



NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2 PT 9

November 1982

ANNUAL REUNIONS

NEW SOUTH WALES

FRIDAY 10TH DECEMBER 1982

6PM ONWARDS

STAFF CAFETERIA

HOSKING HOUSE

VICTORIA

FRIDAY 12TH NOVEMBER 1982

6PM - 9PM

AMENITIES AREA

OTC HOUSE

LONSDALE STREET

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

THURSDAY 25TH NOVEMBER 1982

2.30PM ONWARDS

HOME OF:-

PRES. "BRAX" HORROCKS

7 MIEGUNYAH AVENUE

UNLEY PARK

WEST AUSTRALIA

PLEASE PHONE BRIAN MORRELL ON 274-1274 FOR INFORMATION
AS DETAILS WERE UNAVAILABLE AT TIME OF PRINTING THIS NEWSLETTER

QUEENSLAND

FRIDAY 5TH NOVEMBER 1982

BRISBANE RADIO VIB

CABOOLTURE

MEMBERS TO MEET IN JIM BANKS' OFFICE
IN TIME TO CATCH 11AM BUS TO CABOOLTURE



Bob Scott, ex P.C.B. will be visiting Sydney from Victoria, Canada late November and has accepted our invitation to attend the OTVA Sydney Annual Reunion on the 10th December.

As Bob says "I am particularly anxious to meet ex PCB veterans, Towner, Swinney, Sanders and any others who may remember me". I'm sure ex PCB veterans would also be anxious to see and talk over some old chaff with Bob. How about it?

MINUTES OF THE 7TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, HELD IN THE OTC MANAGER'S OFFICE, 380 QUEEN STREET, BRISBANE, AT 12.30PM ON 25TH MAY 1982

President George Scott opened the meeting at 12.35pm and welcomed the following members:

Jim Banks, Laz Eliou, Wim Elbertse, Alf Goebby, Bob Hooper, Alan Jones, Jock Kellie, Dean Laws, John Marshall, Denis Moorhouse, John Norris, Norm Odgers, John Ponsonby, Vince Sim and Harry Sutherland. He also welcomed Lou Brown, Secretary of the NSW Veterans' Association.

Apologies were received from: Bill Schmidt, George Maltby, Merv Gildea, Bert Edwards, Charles Carthew, Frank Bond, Les Doubleday, Wilf Atkin, Lou Heggie, Gordon Collyer, Jack Dowling, Armour McCollum, Bob Webster, Kevin Hiscock, Eric Cramo and 'Blue' Easterling.

Minutes of the sixth Annual General Meeting were received as read. Inwards correspondence included the General Secretary's annual report and expense account, a letter from Bob Scott (Canada), and best wishes from several members with their apologies. It was resolved that the General Secretary's report be approved and the Association's appreciation of his continued efforts be recorded.

The Treasurer presented his financial report which showed a net balance of \$143.55 as at 31.3.82, virtually the same as the previous year. It was agreed that we would continue to subsidise the cost of the two annual meetings from subscriptions and donations.

All offices were declared vacant and it was moved and carried unanimously that the former officers be re-elected, viz:

George Scott, President;	Jim Banks, Secretary;
John Norris, Treasurer;	Alan Jones, Auditor.

Lou Brown spoke briefly, bringing greetings from the NSW Veterans and seeking further contributions for the Newsletters. The Secretary asked all members to send him a brief outline of their careers so that biographical notes can be updated and also asked that any veteran with articles, drawings or photographs of the Old Southport Cable Station please contact him as we are endeavouring to help the Southport School, which has rebuilt the old buildings on its grounds.

It was agreed that the next reunion be held around November/December at Brisbane Radio, transport to be arranged from the city by Jim Banks. President George then closed the meeting at 1.10pm and good fellowship ensued.

NOTE TO MEMBERS

During 'fellowship' after the AGM, Jack Kellie asked that wives be allowed and encouraged to attend our next reunion, as they do in Sydney. We have discussed this before and whilst there is certainly no objection, nor did we get much response.

Would each member who would like to bring his wife to the next reunion - or to some other future meeting - please let me know.

O.T.V.A. VICTORIAN BRANCH

The 25th Annual General Meeting of the O.T.V.A. Victorian Branch was held in the Amenities Section, OTC House, 382 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne on 14th May, 1982, commencing at 3.30pm. Organisers of the meeting wish to express their appreciation to the Management for allowing use of the Amenities Section as the venue. Present were:-

Donna Members	T.W. Carthage
M. McKittrick	W. Shear
J.P.R. Loeck	D. Leaney
Les Parry	V. M. Glinway
G. Bright	A. Benson
J. M. Kite	C. Hargreave
G. Bright	J. Edwards (see Castable)
Jack Patrick	Pearl Peat
Cliff Allison	Chunnie
Jack Cornish	St. James
Ally Brown	Hall
W. Bentley	F. R. Cook
Merv Fernando	Howard Newsome
J. S. Cooper.	April Martin
Donna Stubbs	Ally Hunter
Mc. Carson	V. M. Findlay
John. Saulh	Stan Silver
Barry.	Ted Kead
	Bob Canale

O.T.V.A. WEST AUSTRALIA

Submissions from our Man in the West, Brian Morrell.

CHANGE OF PHONE NUMBER

Brian advises us that although he still lives at 416 Great Eastern Highway, Midland, W.A. 6056 his phone number is now (09) 274-1274. It has been recorded here, also, Brian.

SICKNESS REPORT

MRS. ARTHUR MacDONALD - 17 Gibbon Street, Mosman Park, W.A. 6012

Mrs. Mac, as she was known, was employed as a cleaning lady at the Cottesloe Cable Station for some time. She is not a member of the O.T.V.A., but some members may remember her, especially if they worked at the Station during the fifties and sixties. Mrs. Mac. suffered a heart attack around mid-August and spent a week or so in Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. Since her discharge, her doctor feels that she will be back playing bowls in the coming season.

HARRY W. BROMLEY - affectionately known as the "Wing Commander", was originally committed to The St. John of God Hospital, Subiaco, having some bits and pieces removed which were not functioning efficiently. His main concern is that his immobilisation has interfered with his activities - fishing and football - to date. His condition is "stable" and he should be back in the General Wards of Royal Perth Hospital by Monday, 30th August, 1982.

Anyone desirous of sending him a card I suggest should be addressed c/- Mr. B. D. Morrell at the address given up top. His transfer from St. John of God to Royal Perth was made because of the availability of drugs at Royal Perth necessary to curb his illness. He is finding it difficult to keep food down for the past 2/3 weeks.

TELCOM GROUP REUNION

As Veterans will recall, RANDY PAYNE made an appeal through the "NEWSLETTER" for any information regarding members of the above Group. We wish to acknowledge the data sent to us from BRIAN MORRELL. As you mentioned in your letter, Brian, some of the info you gave us had been duplicated but you mentioned names and possible addresses of members of the Group previously unknown, certainly enough to send Randy sleuthing off in all directions. However, the hunt is still on, and if any news of this nature comes along we will be only too glad of it. To all Veterans who responded, "Thank You".

C&W - THE EARLY DAYS

When ten of us in Western Australia were first accepted by Cable & Wireless Ltd. for training in Adelaide, the letter of advice we received specifically made note of the fact that "we were primarily engaged to operate submarine telegraph cables at overseas shore stations", or wording similar to that. One of the mothers reacted heatedly, announcing that she "wasn't prepared to allow her son to go down in one of those so and so submarines".

As it was war time, two of us went from Perth to Adelaide by rail in the first instance. The cost I remember quite clearly - fstg.7.19.9 single second class. This made us one month senior to the others, the reason being that as we had started prior to the 15th of the month our seniority started from the first of the month, whereas those who followed us started after the 15th of the month and their seniority didn't start until the beginning of the next month.

Our pay was fstg.9.19.6 per calendar month, but we managed to get an "advance" on it on the 15th of each month to help out; after all, we were all boarded out and most people wanted board payment at least fortnightly. We had to pay the fare across.

Mr. Harold Holmes was Divisional Manager in Melbourne, from memory. He was the owner of a racehorse named "Teacake", and endeared himself to us "boys" from W.A. by generously refunding our rail fares after we had passed the final exams and became fully fledged operators.

I did three night shifts in the Adelaide office, more or less as a bit of work experience, I suppose, and I can still remember Harry Tighe taking morse press on the typewriter - yarning with a couple of chaps in the office at the same time - and this never failed to amaze me over the years, as I have seen so many others able to do the same.

In Colombo we had further work experience in the Colombo office. I can still recall the stories of Yanks (of course, the subjects in the stories had to be Yanks). One came rushing into the office on the 23rd December wanted his Christmas gift to be cabled home to USA by Christmas Day, which was pretty difficult seeing it was a specific Ceylonese artifact.

Two high-ranking American officers did a tour of inspection of the Colombo office where the system of operating submarine cables was explained to them. One posed the question : "And tell me ... how do you keep the paper with the little holes in it dry?" I suppose it had to happen some time.

Harry, or "Tufty" Baker, as we knew him, was on the F1 staff of C&W in Colombo and it was his custom to invite three or four of us Australians home for a meal regularly, and invariably curry was on the menu as an entree.

The table was always provided with a finger bowl, the main course requiring the use of fingers, the bowls being there for cleansing purposes. One of the chaps tried a plate of curry which happened to be of extra strength. Without ceremony he brushed the flowers aside, whipped up the finger bowl and knocked off the water in an effort to douse the fire. It was a sight you don't forget easily - a chap with a small sort of soup bowl in one hand and trying to keep the flowers out of his mouth with the other.

There are probably other stories to be told of the Telcom Unit's days in Ceylon, and maybe this story will spark off others. There were certainly more exciting times in Ceylon than in the only two Australian offices in which I worked in Perth and Cottesloe.

AFTER THE TELCOM DAYS

At the conclusion of the Telcom days, I worked in the Cottlesloe office, and from about the age of 25, took an increasing interest in Tennis Administration, firstly with the Mt. Lawley Tennis Club, then with the State Association and the Umpires' Association. My plan was to involve myself in this time-consuming activity until I had reached forty or so and then have a rest. Well, that's approximately what happened because when I transferred from the O.T.C.(A) to the P.M.G. my outdoor activities were heavily curtailed. I also became involved in Youth Club work with the Morley Branch of the Police & Citizens' Youth Club in which I held the positions of Secretary and President.

At both the Cable Station and later in the Central Telegraph Office, I took an interest in the social side of things, running the canteen at the Cable Station for some years and helping a man who was a great worker for others, LOU SHERBURN, with arrangements for the Christmas party at the Station. Later on, within O.T.C., I helped with socials and was Treasurer for some years. I also developed an interest in Railways, which initially came from my mother's side of the family in South Australia. For about ten years, commencing in 1967, I was involved in the administration of the Australian Railway Historical Society in conjunction with a smaller society which was interested in trams and buses called the Western Australian Transport Museum.

A BIT ABOUT LOU SHERBURN

The article in TRANSIT about the Wagga weekends jogged my memory that Lou probably had a lot to do with the original organisation of the function, which initially began as a cricket match. It is a pity that there is not a LOU SHERBURN TROPHY for presentation for some feat in the cricket match. If you get any ideas, I would be only too pleased to sponsor something to the tune of \$25 or so annually for the cricket side of the Wagga weekend to commemorate the name of Lou Sherburn. Perhaps this could be brought to the notice of the Cricket Club committee.

BRIAN MORELL

COMMENT

What a good idea ... both Lou and I am surprised that none of us here has thought of it before. Lou was deeply involved in the original arrangements, and he had some enthusiastic counterparts in the Sydney office as well. We thoroughly endorse the idea and have referred it to the Cricket Club boys ... perhaps a dual trophy commemorating Lou and his Sydney counterpart. Will keep you advised.

ON THE SICK LIST

HAROLD BURDETT's wife has been hospitalised with fluid on or around the heart. This has been drained off and once the condition settles down she should be able to return home. Harold drives into Perth twice daily to see her; no mean feat when you consider that Harold himself does not enjoy the best of health. It's not easy when both partners are on the sick list, so full marks to them both.

GEORGE McDONALD is over here in Perth and his address is C/- J. Hammer, Mooliabeenie Road, Gingin, W.A. 6503 - phone number (095) 75-2317 for the information of Veterans who may be nearby.

OVERSEAS NEWS - NEW ZEALAND

CLAUDE DALLEY has received a letter from Bill Craig who lives in the Land of the Long White Cloud which contained some items of interest to Claude, in particular, and Veterans in general.

In mid-July, LES DAVISON celebrated his 50th wedding anniversary. Harry Fox and I attended and found Davie still full of life and vigour, and his lovely wife still brimming with Norfolk Island hospitality.

The celebration did Harry Fox a bit of good, also, as he has not been in the best of health lately. Since Harry's retirement he has done a lot of work for Handicapped Children, and in appreciation they have named their hall after him.

The rest of the gang seem to be doing O.K. TOMMY ATKINS and OLIVER CROSSLEY both celebrated their 82nd birthdays last month (July) and had family parties to celebrate. Tommy is quite well apart from a bit of hearing trouble, and Oliver is rather inconvenienced with cataracts on his eyes. ROY HOSKING has sold his car and now lives in a Methodist Home in Mt. Albert. We don't see as much of him now as we once did, mainly because his wife is a permanent inmate of the Waitakere Hospital. PORKY WYLIE is still around and about but just about lost his sight.

CHARLIE BENNIE is still alive and kicking in Honolulu. Not too many of the old PCB boys around but SHERLOCK'S daughter, Marjorie, also takes a keen interest in Bamfield history.

Best regards,
BILL CRAIG

P.S. Hope to join the reunion of the TELCOMS who were at Ceylon when they have one - if I'm still on deck.

O.T.V.A. SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

Brax Horrocks, Preso of the above Branch, sends along the news from the South Australian scene. This letter was written on the 25th April, arriving just a bit late for the last "NEWSLETTER", but nonetheless welcome to the Editor. Some of the events he mentions are now past history, naturally, but it is still newsworthy. He writes:-

"Salutations This is to remind you all that our winter meeting is to take place on Thursday, May 28th, at 2.30 p.m. at the Public Service Club, Wakefield Street, Adelaide, and anyone who can make it will be welcome. (Brax couldn't get that venue, so I believe that the meeting took place in the Royal Hotel in Kent Town).

Sadly, I have to advise that Veteran GRAHAM LITTLE died of a heart attack a few weeks ago at the age of 73. Just a 'boy', you might say. We will miss Graham, an extremely pleasant personality, who always attended our meetings even though he lived up in the hills at Mylor, which is a fair step from Adelaide.

I am enclosing three snapshots taken a few weeks ago on the very special occasion when four Veterans, ROY EDWARDS, CHARLES SMITH, BRUCE SUTHERLAND and myself had lunch together in Adelaide. We all joined the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company as probationer operators at about the same time in 1921. We are close friends and have kept in touch over the years even though we are geographically far apart - Roy lives in Darwin, Charles in Broken Hill, and Bruce in New Zealand, whilst I, as you know, live in Adelaide. It may interest you to know that ROY EDWARDS is a well known Territory pilot, having his own plane, and owned the station at Newcastle Waters until he sold it recently. He still flies his own plane and comes to Adelaide occasionally where he has a second house at St. Georges.

CHARLES SMITH is a well-known, well-respected and well-liked Broken Hill identity. He still has estate and mining interests there but spends much of his time in South Australia where he has a home and pastoral interests. BRUCE SUTHERLAND travelled from Nelson, New Zealand, especially to attend the luncheon. He retired from Cottesloe as 4th Grade Supervisor about 20 years ago because of ill health. As for myself, I have been President of the O.T.V.A. South Australia Branch for some 12 years. Was last stationed at Fanning Island (at the same time as Malcolm Tregenza was Manager), and was transferred back to Australia because of poor health, and retired shortly after.

The other two photos are of CLIFF BIRKS, our oldest South Australian veteran who will be 92 this year. He joined the E.E. Company as a probationer operator in 1907 and worked as a telegraphist in Adelaide, Perth, Cocos, Singapore, and Banjoewangie. He joined the AIF in 1915 and served in France and Belgium until the war ended. During the Second World War, at the request of Stewart Ringwood, Manager of the Adelaide branch of the Company, he rejoined as an operator, leaving the well-known Wendouree Wine Cellars which he and his father had founded after WWI. He remained in that position until the office closed in 1948. Cliff is remarkably fit, and is an active member of the Soldiers' Home at Myrtlebank, in S.A.

Perhaps the editor of "TRANSIT" could use the photos at some future date.

Kindest regards and best wishes,
BRAX.

COCOS ISLAND

Brax Horrocks was one of the first to respond to the request made by RANDY PAYNE for information concerning Cocos Island which is required by GAVIN SOUTER, of the Sydney Morning Herald.

"There is a lot of help which can be given Gavin Souter", he writes. "I mention, in particular, PAT SYKES, who had, if memory serves me correctly, five terms at Cocos, the last one as "Tuan Besar" and Manager. There is possibly no one alive who knows more about Cocos than Pat. He knew Sydney Clunies Ross well, and of course, young John. Pat speaks fluent Malay and has an intimate knowledge of the Cocos Malays ... how they thought and how they lived.

But there are others also. Bruce Sutherland spent two terms there, one during the last war and one just after. He spent much of his time on Pulu Selma (Home Island) and has many interesting and amusing things to tell.

CLIFF BIRKS spent the best part of two years before the first World War (you have the photographs he gave you whilst you were in Adelaide, Lou). Remember, though, that Cliff is 92 years of age this year so Gavin might be advised to contact him first.

There was an excellent article written by TUFTY BAKER in the October 1979 edition of the "NEWSLETTER", the second part of which appeared in the October 1980 edition.

Another who can give a good description of the part played by the R.A.A.F. at Cocos in World War 2 is JULIAN HAY. He was stationed on Pulu Tikis for a couple of years, (I think with GEORGE SNEYD, who died a few years ago), and ran a weather station and observance service for the Allies. I feel certain that his views would be worth having.

Then there was CAPTAIN "BILL" MAY who, for a period, was in charge of the Indian Army garrison stationed on Pulu Tikis and on Horsborough during the war. It was in his time, and with the help of the Army, that I ran a submarine 4-core telephone cable between Pulu Tikis and Horsborough. I have an album of photographs taken at Cocos and would be only too glad to make them available to Gavin Souter should he wish to use them.

If Gavin, or anyone else for that matter, wants to get in touch with the fellows I have mentioned I am including a list of their addresses.

(Note: Copies of these are held by the Editor and our Secretary, Lou Brown. A note to either of us will do the trick).

--AND TALKING ABOUT COCOS--

Brax has sent along what he calls "a priceless piece of paper". An article relating to this appeared in the "NEWSLETTER" circa. 1978, but for those who were not Veterans then it seems an appropriate time to reproduce it.

COCOS ISLAND, 1943

In Cocos in those days there was neither paper nor coin money; any services by the natives were paid for in goods, such as clothing, knives, fishing gear, etc.

On Direction Island (a fragment of the Cocos atoll where the C&W Company had its repeater station) there was a small staff of seven. The Manager was TUFTY BAKER. His Number Two was FRANK McCAY, and there were four watch engineers, BRUCE SUTHERLAND, PAT SYKES, PETER WOLFE, and BRAX HORROCKS. The maintenance engineer was "CHUM" CHUMLEY.

All staff money transactions, such as mess accounts, were done through the Company's books. Salaries, less deductions, were paid into individual bank accounts in Australia and the UK. Most of our stores came from Colombo and these were paid for in rupees - again through the Company's account.

One of our main recreations was fishing and the competition to bring back the largest fish on a Sunday morning (when all except the watch engineer could go out) was very keen. Many a tin of "Peacock" cigarettes and bottle of beer changed hands at the curry tiffin the day after the catches had been weighed and admired.

It came to pass that on one occasion Tufty had bet Brax that he would bring back a bigger and better fish, the bet being two bottles of beer (value in those days being Rupees 2.20). Brax managed to pull in a decent size green-fish from the depths, and the sail-fish that Tufty had hooked into had got away. Next day through the Company accounts went the attached priceless piece of paper - surely in all the history of accounting there had never been anything like it.

It read:-

PAY BRAX Rs. 2.20
being the cost of two beers a/c my sailfish that got away.
Break yr bldy heart.
(Signed) H.W. Baker

Underneath this is a notation by watch engineer, Pat Sykes, who was also acting in the capacity of Accountant. It says,

D/W April A/Cs

initiated by Pat and endorsed with a large tick to show that the transaction had been finalised.

NINETY NOT OUT

GWENYTH OATES, daughter of one of our Veterans in S.A. had occasion to write to us on behalf of her father, C.H. OATES and in doing so has revealed that he had celebrated his 90th birthday on 10th August last. A family party was held in his honour at a suburban hotel and an afternoon tea party for the residents at "Resthaven". For the information of Veterans his address is "Resthaven", 17 Hill Street, Mitcham, S.A. 5062. I am sure that all Veterans, young and old, wish him the best of health in his attempt on the century.

OUR MAN IN NORFOLK ISLAND

Although I retired from the Commission's service in August 1981, I asked for, and obtained, copies of both "CONTACT" and "TRANSIT" which keeps me abreast of times and the activities of the people still in the industry.

It was with mixed feelings, whilst thumbing through a copy of the latter, that I came across a picture of MICK WOOD, the present Manager of the Norfolk outpost, peering myopically at the business end of a shovel. A tongue-in-cheek caption below the picture announced that the reproduction denoted the Norfolk Island Manager turning the first sod in the construction of the new office there, but, in a fit of rare honesty, finally admitted that Mick's pose had been cunningly contrived - which was obvious when the rest of the picture showed the station well in advance in the background.

The sight of Mick in an unusual working stance brought reminiscences flooding back to my Resch's damaged brain, and not to mention a few tears to these old tired eyes. I remembered the many occasions when we met at Wagga for the famous Weekend, and the times we spent trying to score off one another whilst the batsmen were trying to score off the bowlers.

I recalled the night we went for a Chinese meal and ordered four or five courses, the first being a small fried rice. We had finished the lot, and there was Mick, still laboriously masticating the fried rice grain by grain, whilst we urged him on to speedier efforts lest we missed the Smoko start. Mick finally abandoned the project admitting that he just couldn't eat any faster. It was at this stage that I decided to enter Mick's name to be included in the Guinness Book of Records as the slowest fried-rice eater in the world. I received a reply from Guinness' that they didn't have a category for fried rice eating at the time, and therefore had no one with whom to make a comparison. Pity!

On the same weekend, at the presentation ceremony held on Sunday night, I was surprised to hear my name called out to be presented with a travelling alarm clock, you know, one of those little jokers which fold up and can be carried in the pocket or in the kit-bag. The occasion was a kind of "thank you" for writing and producing the Smoko acts for the cricket club's turnouts both at the North Sydney Council Chambers and the Wagga Weekend. I stepped forward proudly, my mind working overtime to amass a few trite witticisms in my acceptance speech. Before I could open my mouth, Mick's voice floated clearly across the auditorium. I shall never forget it:

"The alarm clock is symbolic, Ando. Now you will be able to wake up to yourself."

The magic of the moment was lost. All I could do was wait for the laughter to subside, murmur a tremlo "Thank you", and shuffle off, my reputation as a quick-retort artist lying in tatters on the stage.

It is my intention to cut out the picture from "TRANSIT", have it blown up to approximately ten times its original size and framed. In future years I will assemble my grandchildren before it and say, "See

that man? He became the Manager of the OTC Station at Norfolk Island. If HE can do THAT, I never want to hear the word "failure" pass your lips in my presence.

But I still like the bloke.

BRUCE SCOTT, one of our old-timers living in Vancouver, will be visiting New Zealand and Australia toward the end of the year, and if at all possible, he would like to attend Veterans' reunions in both countries.

BILL CRAIG, to whom we are indebted for onpassing contributions to the NEWSLETTER, advises that the tentative reunion date in NZ is 3rd December, but says that this could be changed should it clash with others. No need for that, Bill. The NSW reunion will be on 10th December, and full details are given on the front page of this NEWSLETTER. We would be delighted to welcome any overseas visitors.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Veterans will appreciate that though this will be the November edition of the "NEWSLETTER", a lot of the material is received for publication some months beforehand. It is extremely likely that news re the health or disposition of Veterans may have changed in the meantime, either for better or for worse.

I would like to say here and now that should this happen it has not been done intentionally, but because the advice of changed conditions has not reached us in time, or indeed, at all. Articles of this nature may cause discomfort to some, but please keep in mind that the disposition of Veterans is of interest to all of us, particularly if we are in a position to render some help.

VALE

Death Notice, West Australian Newspaper, Saturday 20/3/82

LAWRIE, Robert Graham - passed away on Thursday, 18th March, 1982. Aged 82 years, Died in Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. Buried privately at Karrakatta, Friday, 19th March 1982.

Robert was not a member of the Veterans', but we include the item for the information of other veterans who may have known him.

SICK PARADE

13th September, 1982

MRS. RENE COTTEW widow of the late GRAHAM COTTEW an ex CTB Supervisor, suffered a collapse. She is now in ST. ANDREWS NURSING HOME, Wickham Terrace, Brisbane. We wish her all the best for a speedy recovery.

FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The letter from MR. MOREA MEA appearing below was photocopied rather than re-typed. We did this in fairness to all concerned so that no connotations of our own could alter the contents in any way.

I. Morea Mea

Thank you very much for sending me the Newsletter I
which I read many a articles that are very interesting to me
especially the Veterans who have retired and has got their Retired in the
French as you have know in sending me the Newsletter that I was one
of the few Papua New Guinea who has a recorded history of long serving
member to the O.T.C when the Australian Government was here in
Papua New Guinea. Although I am not happy with the R.B.F. system
in the News letter, I enjoyed reading it for reasons that some of
the Veterans are whom I work together, People like GEOFF WARNER
E TUNER, S SILVER, G TOWNSEND, and some others who may know me
(MR MOREA MEA) whom I worked together in Port Moresby, old station
at KONEBOBU, with A.W.A., Before the war, TOWN ELA BEACH after the war
with O.T.C, IS MALE, 9 PA, Then the present station 5 mile which is
been run by P.N.G Post and Telegraphs Department, I have 52 years
of continuous service to both Australian Government and P.N.G.
Government. Australian Government alone is about 45 years if my
memory serves me right, although as you can judge by the number
of years that I have spend or served in the Communication field with
the O.T.C, But I have never recieved any R.B.F. or Financial assistance
from the O.T.C., As a Veteran recieving Newsletter I would like you to Publish
this letter in your articles. So if help can be given from anybody within
the Veterans Newsletter, I hope to see this articles published in your next Newsletter
P.T.O

May I ask you to send my Newsletter in the right address
shown: MOREA MEA, P.O. BOX 354 PORT MORESBY, P.N.G.

Could you please inform the people who publish ~~How~~ TRANSIT
about the right ADDRESS shown above.

With kindest regards.

Thank you
Monia Mea.

TENNIS

In Old Fiji

Perhaps the most popular social game in Suva was tennis. On the club courts, the accepted uniform for men was always long cream flannels - cream taffeta shirt, white socks and white - really white blanco'ed shoes. No one dared play on the Tennis Club's courts in anything but a cream outfit. Even white ducks were not quite the thing. As there were no dry-cleaners in Suva in the twenties, the woollen flannels lasted only one or two washings, ere they thickened up and shrunk to an uncomfortable smaller size. Most of the laundry work was done by the Samoan community. One Samoan individual named Selio, did nearly all the laundry work for members of the cable mess, at the cost of one pound monthly. So keen was Selio for the laundry business that he would enquire from the mess if any new transferees were expected and he would be right down at the wharf to seek their business when they arrived. Selio was not the hard-working type, but he organised the women in the community to do all the laundry work. But in the warm tropical climate, perspiration also played havoc with ones flannels as well as the laundering.

The tennis courts were next to the rugby football ground and on one occasion there was a tennis tournament in progress on the same day as an important rugby game. The rugby captain, Tot Chapman of Norfolk Island, was also a prominent tennis player and to save time he appeared on the courts in his rugby uniform, except for his tennis shoes. He finished his tournament game and dashed over to the football ground just in time to kick off. The tennis committee later debated seriously over a possible reprimand for this flagrant breach of the rules.

There were some very good players in Suva. The two Caldwell brothers and our own Charles Halsted, Tom Bailey and Bill Christian were in the top flight. When a Davis Cup team passed through Suva on a mail-steamer, the Caldwells were usually called to play against such stars as Tilden, Johnston, Anderson, Patterson and many others. All the Club courts in Suva were grass and were kept in excellent order.

Undoubtedly the finest grass court in the town was at Government House. With an abundance of prison labour in their colourful striped garments, working under the supervision of the head gardener, the Government House courts were always kept in perfect condition. Of course, dress was impeccable - perfectly laundered shirt and flannels were a must. Sir Eyre Hutson, the Governor was a very keen player and an invitation from him to play on the courts was always very welcome and considered a great compliment.

One day, early in 1927, the Private Secretary telephoned the cable bachelor quarters and invited two of us over to a tennis party. When we arrived at the courts, the two Caldwell brothers were hitting the ball about with H.E. As I never aspired to any great heights in the game, but was usually around when a "fill in" was required, my companion from the quarters made up the four.

When the four had finished one set, H.E. told us that he had planned a surprise for us as it so happened that the well-known French player Alain Gerbault had arrived in Suva in his yacht "Firecrest" and

was coming along to play. To have such a player of world prominence was indeed very special, for we had all heard of the famous French pair Alain Gerbault and Suzanne Lenglen who were probably the world's best players at that time.

As the Frenchman had not yet arrived, the players carried on with another set. They had only played two games, when coming towards the courts there appeared a dirty dishevelled, wet and muddy figure. From photographs in the newspapers, I recognised the famous Frenchman. Rather apologetic and in fairly good English he explained his predicament.

The Firecrest was tied up in Nabukulau Creek and he had fallen asleep and not noticed that the tide had gone out. On awakening, he found that the yacht was leaning over on a bank of slimy mud and nothing could be done until the tide came in again. Not wishing to be too late for the tennis party, he jumped overboard and sank nearly up to his knees in the mud.

After he had clambered up the steep mucky banks of the creek, he hailed a taxi and drove straight up to the Government House courts looking more like a disreputable hobo than the debonair person he used to be.

Sir Eyre quickly summed up the situation and directed him straight to the shower bath after calling on the house-boy to provide Gerbault with a completely fresh and clean outfit. In half an hour he re-appeared on the courts ready to join the other three players in a first rate game by players of nearly world standard.

I suppose that the long tedious solo voyages across the world's lonely oceans must have some effect on a fellow's temperament, for I found Gerbault a little eccentric and decidedly unconventional in his behaviour. But these little peculiarities did not in any way affect his supreme mastery over the tennis ball.

"Recorder"

THE UNKINDEST CUT OF ALL

From time to time we have read in these pages of veterans who joined the communications industry for a variety of reasons such as patriotism, interest in radio, technical potential and so on. Regrettably, no such noble motives spurred me to join a telegraph company but I claim to be the only veteran who spent a lifetime in communications because of an illicit veterinary operation.

Before you go jumping to conclusions let it be made clear at the outset that despite a high-pitched voice I was not on the receiving end of the surgeon's knife!

It all took place at the O'Connell Street, Sydney, office of The Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Company around 1920. Having recently joined as a probationer (trainee telegraphist) I was apprehensive that perhaps I had chosen an unsuitable vocation for a quiet rural lad.

There was this alley cat that had wandered into the building, made itself at home, and quickly became a nuisance. Far from being house trained, it was not even office trained! Something obviously had to be done and the office grapevine advised that the Assistant Superintendent had a home for the cat if its abundant masculinity could be curbed.

We had this colourful character, Harry Melhuish, a man of vast experience of life at cable stations in the Far East. He was a "natural" where animals were concerned and was the office expert at docking puppies tails and similar extra-curricular tasks. However Harry was on leave and one could sense a momentary pause to select a substitute surgeon. To my astonishment, instead of ordering the handyman to get on with the job, three senior executives elected to man the operating theatre themselves in their lunchhour. They have long since departed from this planet but for the record their names were K. J. Blair (Assistant Superintendent), C. E. Sheppard (Electrician) and G. McCarthy, who appeared to be some sort of Senior Supervisor. They would probably have ranked No. 2, No. 3 and No.5 in the hierarchy at that time. In my wildest fantasies I cannot picture a drove of present-day directors tackling a similar task during their lunch break.

I was permitted to stand on a table and peer through a glass partition at these very senior dignified gentlemen quietly honing the office knife and laying out the required impedimenta such as hessian bag, gloves and tar. Their versatility, their quiet air of confidence and their willingness to turn their hands to anything made a profound impression on me and I suddenly became aware that the cable service offered many an interesting diversion. My future occupation was decided from that moment.

And the cat? Well, the operation was a complete success, its basso-profundo changed to a dulcet tenor and the Assistant Superintendent bore it home in triumph.

AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO "RECORDER"

Included in this edition is an article "Tennis in Old Fiji". I also hold copies of articles submitted previously, "Golf", and "The Cup". These will be printed in future copies of the "NEWSLETTER".

The Editor wishes to assure all contributors that no article of interest to Veterans will be overlooked, and these will be printed as soon as space permits.

Contributions to "NEWSLETTER" are welcome at any time.

WORDS

by John Lee.

I don't know whether radio officers became involved in arguments when working point-to-point radio but I guess that in the days when telegrams were passed from cable station to cable station many operators blew their top with the fellow at the distant station at some time in their career.

The following tale was related to me by Os Morling who was well-known around Spring Street in the 1920s.

There were these two cable stations, let's call them A and B, working siphon recorder. The fellow on duty at A had passed some unauthorised terse rude comments to the fellow at B and as a result the chap at B was seething. At this juncture, unaware of what had been going on, the technical wizard (Electrician) at A came to the circuit, decided the signals required some adjustment, and ordered the injured gent at B to "Send words".

To his shocked astonishment the Electrician at A read off the tape:-

"BALLS FOOTBALLS TENNIS BALLS CRICKET BALLS
POLO BALLS GOLF BALLS BILLIARD BALLS BASKET BALLS
BALLS BALLS BALLS."

Of course the officer at B responsible for the unseemly words was reported to Head Office, London, and in due course he received a "Please explain". His explanation was a masterpiece. He pointed out that he had been asked to send words and words he had sent. All of them good clean words that could be found in any dictionary.

There was no disputing the logic of his explanation and Head Office let him off with a caution to

"exercise more discretion in his choice of suitable words on future occasions".

Perhaps incidents such as this gave rise to the adoption of standard specimen slips to be used instead of leaving the choice of words to the individual.

RUGBY (GBR) HIGH AND LOW FREQUENCY TRANSMITTER

by Jack Burgess

The article in the April 1982 issue of the NEWSLETTER by Recorder certainly brought back memories to me regarding the transmissions from the Rugby Station.

I first became involved with the Rugby transmissions when I was appointed Junior Radio Operator on the Commonwealth Government liner "LARGS BAY" in 1926.

The Radio staff consisting of three operators published a daily newspaper on board which was sold for three pence a copy. It was called the "WIRELESS NEWS" and was a joint venture of AWA and the Australian Associated Press.

The Australian Press transmission came to us as a paid press message and was exclusive to ships that bought the service which, from memory, was addressed to the Australian coastal passenger ship "Katoomba".

In 1926 Rugby did not have high frequency, nor did Nauen or the Eiffel Tower, all frequencies concerned being between 25,000-30,000 metres. The three coils used on the AWA Type P.1 receiver for these receptions were very heavy and the sockets holding them did a man-size job.

The power of the Rugby station was so great that it was acknowledged by the British Post Office to have the world-wide coverage. The BPO made transmissions of public radiograms to ships at sea, the first transmissions of public radiograms to ships at sea, the first transmission being made in daylight hours with a repeat twelve hours later, and was presumed to be received by those ships involved. I had the pleasure of receiving two such messages during my two year stay on board the "LARGS BAY".

My next involvement with Rugby came when I was attached to Sydney Radio in 1934 and the Island Radio Room located at 47 York Street in 1937. H/F was the mode those days and the daily reception of the Rugby, or GBR press as it was commonly known, took high priority with between six and twelve carbon copies being made in Sydney and a copy being transmitted by landline to Melbourne for the Victorian papers.

To ensure that the copy of the Rugby press was complete, three stations, Sydney Radio at La Perouse, the Island Room in York Street, and the West Australian station at Applecross, were all involved in its reception. The La Perouse reception was forked direct to the Island Room. No sounder reception was involved, and at the end of the transmission, the H/F radio talker linked up the Island Radio Room to Perth to clear up any errors or failures which may have occurred at either station.

A few years later, just before the World War 2, the British Admiralty became involved with the Rugby transmissions, which became one of the main stations for transmitting important Admiralty messages to British Empire vessels at sea throughout the world, these messages being addressed to G.B.M.S. (Great Britain's Merchant Ships). The idea was to convey important Admiralty messages to ships in the event of an outbreak of hostilities or other emergencies. They were transmitted as test messages, not only by Rugby but by most Empire stations. I copied quite a few of these messages on different occasions, mainly from Singapore Radio on a frequency of 2,400 metres when I was on ships trading to the Far East from Sydney.

When the real thing came about I happened to be stationed at Sydney Radio and had the pleasure of transmitting some of these messages on VIS 600 metres.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bill Craig, now a resident of Auckland N.Z. has been in touch with Claude Dalley and has sent along copies of articles from Bill Whaley which will no doubt be of interest to old P.C.B. employees. Our thanks to both men. Copies appear in this NEWSLETTER under the name of C.B. Whaley.

FUN AND GAMES

C.B. Whaley

In 1910, there was little participation in outdoor activities in the PCB. The majority of the staff consisted of men from cities, unaccustomed to such sports as tennis or shooting and fishing. Fraser, the electrician, and Hill, were extremely active in all forms of outdoor sport. They cut and marked a trail to a region known as the Big Meadows where deer could be found. The trail is still in existence and is used by present-day residents in search of trout in the little stream which flows through this wide stretch of prairie which is fast becoming a lake, mainly due to the beaver dams at its seaward end.

Tam Smales also spent much of his off-duty time in pursuit of bears, not because he bore any marked animosity toward them, but because he wanted some bear rugs for his home in Auckland. He was assisted in his search by the station dog, a half-breed Airedale that became an active member of the staff in rather unusual circumstances.

His owners, two prospectors who had spent a day or two at the station, left him behind while they took a side trip into Barclay Sound. Somewhere during the trip they got into trouble with some Indians, and a fight ensued in which both the prospectors were killed. As an investigation failed to reveal much information about the incident, it soon became forgotten and the dog, whose name was "Boots", became one of the boys.

The best years of Boots' life were spent in hunting expeditions in which he was particularly fond of rousing out bears for Smales. He also learned to retrieve ducks, somewhat violently, but this was because he was no soft-mouthed retriever. In his later days he became deaf, a condition that cost him his life. He was accustomed to sit on the trolley-way that led to the dock and bark a welcome to the incoming CPR boat before going on board to visit the galley where the cook always had a bone for him. The "Tees" arrived early that morning and this caused a good deal of bustle and excitement, with people rushing about, and Jim Fook, who had a busy day ahead, let the trolley car go in a hurry. Shouts

and pointings informed that something was wrong. He jammed on the brakes but there was too much slack in the rope and the car rolled completely over the dog. He lasted through the day but finally died during the night, leaving a contrite Jim Fook to bury him in a grave the following morning.

Of course in time other dogs occupied the station in the forms of mongrel, puppy whelp, and curs and hounds of low degree but none of them quite as much part of the life of the station as "Boots".

During the war years there was little fun and certainly no games but in 1919 people began to take interest in every kind of outdoor activity. The PCB presented a hall fully furnished with badminton courts, gymnastic equipment, and a stage for concerts and plays. Then the Australians arrived in force and the old cement tennis court took a pounding all day long. Nevitt, Goldrick, Jack Turnbull, Stan Dennison, Oscar Schutz, Frank Mackay, "Sloper" Ohlson, and Bill Stoup all combined to produce a brand of tennis which led to a challenge from the Port Alberni Tennis Club. Though the Port was by no means the town it is today, they possessed a good many very good players, their leader being a highly regarded American considered as possible Davis Cup material by the American Selection Board. The Cable team, supported by ample reserves, went to Port Alberni, scoring a big victory on the unfamiliar wooden courts of the Port, Goldrick taking care of their champion in a torrid singles game and the Bamfielders in general outplaying the rest for the most part.

A few weeks later, the Port club had its revenge seemingly liking the concrete surface of our court. Goldrick and Joe Nevitt lost the singles and the doubles games, and although the reserves fought gamely and won all their games, it was not enough.

The Port people suggested another match next year but by that time the whole staff might have left Bamfield and been scattered up and down the Pacific, or even as far apart as Auckland N.Z. and Halifax N.Z. Well, so much for the tennis players. A nicer set of people it would be hard to find.

Meanwhile, other avenues of activity were taking place. The upper reaches of the Pachena River were explored almost to the source, mainly by the New Zealand and Canadian members. Claude Dalley, Donald Mackenzie, Jack Mallam, "Ike" Phillips (N.Z.) and Jeff Phillips (Canada) were all active in these explorations. Big catches of trout were recorded from a region which had lain wholly undisturbed for many years.

In spite of all this outdoor activity the opportunities to put the new hall to use were not being neglected. Alf Gallagher and Guy Neville became very active in staging plays and concerts. Mrs. Nevitt was an accomplished pianiste and coach for the singers and, with the arrival of Sammy Williams on the station to paint and decorate scenery and props, many successful performances took place. Sammy's screen effects and his stage curtains were exceedingly effective and were used over again and again for years, long after he had retired. It was their new-born interest in the stage that prompted Joe Nevitt, a born comedian, to organise a minstrel group. Actually, they were not minstrels at all but a species of jazz band, each member being equipped with a "kazoo", a small flute-like instrument which, when hummed into by a group, produced a sound not unlike a swarm of musical bees.

The leader of the group, Joe Nevitt, wore a costume probably never before, or since, appearing on any stage. He wore a kilt (owner unknown), but his blackened face and tattered shirt denoted residence in the Deep South. His instrument, equally fantastic, consisted of a metal pipe which, when supported on another metal tube, reached far out over the first two rows of the audience, a cardboard lampshade forming a bell-like appendage on the extremity.

Bertie Baxendale, dressed in a suit of old slacks and a flowing tie, performed on a toy saxophone to which he had attached his kazoo. Bill Stoup, in an old grease-spotted dress suit and wearing a wig made of the frayed ends of a section of rope, sawed silently upon the strings of a box, its only resemblance to a base fiddle being its colour, a dark varnish, donated unknowingly by the carpenter shop. The one outstanding feature possessed by the instrument was a door which, when opened, revealed a bottle of scotch.

Fred Harry, in a barman's white coat and a battered top hat, handed drinks all around in old tobacco tins amid terrific applause. Baxendale would then complain of a leaky saxophone, which would then be Fred Harry's cue to leap to the rescue with a fire bucket borrowed from the row on the upper floor of the quarters. Upon turning a tap in the instrument, a small Niagara poured out to the delighted roar from the audience and loud requests for an encore.

It is difficult for the modern mind to grasp the reason for such amateur buffoonery, but it must be remembered that there were none of the radio, T.V., Hi-fi distractions in those days as we accept today as a part of everyday entertainment. People made their own fun, and in a backwoods region such as Bamfield they would dance happily all night to the worn scratch music of overworked gramophones.

The time appeared ripe for a change and change there was, brought about by the arrival of one "Bud" Penman, a versatile musician from Newfoundland. It was said that he could play any instrument and it is certainly correct to say that he excelled in piano, saxophone, banjo and guitar. An unconfirmed rumour floated about that he had been seen playing the harp in the Halifax Symphony Orchestra. True or not, he was talented enough to perform regularly in a Halifax night club orchestra. Almost overnight, Penman collected together any member of the staff who appeared to be musically inclined and with very crude beginnings commenced what was to become a permanent orchestra at the cable station. Unfortunately, his stay was brief, for he returned to Newfoundland where he died. Apparently his health had never been very good.

There followed a succession of musical enthusiasts. The moans and grunts of saxophones and the strumming of banjos and guitars filled the passage of the quarters with dreadful sounds, but from all these noises there finally emerged music and musicians capable of performing in public. Peglar from Sydney and Saville Garrod from Port Alberni provided dance music which was actually pleasant to the ear. Piano players were also found such as "Bro" Martin who filled this position for quite a few years, sometimes helped by summer visitors to the station. From New Zealand came Jack Salthouse, a gifted trumpeter, together with Alan Beattie, a competent guitarist. When Martin went on leave, another New Zealander, Fred Steedman, appeared to take over the piano stool. For two years he led the orchestra with great success before departing on leave.

A succession of pianists; some good, some not so good, until Bill Rutherford offered to take over the piano. Bill, a first rate classical pianist who knew nothing about dance music, must have wondered what he was getting into when, at his first rehearsal, he scanned the musical score of a snappy little number from the Charleston period, "Underware my Baby is Tonight". However, he mastered this epic and many others and his attempts to fit in with the syncopated antics of Messrs. Schutz, Beattie and Garrod were valiant indeed. On his retirement the orchestra fell apart. Salthouse and Beattie departed, Garrod joined the Commercial Pacific Cable Company, whilst Schutz, finding no musicians to work with, went in for outdoor activities. Enthusiastic dancers were obliged to make do with the gramophone records. To them, however, the presence on stage of a live orchestra, poor that it might be, is preferable to the recordings of the world's finest dance bands.

Finally, the last but by no means least of the long line of piano players, Peter Crakanthorp and Don Abney, performed virtually alone until almost the last dance in the Cable hall.

Tennis enjoyed a welcome revival mainly through the efforts of "Tiny" Kirton, the club secretary, assisted by Jack Woodall, the last of our Australians. A few years before, a new court was built but did not attract much staff interest. Kirton, however, taught newcomers the game but it was not until the arrival of two juniors, from Montreal this time, Pete Argue and Ron Smith who, being athletically minded, were ready for any kind of outdoor activity. Argue was a good enough hockey goal tender to attract the notice of Les Canadiens Scouts, while Smith had played Canadian football. On arrival, they knew nothing about tennis but under the coaching of Kirton and Updall they quickly developed into players who would have received a warm welcome by our Australians of past years. When he could get a weekend off duty, Argue journeyed to Nanaimo to play in goal for the local team. Whatever salary he received did not cover the cost of his travel and hotel expenses so he satisfied his sporting ardour in a series of violent single tennis games with Smith. They never could learn from these clashes as to who was the better player.

Incidentally, the tennis court is still in existence and used by its present owners for Netball.

ABOUT THE EDITOR, BILL WHALEY

Bill Whaley contributed a great deal to the "music life" of Bamfield, his main forte being the drums and associated instruments. To round out the music life of Bamfield a few names should be mentioned to refresh memories:-

W.E. Rockingham (Violin) - Bill Saunders (Trumpet) - Don Schutz (Banjo) - Messrs. Pegler, Fletcher, Lassau and Griffin on the Sax - Peter Crakanthorp, as Bill has mentioned, "the mainstay for dances for years", on the piano - with Billie Wells on the drums.

"THE CAPTAIN AND THE KINGS DEPART"

They do indeed, sometimes with startling abruptness.

Of the first of these Kings, Mr. Reynolds, little is known. He had previously ruled as sumptuous overlord of all the Railways of India and was now the first of the line to be entitled "Manager in the Pacific" for the Pacific Cable Board.

The only available record of his reign is connected with the Bamfield station and concerns his choice of accommodation for the Manager, Mr. MacLauchlan, who on his arrival naturally enquired as to where his house was situated. He was informed that there was no house but that excellent quarters had been reserved for him in the tower of the new building; consisting of three small rooms one above the other. When MacLauchlan pointed out that there was no kitchen he was informed that one would not be necessary as he and his family would take their meals with the staff in their messroom. The Manager soon tendered his resignation, no doubt recalling his comfortable apartment in Montreal and his satisfactory job with one of the Atlantic Cable Companies.

Upon hearing of this, the Board in London ordered that a suitable house must be built and to forget such nonsense as rooms in the tower. The result was the erection of a not unhandsome house which was occupied by a succession of Managers until the station closed. From then on, no further information is obtainable of the career of Mr. Reynolds; nothing, at least, of interest to the Cable people of today.

On a stormy night in February, a group of men sat around the great fireplace in the Somass Hotel in Port Alberni. A heavy north-east wind was plastering the lobby windows with great jobs of snow and rattling the panes violently. No kind of a night to be out in. Suddenly the doors of the lobby pushed open admitting a blast of zero air and a taxi man powered in snow carrying two suitcases. He was immediately followed by a tall well-built man who advanced to the fire and greeted the assembly pleasantly. The Manager rose and welcomed him.

"What are you doing out on a night like this, Mr. Millward?"

"Got to catch the 'Tees'", he replied. "Only way I can get down to Bamfield that I know of."

The dinner hour was long past but the Manager bustled about preparing a helping of hot soup and cold cuts for the traveller and remarked,

"Never saw such a guy, always on the jump. First it's Ottawa and now it's Bamfield."

"Why do they stick a cable station in such a God-forsaken spot? Only way to get there is on the 'Tees'," replied Millward as he got his key and departed for his room.

John Millward certainly did do a lot of travelling. The infant P.C.B. seemed to demand his presence continually. He was a frequent passenger on the 'Tees' where he was always very welcome. He enjoyed the meals in the saloon for he never suffered seasickness.

One rough morning while the ship was doing the tricky job of unloading freight at Clo-oose, he prepared to leave his stateroom on a narrow passageway (miscalled the promenade deck) when he found his door blocked by some heavy object. There was a good deal of noise on the deck mixed in with bovine grunts of anguish. Suddenly, the door flew open almost depositing him onto a large cow which had strayed from the herd on the cargo deck and in attempting to turn around in that narrow space had jammed its rear end against the cabin door while its head hung bawling over the sea rail.

"Such a thing could only happen on the 'Tees'," exclaimed Millward.

His relations with the cable staff were nearly always friendly though there did occur a few instances which caused irritation. One morning in Bamfield he felt it necessary to caution Oakes, a senior operator, as to his language during an interview. Oakes, a good operator with many grievances, became so heated that the M.I.P. cautioned him as to his language. Whereupon, Oakes removed his sports jacket displaying beneath a blue guernsey bearing the sign in red wool, "Canadian Life Saving Service."

"I start work there tomorrow," said Oakes, turning and banging the door as he went.

After a period of work with the Bamfield lifeboat, Oakes was accepted by the All American Cable Co.

Then there was the young gentleman who, on transfer from Halifax to Bamfield, disappeared for a whole month, finally arriving in Vancouver in search of funds. His arrival coinciding with Millward's arrival, he was requested to explain where the dickens he had been. He replied that, in the interests of health, stopovers were necessary. You couldn't be expected to travel all that distance without stopovers so he had divided his time between Calgary, Banff Springs, and the Chateau Lake Louise. He was advised, if he knew what was good for him, to leave at once for Victoria where he would board the boat for Bamfield without fail of risk dismissal.

There was, too, the occasion when Mr. Smith, on reaching his office, found Millward aided by a large black cigar going over the accounts and reports of the station. Mr. Smith's horror of tobacco in all its forms was well known and his protests were loud. He could not, he said, allow even an M.I.P. to profane his office in such a manner. Through a cloud of blue smoke came the somewhat acid reply,

"In that case, Smith, you'd better find yourself another office."

Once, during the First World War, Millward arrived in Vancouver from Ottawa to discover that the boat for Australia had left. Fortunately, he found the cable ship "Tris" about to sail so, together with some staff on transfer, he took passage on her. In Honolulu she stopped to coal and found a German cruiser also coaling in the adjoining dock.

A photograph taken from the deck of the "Tris" shows a German petty officer leaning over his ship's rail smiling at the photographer. "Tris" finished her coaling and left at top speed which was not excessive. Soon her wireless was picking up the German signals to the rest of his squadron and the race was on. It was a very close thing but the cable ship arrived in a section of the Pacific patrolled by the Australian navy where a solitary enemy ship dared not follow. Suva Harbour must have seemed very welcome.

On Millward's retirement he was succeeded as M.I.P. by Robert Bain, who had, as manager at Bamfield during the 'flu epidemic of 1918, worked 12 hours a day as an operator along with his skeleton staff. Bain was the last of the M.I.P.s.

By: C. B. Whalley

January 1982

THE ERUPTION AT RABAU, 28TH MAY 1937

by Jack Burgess.

I read John Lennon's account of the volcanic eruption in Rabaul with interest but I would like to make a correction to his version.

The H/F-L/F AWA station at Rabaul did not suffer any damage from the eruption as quoted by John. Fortunately, neither the transmitting or receiving sites suffered any damage, except for the loss of power from the town supply which was cut and not restored for about ten days. The only time lost was between 4pm and midnight, normally a 600 metre watch for ships at sea on Saturday evening, 28th May 1937. The station reopened at 11am on Sunday morning, which was normal.

At the time, no facilities existed at Bitapaka and no equipment existed. The two high-powered German diesel engines had been sold to timber merchants and the Ruston Hornsby diesel engine normally used by the station was transferred and erected in Rabaul being used as an emergency power source in case of failure of the town supply. This was the source of our power when the town supply was cut during the eruption.

Most of the Rabaul staff of AWA returned to Bitapaka and Kokopo where alternate accommodation in the form of a tent village had been erected.

A small radio transceiver had been obtained (from memory from Norm Odgers, I think). Norm was the Radio Officer on the Burns Philp passenger ship "Montoro" which was standing off Kokopo to pick up any refugees. This small transmitter was used to send public traffic to the Rabaul station which in turn retransmitted it to SYDNEY.

One of the H/F transmitters in use at Bitapaka was also transferred to Rabaul and continued in service covering the outstations within the New Guinea area.

AND WHILST WE ARE TALKING ABOUT NEW GUINEA --

The following has been onpassed to us by Alan Vagg, mainly for the benefit of Bill Luke who is compiling facts relating to the war years in the area.

Alan writes:-

"I was a member of the NGVR (New Guinea Volunteer Rifles) as soon as it was formed in 1939 and trained a signal section consisting of a couple of "hams", an ex-navy signals man, and a couple of ex-PMG telegraphists, etc.

At the time the unit was being mobilised for active service I was on leave in Melbourne and received a telegram to report back soonest. At the same time I was due to return for the Company. I reported into the Sydney Office and worked in the Island Radio Room for about a week until such time as air transport could be arranged. I eventually left on a Lockheed in company with Alan Hooper. I was heading for Bulolo, and Alan for Rabaul, but we had no promise of transport beyond Port Moresby. I eventually got to Wau in a three-engined Ford, and thence to Bulolo by Tiger Moth. I never did hear how Alan got to Rabaul.

For one month I was actually working for both the Army and the Company until my resignation from the Company got to Sydney.

There was no Army equipment in the area, so we used "ham" rigs, teleradios, and stuff we made up so that we eventually had about twelve stations operating in the Morobe district, at inland dromes, and along the coast. We also took over the Aeradio station at Salamau until six Air Force chaps arrived. They were cut off when the Japs landed and joined up with me, and very welcome they were, believe me.

Ivan Hyde had relieved me at Bulolo. I can't remember how he got out, but I think it was by 'plane to Moresby. Ray Wood walked out with a party of civilians along the Bulolo track to the Lakehama River, and then by rafts down the river to Yule Island, then by small ship to Moresby. Charlie Beckett was also in this party, the last one to leave the area. It would take many more pages to describe my experiences, but as your main interest is in how people got away I will not go into them here.

Eventually, the Army caught up with us, and the campaign in our area ended with the battle of Wau.

After that I was sent South and spent four months in Hospital in Melbourne before returning to Moresby where I was made Chief Wireless Officer, New Guinea, presumably for my sins. I was finally discharged at the end of the war with the rank of Captain, and three MID's to my credit.

Upon discharge, I was sent by AWA to Braybrook as technician and stayed there until my return to VIG. After a year there I went to open the Samarai station and was there when the OPTC took over. Two years at VIJ and then back to Braybrook, from where I resigned the OTC and rejoined Engineering Products Division of AWA Melbourne, and was Manager of the Division until my retirement in 1970.

P.S. Just a couple of interesting notes. On the drome at Cairns I met Jimmy Twycross who begged me not to go back but to come over to DCA with him. Also whilst we were up at about 1,000 feet between Cairns, both the motors of the Lockheed cut out. It was due to the pilot forgetting to change over tanks. I vividly recall Alan Hooper saying, "PASS THE WHISKY BOTTLE, QUICK".

OUT TO PASTURE

HARRY STONE, retired from the Service of the Commission on 27th August 1982 having had 51 years service in communications. He joined AWA Beam Wireless as a messenger on 7th October 1931, proceeding from the position of messenger through the various grades, finally becoming a telegraphist. He transferred to La Perouse as a technician in 1950 and then to Bringelly in 1953 to prepare the station for opening in 1955. From 1966 to 1968 he did a tour of duty in Tonga, back to Bringelly as Supervising Technician and then to Madang as Manager, the last OTC Manager prior to handover to PNG Telecom in 1979. From that date until his retirement he was Manager Bringelly.

Harry is a foundation member of the Sydney OTC Cricket Club, and a member of the first Melbourne/Sydney cricket match at Wagga. Still an active "Ham", VK2SH (SH for Silver Hair), he has bought a house at Bateau Bay on the Central Coast of NSW and has joined the Norah Head Big Game Fishing Club.

On the same day, "HORRIE" McINNES, Chief Traffic Superintendent also retired. Horrie began as a Beam Wireless messenger at AWA, Queen Street, Melbourne, and after six months began the arduous climb to the position of telegraphist. He was transferred to Sydney in 1940. In 1946, when OTC(A) was born he transferred over from AWA. He went through the various grades until he became Superintendent (Service Standards) in 1968, finally becoming Chief Traffic Superintendent in 1970.

Horrie was also a foundation member of the Sydney OTC Cricket Club and served as President, Secretary, and Club captain, and like Harry, was also a member of the first Melbourne/Sydney match at Wagga, playing for Sydney. He has served on the OTC Credit Union as Chairman and Director, is a past member of the Staff Relations Committee and the first Secretary of the Telegraphic Staff Consultative Committee. He intends to remain in Manly, but will tour Australia and his wife, Fleurette, as time permits.

We wish them both good health and a long retirement.

NEWS FROM THE VICTORIAN SECTOR

LOCAL NEWS

Veteran VIN DUIGNAN has been of poor health recently and has decided to sell the family home in Camberwell. He now resides at 1 GLEN EVOR AVENUE, BLACKBURN. 3130. His telephone number is 878-2346 for any of the Vets who may be looking for him. Vin is well remembered and held in high esteem for his activity and sterling staff relations in both Adelaide and Melbourne.

RON ROGER is now back home from hospital after knee surgery but still convalescing as he still has the plaster covering the affected area. Ron has home help and Meals on Wheels, and good neighbours only too happy to keep an eye on things, which is a fitting reward for a chap who was always ever-ready to assist others.

Veteran, BILL HENDERSON, a keen "ham" (Call sign VK3ARX), recently heard a "CQ" call ZS-SYN, Christian name DERRY, resident CRESTHOLME just outside Durban, South Africa. After making contact it was found that they both had mutual interests with backgrounds with AWA Ltd., and the CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT equipment. Before his retirement, Bill served at Tullamarine and Essendon airports.

ELLIS SMELLIE, now 89 years old, is on the move again. His new address is BOX 12 P.O. MANDURAH, 6210. Ellis is slowly losing his sight, unfortunately, but is his robust self otherwise. He listens to, and recommends to others in similar straits, stories on cassette. Quite a lot of the Municipal libraries have cassettes of this nature available, should anyone wish to avail himself or herself of the facility.

Another of our veterans, J. M. MARTIN, now approaching 96 years of age is comfortably settled in ST. JOSEPH TOWER RETIREMENT HOME, PRINCESS STREET, KEW. 3101. VICTORIA. Jack is hard of hearing and blind, but he still remembers the old wireless operators, all of whom have his signature on their 1st Class Tickets.

OVERSEAS NEWS

Veteran JOHN ASH has retired from the position of Hon. Secretary, Eastern Extension Retired Officers Society because of ill health, and his successor is:-

M. B. PREECE (also a Veteran)
10A Woodside Avenue
Walton-on-Thames, SURREY.

The E.R.O.S. will celebrate its 50th Anniversary at the Cafe Royal, London, on 9th October 1982, and a good attendance is expected to mark the Golden Jubilee.

IN APPRECIATION

CHARLES CARTHEW, our National Secretary, is not only active within the OTVA, he recently received the following letter from the State Library of Victoria.

"We are writing to thank you for presenting records of the Overseas Telecommunications Veterans' Association (Victoria) to the La Trobe Library.

These albums of photographs and scrapbooks have been placed in our Australian Manuscripts Collection with OTVA records which have already been presented.

The photographs depicting the cable manufacturing process will be extremely valuable to researchers in the field of telegraphy. The other album of photographs taken during the filming of "On the Beach" is an unusual and interesting addition to the OTVA records.

Thank you for your continued interest.

Yours sincerely,
DIANNE REILLY,
La Trobe Librarian."

A TRIBUTE TO THE COAST WATCHER

"Within the quiet Exhibition Galleries of the Canberra Australian War memorial there is much to be seen, and in the silence of the lofty Hall of Memory sunlight filters through fifteen beautiful tall and narrow stained glass windows. All but one contain the figure of an Australian Serviceman and the remaining window incorporates the figure of an Army Nurse.

Each portrait bears a single work in scarlet letters across the bottom. These words list the outstanding social, personal and fighting qualities of men and women who the memorial commemorates. For example, there is a signaller holding two furled signalling flags. Above him is an open flower denoting frankness of expression while three arrow heads suggest the swiftness which is the essential feature of his special work. Below is the word CANDOUR. This panel may well be the memorial to the gallant Coast Watcher."

The above is part of a quote from "WINDOWS OF FAME" by B. A. HARDING.

OTVA veterans remember with pride their New Guinea colleagues and acknowledge this memorial in silent tribute to their courage and dedication whilst acting in the voluntary capacity as Coast Watchers.

If an authentic list of New Guinea Coastal Radio Operators had been compiled it would have been appended to the above. Quite a few of our veterans who have acted in this capacity have been mentioned in past articles within the "NEWSLETTER" but as yet we know of no one who is attempting this task. Should anyone have any information in regard to Coast Watchers I would appreciate a letter.

MARCONI OCEANIC GUILD WINDING UP.

The Marconi Oceanic Guild is winding up after 31 years. CHARLES CARTHEW reports that CHRIS FOX was at this function and played a cassette greeting that Charles had made when Chris was here last year, and also obtained signatures as a souvenir. Chris also attended the Worthing Eastern Extension Annual Reunion luncheon and gathered more signatures. As a point of interest, in 1929 the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company merged with Eastern Telegraph, and so ended the Marconi intake, as new members became C&W-ites. Fortunately, the other associations will absorb the remaining Guild members, all of whom are 70 years or over. Chris and Barbara Fox will be back in Victoria next November on what will be their third Australian visit.

THINGS WE HEAR

ROLEY LANE is yet another veteran seeking the sunshine up in Bjelkeland, attempting to escape the much maligned Melbourne winter.

By a happy change, veteran JACK FINCH recently met up with ALEC STEWART and JACK HUNTER, and reference was made to the non-attendance of J.F. This has been followed up with the end result that our AWA colleague will be present at the next November Reunion in Melbourne after an absence of many years.

VALE.

Deepest sympathy is extended to the McCormack family on the sad passing of Tess, widow of our late Past President, Frank McCormack, OTVA (Victoria).

REMINISCENCES

We have received a bit more from JIM JACOBS, whose article in the April edition of the "NEWSLETTER" brought back a lot of memories to our older Veterans. he writes:-

"Here are a few further notes on Vol. 7 of the November 1981 "NEWSLETTER". Seeing the name of Ernest Fisk reminded me that his son, E. K. FISK, was a Captain in the 8th Division Sigs. I was his Company Commander. For some reason he was always known as "Fred", and he was one of the lucky ones to be evacuated from Singapore a few days before the surrender in February 1942.

I was saddened to read of the death of BILL JENVEY. We worked together in the Wireless Branch of the PMG Department, as it was then named. Bill joined the Police Wireless patrol as I had already mentioned. He arranged for me to be with him on patrol one Saturday night/Sunday morning, and it was quite an experience.

Seeing the name of Fred Griffiths reminded me that we had both served as wireless operators on the "LARGS BAY" in 1926.

George Morrison I remember well, as I was Service Clerk with Ted Bain when George was a Beam Supervisor. That was in 1927/1928.

Among the names of "Hams" I can remember Ross Hull (3XU), Tom Court, H. Kingsley Love, and Morrie Israel. Kingsley Love was President of the Victorian Branch of the Wireless Institute of Australia, and the Secretary was Geoff Sheane, who joined AWA on the same day I did.... 3rd April 1924. Ben Rose also joined on that day.

Maybe the names of old "shipmates" I worked with will bring back memories to other veterans of that era, names like Harry Barnfield, Ernie Coldwell, Jack Bennett, Peter Gillon, Ron McKenzie, Harold Sticpwich, Bill Myers, Frank Marsden, Lionel Jones of NZ, Gordon Guppy, Frank Davidson, Wilf Atkin, J. Lexton, Colin Hickey, Viv Brooker, and "Tiny" Ternes.

I met George Scott on the "CANBERRA" about 1926. His brother, Alan, was a P.O.W. with me at Changi.

Just the mention of a name brings back memories still vivid to me, and perhaps the mention of these "old timers" will do the same for other veterans. I sincerely hope so."
