.W.A.'s Victorian staff was destined to give him a lot of experience with clocks. One of the trade agencies which he conducted for A.W.A. was for electric clock systems. Their installation kept him busy: he put in a master clock and 64 slaves in the "Argus" office in Elizabeth Street, as well as equipping the Melbourne Stock Exchange, the State Theatre and 3LO, etc.

Cutler and Lionel Hooke were responsible for selecting the Braybrook site. Hooke was then A.W.A.'s Melbourne manager. As soon as A.W.A. received the contract to build and equip 3LO, the Melbourne staff was asked to select a transmission site for the station ... "we got a map of Melbourne and found that the population density was in an arc from Broadmeadows to Mentone, so we decided to put the station in the centre of this arc, but away from it". Cutler actually found the site at Braybrook and Hooke approved it. They bought a strip from a private golf course and put up the transmitter building and quarters, as well as the aerial. When the original VIM was removed from the Melbourne Domain, it was moved to Braybrook.

CBC didn't learn Morse until after World War I. Aubrey Hosking taught him and Fred Newman tested him.

In 1921, the PMG's Department sent Cutler with two assistants to Willis Island to erect a weather reporting station there. Over the years its main function has been to report tropical cyclones.

CBC's most demanding responsibility during the 1920s was in connection with the erection of the two Beam Wireless stations at Rockbank and Ballan. He was responsible for getting every piece of equipment from the wharf to the transmitting and receiving sites on a road that was absolutely terrible. The cartage contractor had a fleet of vehicles that were continually breaking down and at one stage they caused so much damage to local roads that the council closed them to the contract carter. Considerable diplomacy was needed to overcome this problem. Cutler remembers spending many an anxious night on the Ballarat Road working out how to get the vital consignments moving.

Cutler confirms that during World War I, the R.A.N. Radio Service decided to experiment with arc transmitters because at that time "the Poulsen arc was doing better than spark". Plans were sent out from England for a 5 kilowatt arc and some of these were built at the Randwick works for installation at coast stations.

Cresswell decided to have a high power arc, so plans were put in hand to equip VIP, Applecross. The Perth Council was asked to supply high tension AC to Applecross and Cutler installed the 200 KVA 3 phase transformer and its associated HT-LT switch-gear. The big arc set was under construction at Randwick, but the project was scrapped when the PMG regained control of CRS. Valve transmission was coming into its own and from that time forward the Poulsen arc went into oblivion.

#### MERCANTILE MARINE

Mr. D. Pereria, Industrial Officer of the Professional Radio and Electronics Institute (phone 211 1566) has advised that his organisation together with the R.S.L. and Merchant War Service Association is endeavouring to gain pensions and other benefits for members of the Merchant Service who served during the course of the Second World War.

Information from Senator Messner, Minister for Veterans' Affairs advises that the budget in the past has not allowed for extending service pension eligibility for former merchant seamen. However, proposals to widen the application of the repatriation system are considered each year at budget time and any proposal to extend the Service pension to former merchant seamen will be kept in mind for consideration in lead-up to this years budget.

Doug Pereira suggests that eligible merchant seamen could assist in this matter by forwarding a letter to Senator Messner at Parliament House, Canberra and a letter to your local Federal M.P. or Senator.

#### KRAIT

Congratulations to Channel 7 for re-running the episode of "This is Your Life" which featured the exploits of the Krait rather than an individual. The Special was run just before ANZAC Day and featured the surviving four members of the raid. Horrie Young featured and with a bit more exposure could become as famous as Philip Geeves as a TV star. Horrie, together with Phil Chapman have retired to the Central Coast where Horrie is keeping Phil from going astray.