



Newsletter

3/3

O.T.V.A.

VOL. 3 PT. 1 PAGE 1

NOVEMBER 1983.

ANNUAL REUNIONS

<u>NEW SOUTH WALES</u>	FRIDAY, 25 NOVEMBER	6pm	CONFERENCE ROOM 4TH FLOOR, OTC HOUSE MARTIN PLACE, SYDNEY.
<u>VICTORIA</u>	FRIDAY, 11 NOVEMBER	5.30pm	AMENITIES SECTION BASEMENT, OTC HOUSE 382 LONSDALE STREET MELBOURNE.
<u>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</u>	THURSDAY, 24 NOVEMBER	2.30pm	MR. B. HORROCKS' HOME 7 MIEGUNYAH AVENUE UNLEY PARK. S.A.
<u>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</u>	TUESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER	5pm	COOLABAH TAVERN, MORLEY. RSVP BRIAN MORRELL PHONE (09) 274-1274 BY 15 NOVEMBER.
<u>QUEENSLAND</u>	FRIDAY, 18 NOVEMBER	12pm	COAST RADIO STATION BRIBIE ISLAND ROAD TOORBUL POINT (Transport will leave Brisbane Office at 11am).

INTERSTATE MEMBERS AND VISITORS WILL BE WELCOMED
AT THESE FUNCTIONS, BUT PRIOR ADVICE OF INTENTION
TO ATTEND WOULD BE APPRECIATED BY THE ORGANISERS.

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I am sure that all Veterans will join me in wishing you a speedy recovery, Charles.



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27TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS ASSOCIATION (NSW)

20TH MAY 1983

The 27th AGM of the NSW Branch of OTVA was held in the Conference Room, 4th Floor, OTC(A) House, Martin Place, Sydney.

- (1) President Philip Geeves opened the meeting.
- (2) One minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect to colleagues who had passed away since our last meeting.

Harry Burdett
Bert Hartley
Harry Hicks
Fred Mulligan

- (3) The minutes of the 26th AGM held on 21st May 1982 were confirmed.
- (4) Treasurer Joe Collister presented the Balance Sheet and Annual Accounts which showed the Branch to be in a comfortable financial position, being just over \$400 ahead of last year.
- (5) A Returning Officer was elected and an election held for the following positions:

President
Secretary
Treasurer
Committee

The major change was that of Secretary. Lou Brown had indicated that he would be unable to carry on and Alan Arndt was nominated for the position. He was duly elected, which serves him right.

- (6) Confirmation of the next date and venue were made, the result being on Page 1 of this issue. All NSW members are requested to keep it in mind.
- (7) General Business

President Philip welcomed Alan Arndt to the position of Secretary, and thanked the outgoing Secretary, Lou Brown, for his past work. He also thanked those members and the Executive for the support they had given him in the past year.

A motion of which due notice had been given was put to the meeting:
"That the Annual Subscription be raised from \$2.00 to \$4.00".
The motion was carried.

The matter of a new heading and logo for the NEWSLETTER was discussed, and a sample of the proposed new one circulated for inspection and comment. After some discussion it was finally decided to retain the old format until something a little more satisfactory can be worked out.

The members were advised that Jim Shore and Norm Giles were both on the sick list. Jim was in Lady Davidson, Turramurra, and visitors were allowed between the hours 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., but intending visitors were requested to phone first.

The meeting was then closed, and those who were in attendance partook of refreshments whilst renewing old acquaintances.

OBITUARY - MR. PHILIP LESLIE GEEVES

Veterans, no doubt, will have received the news of the death of the NSW President of the OTVA by now, but this edition would not be complete without a thumb-nail sketch of this talented, yet modest man.

Philip suffered a stroke on 5th August and died on 16th August. To his widow, Mrs. Leona Geeves, his daughters, Leona Jenifer and Miranda, and his grandson I extend heartfelt sympathy on behalf of the members of the OTVA.

We all remember Philip as a witty and humour-loving kind of bloke, but he was a highly talented man, regarded by the ABC as a "resident historian", a writer of some repute, a Fellow of the Royal Australian Historical Society, a recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia, and a returned service veteran who had served as an artillery officer in World War II in the Middle East and Pacific area during which service he was Mentioned in Dispatches.

Though he was with us as our NSW President for only a short time in his life span, I feel sure that he left an indelible impression on all who knew him. I, for one, feel richer for our acquaintanceship.

Vale, Philip - it was nice to have known you.

THE NEW NSW PRESIDENT OF THE NSW BRANCH OF THE OTVA

Realising that every ship must have a captain, the steering committee of the NSW Branch of OTVA set about finding a replacement for Philip. Quite a few men have had a long association, fellows like GORDON CUPIT, for example, but like a lot of us who have retired we are still subject to commitments of some kind.

An approach was made to RON MacDONALD who agreed to occupy the position as a "caretaker President" until the next AGM when, he said, "the members can decide on a permanent incumbent", or words to that effect.

I have to give Ron full marks for his intestinal fortitude in taking over the job, because Philip Geeves will be a hard act to follow. Nonetheless, we all wish you the best in your endeavours, Ron, and you can always count on me to spell the big words if necessary.

THE UNDERSTUDY

Whilst we are dealing with replacements, I would like members to know that ALAN ARNDT is riding double with LOU BROWN, preparing for the time when Lou will relinquish the reins to Alan on a full-time basis as Secretary of this branch. I have had quite a lot to do with Lou since taking over the Editor of the NEWSLETTER and had become as attached to him as I dared do without drawing knowing looks from by-standers. However, Alan Arndt is no stranger to me either, having known him when he was in the Traffic Section and delighted to find out that promotion has not spoilt our boy since he entered the Marketing Section. Overall, I have been very fortunate in Secretaries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As Editor of the NEWSLETTER I wish to acknowledge articles received from contributors. Some of these will appear in this issue, and others as space presents itself. Thanks go to -

Charles Carthew
Brax Horrocks
Eileen Haran
Bob Scott (Canada)
"Recorder"
Claude Dalley
"Blue" Easterling
John Moynihan
Ronald G. Martin W6ZF (Calif.)

To those who are out there reading these articles, surely some incident or incidents bring back memories in kind. If so, how about sharing them with the rest of us. All material in the NEWSLETTER, and indeed, the NEWSLETTER itself is archived in the National Library. You never know, they might want to make a film about communications in the near future. It would have to be a comedy of course.

PERSONAL THANKS

I wish to thank "Blue" Easterling who responded to my plea for information concerning the Coast Watcher Radio men on Tabar Island, north of Rabaul. Blue not only gave me a comprehensive run-down on the Island but went to an enormous amount of trouble to send photostat sections of books which dealt with the subject. The courage and devotion to duty lends pride to the statement, "I was a wireless operator."

VALE

Those of us who were on the High Speed Beam Course run by the Department of Rehabilitation at the conclusion of World War 2 will remember the catch-cry, "Come on, High Speed Beam - settle down" constantly uttered by HAROLD GRADY,

ex-marine operator and instructor at the AWA Training school. We are all saddened to hear that Harold died suddenly on 15th June last whilst on his way to visit his wife who was in hospital. His last ship was the MV "MERINDA" in 1939 after which he was transferred to the AWA School. His patience with the 24 rehabilitees doing the High Speed Beam Course bordered on the monumental, but we all had a soft spot for Harold and our sincerest sympathy goes to his widow and family.

FREDERICK CHARLES MULLIGAN died on 11th September 1982 in New Zealand at the ripe old age of 95. Fred was an old CRS man, serving at Pennant Hills Radio, in Melbourne for 2 years, at Flinders 1918-1931, Manager Darwin during the war, served in Adelaide and Pinkenba. Fred had been invalided during the war. Our sympathy goes to his son, M. Mulligan, who provided the information.

BUT NOW, A BIT OF GOOD NEWS

ALAN ARNDT, our new Secretary, has had a line from HORRIE McINNES mainly to congratulate Alan on his new position, and at the same time inform him of Horrie's change of address. Included in the letter was a cheque for "a donation toward the Association's funds," as Horrie put it. We thought that this was the best way to acknowledge receipt. Thanks Horrie, JOE COLLISTER, our Treasurer, will be in raptures.

JOCK COWIE, who now lives down Tumut way has provided a bit of news in an answer to a letter from LOU BROWN and as we haven't heard from Jock for some time perhaps these extracts may be of interest to veterans.

He writes, "Re NORM OLSEN. Norm and Elsie Olsen ran a newsagency in Brisbane for a number of years after his retirement from the AWA Island Radio Service. In actual fact, Norm relieved me at VPD Suva. We used to see a lot of Elsie and Norm, as I was stationed in Brisbane for some time, but after Elsie's death, Norm sold out and went to Lord Howe Island sometime in the fifties, subsequently re-married and settled down there. It is some time since we have been in contact, but during a week in May mutual friends called and said they had had a card from them last Christmas (1982).

Re Comments about Fanning and Christmas Islands. I was particularly interested in the copies of correspondence re flying to Christmas and Fanning Islands. Having spent twelve months on Christmas Island Acting Deputy Commissioner in charge of the island, I am naturally curious. Whilst en route Christmas from Honolulu on HMS "ACHILLES" we stopped off at Fanning and spent a fascinating day there. The Cable Staff hospitality left nothing to be desired.

Mention of the "Cleaning House" day in Brax Horrocks' memories reminds me of a similar one in Suva at VPD. There was no loss of promotion, as I recall, but inaccuracies meant an interview with FRANK EXON, who was the boss.

Cyril Swinbourn's "hocking" his dinner suit made me chuckle, because I recall doing exactly the same thing for the same reason whilst training in London.

As a golfer I would make a good cement mixer, but I do recall the hazards of the then Suva Golf Course and the shortcomings of some of the foreboys.

Best regards,

JOCK COWIE."

Thanks, Jock.

FAREWELL, TED

EDWARD JOSEPH O'DONNELL (Ted) passed away on 1st August 1983 at the War Veterans' Home, Narrabeen. He had been suffering from bronchitis for several years, but the current outbreak of the Philippines flu virus was more than Ted could withstand. Ted was about 86 years of age, and his work history shows that he was a CRS operator with AWA between 1920-1946, then worked with OTC until 1948 at La Perouse before retiring. During his career he worked at coast stations including Port Moresby, Lae, Melbourne, Geraldton, Honiara, Esperance and Adelaide. Our sincere condolences to those of his family and friends.

VALE

H. J. (BERT) EDWARDS died at Southport on 11th September 1983. Our condolences go to his widow, Lorna, and our thanks go to HARRY COOK who was good enough to advise us.

I'M FINE THANK YOU

Contributed by Eileen Haran

There is nothing the matter with me,
I'm as healthy as I can be.
I have arthritis in both my knees
and when I talk, I talk with a wheeze.

My pulse is weak and my blood is thin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in
Arch supports I have for my feet
Or I wouldn't be able to be on the street.

Sleep is denied me night after night
But every morning I find I'm all right
My memory is failing my heart's in a spin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

The moral is this, as my tale I unfold,
That for you and me, who are growing old,
It's better to say I'm fine with a grin,
Than to let folks, know the shape, we are in.

How do I know that my youth is all spent?
Well my "Get up and go" has got up and went!
But I really don't mind when I think with a grin,
Of all the grand places, my 'Get up has bin'!

Old age is golden I've heard it said,
But sometimes I wonder as I get into bed,
With my ears in the drawer, and my teeth in a cup,
My eyes on the table, until I wake up,
Ere sleep overtakes me, I say to myself,
Is there anything else, I could lay on the shelf?

When I was young my slippers were red,
I could kick my heels over my head,
When I was older my slippers were blue,
But still I could dance the whole night through,
Now I am old my slippers are black
I walk to the store and puff my way back,

I get up each morning and dust off my wits,
and pick up the paper and read the "Obits".
If my name is still missing I know I'm not dead,
So I have a good breakfast and go back to bed.

OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS ASSOCIATION (VIC)

26th Annual General Meeting

The 26th Annual General Meeting of the OTVA Victorian Branch was held in the Amenities Room, OTC House, 382 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne from noon to 3.30 p.m.

Immediate Past President, Bill Shea opened the meeting with a call for a period of silence in memory of and a tribute to our late President, Viv Molineaux and other veterans who had passed on.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed, and the Annual Balance Sheet adopted. The new President, JACK McGRORY, was nominated by Bill Shea and seconded by Eddie Trezise, and carried by acclamation. There being no other nominations for the other positions the present office-bearers were re-elected.

Hon Secretary	Charles Carthew
Hon Treasurer	D. Chambers
Committee	Mrs. D. Gosney - G. Russell - D. Crabtree - L. Foley - W. Shea
Auditors	Ex-officio Immediate Past President S. Silver - R. Lovett

Reunion

It was decided by a unanimous vote to hold the 27th Annual Reunion on Friday, 11th November 1983, from 5.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. and the Annual General Meeting on Friday, 11th May 1984, from noon until 3.30 p.m., both functions at the OTC Amenities Room with the kind permission of Management.

President Jack McGrory declared General Secretary, Charles Carthew, re-elected to office for the ensuring year - carried by acclamation.

After general discussion President Jack declared the meeting closed with a vote of thanks extended on behalf of all present to Lou Brown and Jim Anderson and everyone responsible for making the NEWSLETTERS so popular and covering veteran activities so well ... the new logo also met with approval.

Thirty-seven veterans came along and there were 18 apologies recorded. In all it was the happy air of friendship that mattered most.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE GARDEN STATE

There was a time when Melbournradio (VIM), situated in the Domain Gardens, not far from the city in a somewhat isolated spot and not exactly a pleasant environment after dark, kept in touch with the Beam Wireless Section by telegraph sounder. Eventually, VIM was transferred to Wireless House, Queen Street, Melbourne, until a new Coastal Radio Station was built down on the Peninsular at Cape Schank.

Mention of CRS recalls a conversation among real "old timers" touching upon the original Wyndham Radio Station (VIW) which was built some miles out of town with Chinese market gardeners as neighbours making good use of the swamp-land nearby. The only break from an otherwise monotonous life was the occasional sight of sheep being brought overland and wild life, generally, moving around.

VALE

WILLIAM HENRY RICHARDSON died 6th June 1983, aged 88 years.
Joined AWA Marine Service 1st March 1918.
CRS 20th July 1927.
Transferred Rockbank May, 1950 from Perthradio (VIP).
Last record 1956.

Veteran, V. J. (Vince) DUGNAN died on 25th June 1983, aged 82 years.
Vince joined Eastern Extension Telegraph Company on probation in Adelaide, 1st March 1919.
Appointed operating staff 1st September 1920.
Transferred Darwin 1922.
Transferred Adelaide 1st March 1925.
Promoted Senior Cable Officer, Adelaide, 1st September 1935.
Transferred Melbourne 16th January 1949 as Senior Telegraphist, OTC(A).
Retired 1st September 1967. Total service 48 years
Vince was actively associated with Sports and Social Club both in Adelaide and Melbourne.
Sadly missed by his family and colleagues.

BITS AND PIECES - HERE AND THERE -

Over the years OTVA(A) has kept in touch with Worthing C&W veterans and Chris Fox kindly forwarded their recent Annual Reunion autographed luncheon menu with greetings to their Aussie colleagues.

Veteran ELLIS SMELLIE has now reached the ninetieth milestone and is comfortably cared for in the Lady Nell Blind Centre, 384 Wattletree Road, East Malvern, 3145.

STAN DAVIES telephoned to give a change of address and also offering his new home at Mt. Eliza as the venue for a veteran afternoon barbeque next summer. Please contact Hon. Secretary for details.

The General Secretary's mail includes regular overseas correspondence including the Canadian Teleglobe periodical "SPARGO" covering staff transfers, promotions, technical notes and personal pars. When reversed English is duplicated in French which is quite novel and caters for the bi-lingual reader in both East and West.

The USA Wireless Operators Journal, "SPARKS", is very comprehensive in its coverage of radio communication, taking in anecdotes of present and past life at sea, and makes nostalgic reading for a membership of several thousand.

C&W Chelmsford publish a monthly newsletter "MERCURY" which also gives detailed staff movements, technological changes and personal pars. Another publication is "MARINER" which deals with shipping and the C&W movements of marine personnel.

Hearty congratulations are in order from veteran colleagues in Victoria to LOU & EDITH HEGGIE on the happy occasion of their Golden Wedding anniversary which they celebrated on 15th July 1983.

VALE

Our highly esteemed late veteran colleague, A. E. BOORD, died on 10th August 1983. He had spent a lifetime of service with AWA joining the Beam Wireless Service in 1927, and, on the formation of OTC(A) decided to remain with AWA until his retirement. Melbourne sportsmen will remember Al Boord as the President of the Richmond Football Club 1971-73.

A QUOTE FROM "GIRDLE AROUND THE EARTH"

The chosen few of Eastern Telegraph trainees had to show they had it in them to take more than instruction. The guard on the train from Paddington could always detect the Eastern Telegraph boys smartly dressed in their well cut suits, sporting the latest fashion in curly bowler hats, but never let on what lay in store for them on arrival at Penzance. He well knew that there would be a reception committee waiting on their arrival to seize their hats and hand them over to the fireman on the locomotive in front of the train for prompt disposal in the engine fire-box.

Hats were not allowed at the training school.

During the long ride in the horse bus to the lonely valley they learned that the school uniform was "W.O.G.S." (worn out garments), and that meant jackets without buttons, shoes without laces, shirts without ties and wire and string were the fasteners for "WOGS". It was no use protesting and for all the first week the New Boys were sent to Coventry and none of the Old Boys would talk to them.

On the first Sunday there was a "sing-song" at which each entrant had to stand on a table and perform. Once the ordeal was over the New were accepted by the Old and they were all EXILES together.

Foundation Hon Secretary, Charles Carthew, has attended every OTVA (Vic) function since the inaugural meeting in 1957 and also kept intact all "TRANSIT" and OTVA NEWSLETTERS over the years in addition to supplying Latrobe Library, Melbourne, with veterans memorabilia. Furthermore, by courtesy of the Commission, visits to State Branches brought about expansion of an already wide circle of colleagues in the Service of the OTCA.

The above paragraph is written in all sincerity as a thanksgiving for being granted health and strength to carry out a dedicated job of work and enjoy the good fellowship of OTVA(A) members together with that of kindred associations overseas.

Charles Carthew.

Two AWA veterans retired last July, namely ALEX STEWART, Divisional Manager, Melbourne, and BRUCE NEAL who served in both Commercial and Sales Sections, Melbourne. Very best wishes are extended to both colleagues for the years ahead.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to MRS. GRIMA and family on the sad passing of TONY (December 1982) who served with Eastern and Marconi before joining OTC(A).

NEWS FROM TELEGLOBE, CANADA.

An item from Teleglobe Canada's employee publication, "SPARGO" is reproduced here for the interest of veterans.

"CHARLES WOODS" passed away in Ormstown, Quebec, on 25 March 1983. He joined the Pacific Cable Board in 1921 and saw service in Auckland, Fanning Island, Suva, Bamfield, Ottawa and Montreal. Since he retired in 1961, he lived in Dewittville, Quebec. He is survived by his wife Emily, daughter Allison, Grand-daughters Lisa and Sarah, and two sisters and a brother in Australia.

RECOLLECTIONS FROM TED BISHTON

I was stationed at Kavieng, New Ireland, for a few years. When the 2nd World War started, I, like all the other wireless stations in New Guinea used to send weather reports to Rabaul daily at 6 a.m.

One morning around Christmas time 1940, I was just leaving my house to send the weather report when a police boy told me that the District Officer wanted to see me immediately at his house. I went straight to the D.O.'s house, arriving there just at day-break, and in the gloom of the verandah there were four naval-looking guys in oil skins and gum boots, all bearded and in naval officers uniforms. I thought right away that they were Germans.

The D.O. introduced me to the officer in charge, Chief Officer of the 'RANGATANI'. He asked me if I could get a message to Rabaul, and I told him I was on my way to the wireless station as I had a sked with Rabaul at 6 a.m.

He gave me a message to the Administrator which said that there were over 500 men, women and children dumped on Emirau Island, about sixty miles north of Kavieng, needing urgent assistance and food. The Chief Officer said the German raiders had sunk many ships in the Pacific and these were the survivors from some of the vessels. Several ships had been sunk and their whereabouts unknown as not one of them had sent out a wireless signal. There were six sunk off Nauru and some around N.Z. The Germans told the Chief Officer of the RANGATANI that there was a wireless station located at Kavieng and to get there as soon as possible. They also added, "Tell the wireless man at Kavieng not to waste time coding the message to Rabaul as we have all your codes". The Germans gave the Chief Officer charts and a small motor boat to get to Kavieng. I sent the message to Rabaul and told the operator to "phone the message to the Administrator, and I would wait for a reply. After waiting a while, the operator had said that the Administrator wanted to know if the Kavieng people had started Christmas a bit early. However, we in Kavieng sent all the food and clothing we had to spare and all our fleet of small boats to Emirau and brought the survivors to Kavieng. A little later the ship 'NELLORE' put into Kavieng, picked up the survivors and took them to Sydney.

Acknowledgement: To Ted Bishton.

Thanks for the information re Tabar Island and Con Page. As you will have read by now, Blue Easterling has sent along a comprehensive account of the happenings there and at long last I know the full story.

From Bert Dudley, through Orme Cooper, we learn that ALF KERR, who was an active veteran up until about 8 years ago, passed away on 6th June 1983. He was over 80 years of age. Alf worked at Doonside during his career. He is survived by his wife.

VALE - LINDSAY SHEPHERD (27.6.02-4.6.83)

LINDSAY SHEPHERD, veteran, passed away on 4th June 1983. First associated with Sir Ernest Fiske in the early pioneering days of the Beam Wireless Service 1921-29, including three years at Fiskeville Transmitting Station, he then transferred to Sydney Coastal Radio Station (VIS) 1929-31, Amalgamated Wireless Broadcasting Service 1931-35, 3XY 1935-55, ABC Radio Australia 1955-68 ... a total of 46 years contact with wireless telegraphy and broadcasting.

FROM OUR MAN IN THE WEST - BRIAN MORRELL

OTCA VETERANS (W.A.)

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH AGM HELD ON 23RD NOVEMBER 1983

The President, Mr. F. James, opened the meeting at the Coolabah Tavern at 7 pm.

PRESENT: Tom Bryant, Harold Burnett, Ron Cocker, Paul Cooper, Herb Farrar, Ron Fisher, Fred James, Doug Lancaster, Fred McNulty, Brian Morrell, Les Owen, Jim O'Toole, Randy Payne, Harry Rumble, Bob Ryding, Ellis Smellie, Gerry Tacey, Jack Thomas, Trig Trigwell, Len Vella, Derek Walker.

APOLOGIES: Jim Bairstow, Arthur Black, John Eales, Barry O'Keefe, Sandy Sandilands, Geoff Warner, Bill Schmidt.

The President welcomed all members, especially Mr. R. H. (Randy) Payne, representing the General Manager of OTCA, Mr. Bill Schmidt, and visiting member veteran from Melbourne, Mr. Ellis Smellie, who was accompanied by his daughter.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the 7th AGM

The Minutes of the previous AGM having been distributed, the President asked if there were any matters the members wished to discuss. No matters were brought up and it was moved and seconded that the Minutes, as distributed, be confirmed. Motion carried.

Subscriptions

Standing orders were suspended on the motion by Ron Cocker, seconded Len Vella, for the purpose of discussing subscriptions for the next financial year, 1982/83. It was moved Harry Rumble, seconded Derek Walker, that the subscriptions as from 1.11.82 be two (\$2) dollars per annum. Motion carried.

Election of Officers

President: Derek Walker was nominated by Doug Lancaster, seconded Elliott Trigwell; Fred James was nominated by Ron Cocker but declined the nomination. There being no further nominations, Derek Walker was declared elected to the position of President for 1982/83.

Secretary/Treasurer: Brian Morrell was nominated by Ron Cocker, seconded by Doug Lancaster; there being no other nominations, Brian Morrell was declared elected to the position of Secretary/Treasurer for 1982/83.

Standing Orders were resumed on the motion of Ron Cocker, seconded Doug Lancaster.

Reports/Letters

Agreed that they be tabled for the duration of the meeting.

Ninth Annual Reunion

It was agreed that this be held on Tuesday, 29th November 1983. Details of same to be left to the incoming President and Secretary.

There being no further business, Mr. James declared the meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

It is indeed a pleasure to be able to report that our numbers were not reduced through any member passing on during the year under review. However, inevitable as it is in Veterans' Associations, two members of the Veterans' have been on the sick list since our last reunion, namely Harold Burdett and Harry Bromley. It may also be prudent to report that Ron Fisher has been retired on invalidity grounds in recent times, actual date not known.

During August 1982, all financial members as at that time, were asked for their opinions in respect to the 1982 reunion, if it necessitated the function being held on the same conditions as that applying to the 1981 reunion. Sixteen circulars were despatched, thirteen returned, with 9 voting to defer the 1982 reunion and 4 voting to hold the function irrespective of the financial/organisational problems. Discussions were held over a period between the Manager, OTCA, Gngara and myself and the existing scheme of arrangement was worked out as a compromise. The response in itself is ample reward to those concerned.

The position of Honorary Secretary comes up for election this year, and while I am keen to see OTVA(W.A.) settle down under this new arrangement for holding the annual reunions, I will definitely not be a candidate for the position after this year - I hope someone comes forward this year to take over the position, quite candidly.

In any position, a change is like a "holiday" - it brings in new ideas and gives the Association a boost, and if the position could be held by someone still in the employ of OTCA a lot of the procedures would be made so much easier. If the position of Treasurer is the "bogey", I would be prepared to continue in that position if the membership so desired.

(Signed) B. Morrell

BITS AND PIECES FROM W.A.

Members of the Western Australian branch of OTVA will be saddened by the death of HARRY W. BROMLEY, known affectionately by all as "THE WING COMMANDER".

Harry passed away on Friday, 19th August 1983.

Harry came to the Cable Station at Cottesloe for a "conversion course" during the fifties or sixties, having been with the RAAF in Hong Kong after World War 2 for a period. His dry sense of humour was admired by all - he never seemed to get flustered and his endless stories amazed all, and finally his various modes of transport held together with "bits of wire" provided a talking point in the office on most days of the week.

Harry had a serious illness from which he never really recovered, and was retired from Telecom only fairly recently.

The widow of the late HAROLD BURDETT, Mrs. Rose Burdett died around the end of May 1983, following a short and sudden illness whilst she was visiting her daughter and family in Adelaide. Rose was well-known to many members through her close association with Harold.

BUT - ON A BRIGHTER NOTE -

J. P. (Pat) SYKES is going to the U.K. for the EROS Annual Dinner in October 1983. Pat was mainly with Eastern Extension in the Far East, but had one term at Cocos shortly after World War II. Pat told BRIAN MORRELL that he had paid 2.13.4 pounds on his retirement to the EROS Association, and for that he gets an invitation to the Annual Dinner for life without further repayment.

W.A. VETERANS PLEASE NOTE

The 1983 Reunion will be held at the COOLABAH TAVERN, MORLEY, on TUESDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER 1983. Any further details will be furnished by contacting Brian Morrell. Brian would like your RSVPs by 15TH NOVEMBER 1983, please.

A PERSONAL MEMO TO BRIAN FROM THE EDITOR - OTHERS TUNE OUT

I always await any communique from you, Brian, with a certain amount of trepidation. When it arrives its presentation may be slightly off-beat, but it's never dull. As for the quality of the note paper ... pay no never mind, as our American cousins say. I wouldn't care if it came on a roll of Lady Scott (which wouldn't altogether surprise me), so long as I get the news. Keep it coming.

OTVA SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

MEMORIES By BRAX HORROCKS.

In the article which I wrote for a recent edition of the Veterans' NEWSLETTER, I mentioned some of the difficulties which operators had in the early days of submarine telegraphy, such as trying to decipher what were sometimes indefinite siphon-recorder signals with the added hazard of knowing that one could lose his promotion for the year were he to lose concentration even for a moment.

There were other hazards, too. For instance, when BRUCE SUTHERLAND and I were in Darwin in 1924-25, some years before the Beam Wireless Service operating out of Australia commenced, the only means at that time of perforating paper tape for use in the transmitter on the cable to Banjoewangi was what was known as a hand punch. This was a metal box approximately 6 inches by 4 inches and 2 inches deep, on top of which were three metal buttons about half an inch in diameter, one, when hit by a metal punch stick held in either hand, perforated for a dot, the other for a dash, and the centre one moved the tape one notch for a space.

It was necessary to maintain a speed of 115 letters a minute in order to keep up with the transmitter, which wasn't easy with such a crude device, and some physical effort was required. I recall that during the wet season a pool of perspiration would quickly form on the floor under each elbow.

I remember, also, that during an interruption to the Cottesloe-Cocos cable all Eastern Extension overseas messages had to be sent via Darwin-Bangoewangi so our transmitter and siphon-recorder never stopped. Of necessity we were placed on shifts of 8 hours on and 8 hours off, so as you can imagine, after almost four weeks of this we were more than somewhat relieved when the Cable ship "RECORDER" completed the repairs and we resumed normal shifts.

Some of us lived in quarters adjacent to the office so at least we had no travelling to and from duty. However, others such as ROY EDWARDS, KEITH AND AUBREY BARNES, ERIC MEREDITH, AND JACK FINLAYSON had to walk home in the dark as the town electricity supply shut down at midnight. They told me that sometimes, on moonlit nights, George, the driver of the night-cart, would wave as he rattled by with his load of smelly cans.

In many ways we enjoyed living in quarters. We were all about the same age, in our early twenties, so fun and games were on most of the time, except, of course, for those sleeping before or after the night duty.

There were no domestic type refrigerators in those days, but at the end of the long verandah was an ice-chest of which we made good use,. In particular I remember the cold barley-water always in plentiful supply, which was very popular, especially after tennis. Near the ice-chest was a pahit table with chairs, a favourite spot for our pre-lunch and dinner drinks.

In the wet season when there was some grass on the oval we played football for the "Waratahs". In our team were friends from the Banks, Jolly's store and so on. And was it hot? Sometimes I would get one of my pals to throw half a bucket of water over me at half time to cool me down a little.

There were no electric fans, even in the office, but we did have a long punkah over the dining table. This was attached to a rope which was pulled back and forth by our Aboriginal boy, "Burbur", during the lunch and dinner meals, and though not very effective, at least it moved the air sufficiently to provide some degree of relief during the wet season.

There were 22 on the staff in 1924-5, and for OTVA records I enclose a photo of them and a list of the names. I feel certain that some of our older veterans, like Arthur Black, Ron Ward, Ken McMillan, Eric Meredith, Charlie Smith, Moss Hart, Ken Springbett, Roly Lane, Clive Tressider, Norm Giles, Roy Edwards, and Bill Hyde would be interested.

OTVA QUEENSLAND AREA

MRS. G. R. GRIFFITHS who lives in Labrador Qld. has sent along a collection of press clippings and photos of what we will call the rejuvenation of the old Cable Station buildings which once comprised the Southport Cable Station. Above a picture of two boys, one playing a violin and the other a clarinet appears the by-line "Students say it with music".

The article continues as follows:

"The opening of the two old Pacific Cable Station buildings was music to the ears of about 600 people at the Southport School on Saturday. (Unfortunately no date given). The two historic buildings were part of the station located in Bauer Street, Southport, and were under threat of demolition until TSS stepped in last year with a renovation, restoration and re-siting programme. The eighty year old buildings were opened by the Cable Station complex committee chairman, John Walker, with the help of students of the TSS music department. The picture shows the two boys, Nathan Dean, 8, playing the violin and Richard Thompson, 10, playing the clarinet."

The Gold Coast Bulletin, dated Monday 13th September 1982, gives a further article quoting the stylish charm reminiscent of Victorian Garden parties which was evident at the opening of the music school of the TSS. The atmosphere "reeked with history" as the students and parties celebrated the opening of the new musical rooms - the two 80-year old buildings that were moved to the banks of the Nerand River from the old Pacific Cable Station at Southport. The buildings were donated to the school by the former owners, de la Salle Brothers, after the National Trust listed them as being worthy of preservation for their historical and architectural significance. The article goes on to say:

"And though the chatter of morse keys no longer echo through the buildings they have taken a new lease of life as the school's music department. About 600 people attended the official opening by Old Southportian, Mr. John Walker, which was followed by performances by the school's concert orchestra, brass ensemble, Choir and rock group".

AND WHAT ABOUT THE OLD SITE?

Courtesy of Mrs. Griffiths again appears this item from the Gold Coast Bulletin dated 29th October 1982.

"The first de la Salle Retirement Village unit was opened yesterday without any opposition from other Bauer Street residents. Brother Peter McIntosh, director of the de la Salle Order, said that he hoped that all the bickerings which had occurred when it became known that they planned to bulldoze some old cypress trees to make way for the \$4 million project would accept the worth of the project as it now stood. The local Alderman, Athol Paterson, said that he had been attacked when the project was first mooted, but now that the buildings had been erected with their unique styling to fit in with the trees it appears, by the lack of protest and demonstrations by the Bauer Street residents, that they are satisfied with the end result".

"The architects had given a firm undertaking that no trees would be demolished around the perimeter, and they have even saved some of the trees closer to the actual buildings."

Well, that appears to be the end of a story with a happy ending. It is good to know that in this throw-away age some of the buildings and grounds of an historic age have been preserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

COMMISERATIONS

Our sympathy goes to "BLUE" EASTERLING who lost his good wife on 28th May 1983, in a Brisbane hospital.

And those of you who knew JACK CLARK (VIB) will be distressed to know that he died on 9th June 1983. Jack was not a veteran, but I feel that many members would have known him.

"FOLLOWING FROM TABAR BEGINS"

I wish to thank BLUE EASTERLING who responded to my request for information re the operators at Tabar Island. Blue has sent me quite a comprehensive account taken from two books. "Hunted - A Coastwatcher's Story", written by M. Murray around 1966, and "The Coastwatchers", by Ernie Feldt. To answer your question, Blue, I was with the AOB at Rabaul. I arrived at the AOB around 1st December 1941 with three operators to supplement the staff at the AOB under the watchful eye of Bob Young. We were fresh from Wireless Training, inexperienced. I had just turned 20, the know-it-all age, but it wasn't long before we were straightened out by the old lags.

I still have my Air Force pay book, and from it I see our first pay was on the 24th December 1941. The pay which was due on 22nd January at Rabaul has been crossed out and the rubber stamp of Port Moresby superimposed, so you can see that we got there just about in time to be chased out. I don't remember D. Laws, but I do remember young Ian Gascoigne and his father who lived just down the road from the AOB. In fact, we tried to talk them into coming with us, but they elected to stay. One of our Flying Officers, F.O. Lempriere, became separated from us, and despite a final search around the town before we left we never saw him again. At a later date I heard that he was on the same P.O.W. boat as "Dutch" Holland, the OIC AWA, and was drowned when the Yanks tin-fished the boat on its way back to Japan. As you say, it's a small world.

With regard the other information you sent me it is my intention to present it either serialised or in precis form in the "NEWSLETTER" as opportunity arises. Thank you for the information, which is much appreciated. Glad to hear that you are enjoying retirement in sunny Burleigh Waters.

News is that MRS. RENE COTTEW, widow of the late GRAHAM COTTEW, of the PCB, suffered a stroke and died peacefully in a nursing home in Brisbane on 7th May. She is survived by her son, Geoffrey and his wife Marcia and their children. While there are not many of her vintage left, she had many friends among the younger members of the Cable fraternity who will remember her.

We have Claude Dalley to thank for the information.

AND WHILST WE ARE ON THE SUBJECT -

I do not want members of the OTVA in all States to assume that because they have been advised of the passing of one of our members or friends that everyone else must know. If you hear of some incident concerning veterans in your area please let us know. Both Alan Arndt and myself would rather be told a dozen times from different places than not at all.

It is pleasing to see that other veterans are now joining with regular contributors of the NEWSLETTER. Material you may have could be of interest to all of us, so don't be shy in sending it in. I like to get new contributors published soonest in order to encourage them to follow up, but where this is not possible, rest assured that the items will be kept for future editions. How about it?

Nolsee

K. MULLEN

MORE MEMORIES

By Brax Horrocks

Bruce Sutherland writing from New Zealand reiterated that we should record some of the things we remember before it becomes too late. He pointed out, curse him, that he and I are almost 80 so time is running out more than somewhat quickly. He suggested that it could be worth writing not only of our time in the cable service, but also of earlier days when we were very young. Unwittingly, Bruce has done me a favour for it has made me explore almost forgotten corners and recesses of my memory, and in so searching, I have had unexpected pleasure in remembering incidents and events of long ago. It has also given me the urge to record some of the more worthwhile things for inclusion in our book of family records - my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather did this and what they wrote seems to have become more interesting with the years. Some of these records are proving of interest to the Penwortham (South Australia) Mount Horrocks Historical Society of which I am most honoured to be their Patron.

Certainly many things have changed in the past 70 odd years. Perhaps the most dramatic difference is that when I was very young there was, so far as I was concerned, practically no music. If one lived at North Adelaide, he could perhaps hear the Cathedral bells on a Sunday morning, at Sunday school in the afternoon there was a piano and we sang hymns, BUT THAT WAS ALL. When I was almost eight I heard, for the first time, music from an early model HMV gramophone - I remember my utter amazement that singing and orchestral music could be coming from the trumpet attached to a tiny wooden box with a handle. Shortly after this I joined the choir of St. Columbas Church, so every Sunday I was able to enjoy the wonderful sound of the pipe-organ.

Changes in other things have been almost as dramatic. When I was a child there were trains and tram-cars but they were very different from what we have today. Until I was five we lived in Hyde Park, just two miles from Adelaide and one of my earliest recollections is of the horse-drawn tram service which terminated at Northgate Street, just past our home, and of the worn dirt-track between the rails. It was only a single track, all that was necessary for the then hourly service. As a matter of interest, there was a horse-drawn tram which ran from Victor Harbour, about 50 miles from Adelaide, across the causeway to Granite Island, a distance of two or three hundred yards. This was discontinued only about 20 years ago.

I don't recall when I first saw a motor car, but I do know that the first ride I ever had in one was about 1910, in an early "T" model Ford, I well remember how it struggled up Willunga Hill on its hazardous and torturous way to Victor Harbour.

We had friends who lived at Mt. Pleasant, some 35 miles from Adelaide, and I recall that when I was about seven my brother and I caught the coach which provided a daily service through Mt. Pleasant to Mannum on the Murray. This was a Cobb & Co type of coach, drawn by six horses. The first change was at Tea Tree Gully, and with other slow changes, at Chain-of-ponds, and Gumeracha, the journey took the best part of a day. A few years later I did the trip on a bicycle in less than half the time, though it was a tedious business going up Anstley's Hill for there was no road through the Torrens valley in those days.

Then came World War One. Such vivid memories of the nearby first AIF training camp at Mitcham and of recruitment meetings organised by a quite unforgettable character, one Sammy Lunn. Of soldiers in putties and slouch hats as they marched down King William Street, their rifles all with fixed bayonets, carried at the slope, of gun carriages and field-guns pulled by horses, and of the magnificent light-horse brigade. We stood and waved goodbye to them and to my cousin John Horrocks who had just turned 18. With my parents, I wept when a few months later we heard he had been killed at Gallipoli.

As I indicated earlier, there were no such things as wireless and television when I first went to school, so one could do his homework without such distractions - I suppose it was because of this that I learnt to read at quite an early age and quickly progressed from the adventures of Tom Merry in the "Magnet", and from other weekly "Penny terribles" as they were called, to books such as Treasure Island, Swiss Family Robinson, Tom Sawyer, and so on.

My favourite book was Coral Island by R. M. Ballantyne. As I read it over and over again, I became Petersen and it was I who was being washed ashore, it was I who removed the husks of coconuts to enjoy the white flesh and drink the cool effervescent juice, it was I who built a humpy of coconut fronds and caught fish in the clear warm waters of the lagoon.

Many years later as I was standing on the fore-deck of a ship as it drew close to a tiny coral atoll in the middle of the Pacific where I was to be stationed for two years and I saw the tops of coconut palms slowly coming into sight, I again felt the thrill and exhilaration of my childhood fantasies.

Strangely, when I called at Apia in British Samoa I experienced the same type of illusion. Like many before me, I climbed to the top of the mountain which rises steeply behind the town, to the lonely grave of Robert Louis Stevenson and, as I stood by it, I experienced a strange hallucination of unreality. In my imagination, I felt I was drifting, as Stevenson had drifted, from life on an island Paradise to a strange fantasy world of ultimate tranquility.

Inscribed on a bronze plate at the foot of the grave are written the words of his well-known requiem

"Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie
Glad did I live and gladly die
And I laid me down with a will

This be the verse you grave for me
Here he lies where he long'd to be
Home is the sailor, home from the sea
And the hunter home from the hill."

RECOLLECTIONS 1920-1960
Part Two

By R. B. Scott

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Southport Training School

Southport is a seaside town fifty miles south of Brisbane, the capital of Queensland. It had an endless stretch of beautiful sandy beaches. A river ran parallel to the beach separating the town from the unpopulated beaches. To get to the beach, one crossed the river on a small passenger ferry - there being no vehicular traffic.

Near the centre of town there was a wide pier jutting out into the bay where the river emptied. At the end of the pier there was an enclosed swimming bath and a band rotunda.

The Cable Station and Training School was located close to the centre of town. Like all cable stations it had a tennis court, gymnasium and library. There was a fair amount of social activity in the town of about five thousand people, to which all of the boys starting out in cable life were invited.

Tales of the pleasures of life in Southport and other exotic overseas cable stations were fed to the boys by the older operators both before and after their assignment to Southport. They contributed to the excitement experienced when one received an official memorandum advising the date and time of departure to Southport by coastal steamer to Brisbane, then by train to Southport where one was met by a horse-drawn carriage and driven to the station.

At the training school he was shown to his bedroom which was equipped with an iron bed, washbasin and jug of cold water, a writing table and chair. The accommodation was under the management of a Matron and her husband, who also served as cook and waiter. There were always a dozen boys resident in the school.

Instruction in cable operating began the next day. It included reading long distance cable signals from various stations in the service. The longer the cable the worse the signals. The longest telegraphic cable in the world was the one between Bamfield and Fanning Island, over four thousand miles, so these signals were the most difficult to read. Other modes of telegraphy were sending and receiving the Morse Code with key and brass sounder, typing up ten-letter code words, transmitting messages by hand perforator and keyboard perforator, transmitting by cable keys (which were different from the telegraph key in that they had two keys - one for dots and one for dashes). In all cases emphasis was placed on cultivating the correct wrist action for tireless operation hour after hour.

To quote the P.C.B. rule book "The course of instruction should be such as will bring about the power for youths to key, perforate, and type on the several instruments in a correct manner free from blundering (erasures and mistakes) - and to receive with accuracy." It was necessary, said the rule book, to stamp out the erasure habit and avoid carelessness of any description.

After a boy reached a certain degree of proficiency, he was assigned to actual operating duty in the instrument room for a few hours each day and sometimes on night duty.

It was on one of these occasions that I received what was, in all probability, the only S.O.S. message ever received by submarine cable. I was alone on night duty. There was little or no traffic routed via Southport at that time, the main route being via Sydney-Auckland-Suva and on. Southport provided an alternate route in case of emergency. What little communication there was between Norfolk Island and Southport was by manual operation of cable keys.

The main duty of the man on night duty was to send extracts from the Brisbane daily newspaper by key over the cable to Norfolk Island for the local "newspaper" which was typed up by the Norfolk Island operator and tacked up on a tree at the crossroads for all to read. The tree was known as the 'tree of knowledge' by the islanders.

One night, in the small hours of the morning, Norfolk Island called up and commenced sending an urgent S.O.S. message originating from the sailing vessel FRANCE which, at that time, was the largest sailing ship afloat. She had gone ashore in the New Hebrides. As Norfolk Island was unable to make radio contact with Brisbane, the S.O.S. message was sent to Southport for re-transmission by morse key over the landline to Brisbane where our terminus was located in the post office.

The message was duly relayed but the ship broke up before help could arrive.

Examinations to test the proficiency of the boys were held at the end of each month. A certain number of words had to be transmitted and received accurately in a five minute test of each type of telegraphy. A boy had to pass the examination three months in succession before being eligible for transfer back to Sydney station as a probationary operator. Instruction could take anywhere from nine months to two years, depending upon the aptitude of the boy. A small salary was paid during tuition.

The main attraction during the summer was the ocean-beach surfing. Although not many townspeople participated in those early days, the cable boys formed their own surf patrol to rescue those caught in the undertow. Nowadays the main beach is completely built up with expensive hotels and resorts similar to those of Miami, Florida, and is known as Australia's Gold Coast.

Next episode: Sydney Station.

"DEAR CHIEF OF VIS" - AN ARTICLE FROM USA

We get correspondence from the darndest places. This article, headed as shown above, was forwarded to us from one RONALD G. MARTIN W6ZF, a retired US Colonel residing in Napa, California.

I have included it in this issue because it may spark some interest from VIS Veterans.

Dear Chief of VIS:

Many years have passed since I used to work VIS from Radio KUP in San Francisco back in 1928 to 1936. I monitor HF 8 Meg band occasionally and having heard VIS one late evening it brought fond memories of the days after our Press (PX) schedules we used to listen for ships on 8 Megs after our transmissions. Many nights after the 1AM (0900GMT) HX Schedule, VIS would give us a call and ask for a brief resume of a Championship Boxing match. It was always such a pleasure to contact VIS because the operators there were such fine chaps. Over the years I have forgotten some of the names but never the memories of those days.

Radio KUP was owned and operated for eight years by the San Francisco Examiner, Hearst Newspaper. We furnished press to ships at sea. At first the schedules were free and then in 1931 we started to charge \$15.00 a month per ship for ten thousand words of press if they wished to copy it all. Our scheduling was as follows:

- a. 0900 GMT (1AM PST), 1 hour duration at 25 WPM, 6440, 8320, 11340 KCS simultaneously. Deforest Transmitters 3 KW, 240 cycle Mod. At first keying was by bug and later by Boehme and Kleinschmidt Tape, Press.
- b. 1230 GMT (430AM PST), 45 minutes of Stocks and Bonds at 25 WPM, on the above same frequencies.
- c. 1500 GMT (7AM PST), 55 minutes of Press on same frequencies cited above.
- d. 1600 GMT (8AM PST), 30 minutes of Pacific Coast Weather, on same frequencies cited above.
- e. 2100 GMT (100PM PST), 1 hour duration at 25 WPM, 11340, 16460 and 22225 KCS simultaneously with 1 3 KW Transmitter, one 1 KW and one 500 Watt Transmitter. Taped Press.
- f. 0030 GMT (430PM PST), 45 minutes Financial Survey on same frequencies cited in sub. para. e.
- g. 0300 GMT (7PM PST), 1 hour duration at 25 WPM, 6440, 8320 and 11340 KCS simultaneously. Same transmitters and frequencies cited in Sub a.
- h. 0530 GMT (930PM PST), 45 minutes to 1 hours of special press schedule for the US Navy at 40-45 WPM, with same transmitters and frequencies cited in Sub. a.

There were three full time operators and two relief operators:

Wes Wright, "WW", day trick 1600 to 0400 GMT
Frank Button, "FB", 2nd trick 0400 to 0800 GMT
(had a bug fist like Boehme Tape)
Joey Raspiller, "JY", 3rd trick, 0800 to 1600 GMT

Relief Operators:

Wayne Paschal, "WP"
Morton Brewer, "MB" (Later with Globe Wireless as Chief Engineer)

Bob Walton, "RW" who sat in for us when the other two reliefs were busy. He still is interested and is W6CYL in San Jose.

The idea of a Press Station was first thought of by William Randolph Hearst, owner and publisher of the large chain of Hearst Newspapers in August of 1928. By the end of August we were in business. Fred Roebuck, "FB", now deceased, was the Chief Operator and 2nd Operator was Howard Cookson, "GW", now deceased. I was at sea on the old Dollar Steamship Liners, my last trip was on the SS President Garfield, KDTC, round-the-worlder liner. I had made nine trips around the globe on the Garfield, Adams, Van Buren, Polk, and three trips on the horseshoe run, San Fran to Manila, then to Seattle and back out to Manila and then home port San Fran. On my last trip on the Garfield, coming up the coast of Mexico I had been in constant touch with KUP most of the trips, and Roebuck knew of my operating, asked if I'd like the 2nd op job at KUP ... as he had just lost Cookson. Said yes and told him would arrive about 1st September 1928 ... On arrival reported for duty and became 2nd op at KUP. Four months later became Chief, when Roebuck went back to sea on the President Polk, KDOZ, to pioneer Short Wave (HF) for the Dollar Line and Globe Wireless. He and I kept co schedule every day around the world except for three days in the Indian Ocean. KPH and KFS, San Francisco, RCA and Mackay lost him at Singapore, but old KUP kept going and we had 3 KW against KPH and KFSs 20 KW rigs. We had superb operators outstripping RCA and Mackay all the way. We could hear ships they couldn't even scratch.

Then we went 24 hour service and I hired three operators listed as regulars. And was promoted to Superintendent by Mr. Hearst. His son George and I became close friends up until the time of his death. He was listed as the publisher of the Examiner. When KUP closed its door, George moved to Los Angeles and more or less retired. I gave two weeks notice a year before, as the Federal Radio Commission in Washington, Mr. George Sterling, one of the Commissioners, close friend, wrote and told me that Hearst's stations would not be renewed in 1937. This was in 1936 when I learned this ... so I looked around in San Fran and the Bell Telephone System was it. I left Hearst on last of August, eight years to date and went to work the following Monday for Maw Bell in their Toll Department. Was given three years service credit, and was the only 1st Class Commercial Op they had licensed. I ran their Coastal Harbour Station KLH, which they had just turned up to Traffic for San Francisco.

At the middle of 1939 it looked like WAR was coming, so the Bell System, sent me over to their General Offices, Circuit Layout Bureau, and I designed National Defense circuits until about last quarter of 1941 ... Applied of course to the Air Force and was commissioned a 1st Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps, stationed at Bolling Air Force Base near Washington, D.C. In 1967, 30th September, I retired for good. Had made full Colonel 1st July 1960 and sure didn't believe it either. Ha. I had number of commands, all in communications. It has been my whole life. many pioneering events in the old days ... when short waves were first discovered and took part in many events. My life history reads like a sixteen chapter book, believe me. Ha.

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Am active radio amateur today as have been for sixty-five years. Got my first radio license when was ten years old and have been very active ever since. W6ZF makes the various amateur bands as often as can. Being retired ... have always said, "will have to go back to work to get some time for myself!" Retirement is a busy life. Lecture also on various communications subjects and also on Napa Valley, the world's greatest grape growing valley, grapes, wines, brandy, champagne, etc. It took many years for France and Italy to finally concede that Napa Valley in California is the finest in the world! We are mighty proud of that, believe me.

Probably none of your operators remember KUP, but it has become a Legend, its operators enshrined ... believe it or not ... and the original DeForest Transmitter, 3 KW job in its entirety is in the Perham Museum at Foothill College, Palo Alto, California ... for posterity.

Back about ten years ago, when Press Wireless closed its doors, I attended the final ceremonies. Previously many years ago I had attended their opening christening ... Their President called me to the front and gave me a paper which stated "To "RM" Ron Martin we hereby transfer into his hands once again the old DeForest Transmitter TCH-312 NO. 1, and when Press Wireless bought out all the equipment at KUP ... it became Prewi No. 22 operating on 22 Megs to New York and never had one hours down time in all those years!" Good luck ... may it sleep well with KUP!" To tell you the truth I was so thrilled it was difficult to say a word. I finally got it out and said Thank you ... and for the life of me I can't remember whether I said anything else. I had stars in my head!

Now how in name-of Heaven would I get that monstrosity to Napa and into my ham station. Finally at the end of the ceremony I telephoned Ralph Heintz, father of Globe Wireless and Heintz and Kaufman, and knowing he was President of the Perham Museum ... I asked if he'd like old KUP Transmitter. He and his son were at Belmont Press Wireless Station within 40 minutes. KUP was loaded on a flat bed, covered with comforters and straps and taken to Perham Museum! I have gone down a number of times and patted the old girl ... she did yeoman service for about thirty years!!!!

So ... you can see why I hold very fond memories of VIS, ZLB and a few other stations "down-under" till this very day. Just had to write you and let you know ... every now and then I hear VIS on either on 8, 12, 17 or 22 megs. When I do I get a little twinge of the old days!

May I take this opportunity to pass my kindest good wishes to you and your staff at VIS a very Merry Christmas and a most joyful and prosperous New Year for 1984.

If any of your boys or friends might remember old KUP ... would love to hear from them. We used to work and see the ops on the old SS Makura, GDZV, every trip she made. Believe she was a Blue Funnel ship ... Have often wondered what ever happened to her ops ... they were a good bunch of lads.

My kindest 73,

RONALD G. MARTIN W6ZF,
COLONEL, USAF (RET.)
1573 BAYWOOD LANE,
NAPA, CALIFORNIA. 94558.

RECOLLECTIONS 1920-1960 By R. B. Scott

Sydney Station

Upon arrival in Sydney each boy signed a five year agreement regarding his terms of employment, at a salary of one hundred and fifty pounds sterling per annum - the equivalent of \$729 at that time. He was also given a copy of the book of working rules and regulations, in which emphasis was placed on the fact that, both on duty and off, he was to remember his responsibilities as a British gentleman on Imperial Service.

Technically, methods of transmission and reception had not changed much since their original invention. All traffic between Sydney and Melbourne was by means of a manually operated telegraphic circuit, and the two main operators, Karnaghan and Fletcher, were expert operators. They could carry on a conversation for what seemed like several minutes after the distant station had started sending traffic then, casually inserting a form in the typewriter, start receiving the message several lines behind - still carrying on with their conversation.

Messages were received over the Auckland-Sydney cable, about 1200 miles long, by means of a siphon recorder, the wavy, seismographic-like signals being recorded on a moving tape which passed over a typewriter through a thick glass tube filled with water. The water magnified the signals to a desirable size. Messages were typed up by an operator and were checked by another operator sitting alongside him. In case of doubtful signals they could confer with each other, or with the supervisor. As previously mentioned, press messages required about a dozen carbon copies for distribution to various press services. Imagine how hard one had to hit the typewriter keys in order to make readable copies of all twelve!

Transmission was by means of a keyboard perforator and Cox Transmitter, whose speed was not altogether reliable. It could bolt and it could slow down unpredictably. This cable was worked at a speed of about 200 letters per minute, and so long as there were messages to be sent, that speed had to be maintained by the operator, regardless of what difficulties he might encounter. He could not stop the transmitter without attracting the attention of the supervisor.

The rulebook gave the various speeds at which cables worked and the consequent number of words which had to be handled. At a speed of 200 w.p.m. it was 1,326 words per hour. It also stated: "Senders not generally securing the above earning power of the several listed speeds should be called upon for report, and the incident brought to the attention of the Manager."

Not only did the operator have to keep the cable full, but he also had to be accurate. He was allowed a certain percentage of errors in a certain number of words each month. If he did not maintain the required standard of accuracy, a check was made of each succeeding month's work and his annual increment was not recommended until his record for the immediately preceding twelve months came within the scheduled allowance. Delayed increments entailed a permanent loss of seniority. The monthly percentage for junior operators was .025, and for senior operators, .012. It was a hard school but it produced the best operators in the world. A PCB operator could get a job with any other cable company anywhere in the world - at a higher salary.

When it was night time in Sydney it was daytime somewhere else in the world. In consequence the cables were manned twenty four hours a day with three shifts of eight hours each.

The Pacific section of the PCB extended from Sydney to Halifax, N.S. The cable route was: Sydney-Auckland-Suva-Fanning Island-Bamfield-Halifax-London, the section between Bamfield and Halifax being an overland telegraphic line maintained by the Canadian Pacific Railway company. There was an alternate route from Sydney-Southport-Norfolk Island-Suva which was only used when the main route was interrupted. The connection between Sydney and Southport was a landline circuit maintained by the Government Telegraphs system.

In order to make the maximum use of the limited capacity of the cables in those days, numerals, and the stations of origin and destination, were abbreviated. London was sent LN, Auckland AK, etc., but the receiving operator typed up the words in full. Number 1, instead of being sent one dot and four dashes, was sent one dot and one dash - the letter A; all figures were abbreviated except 3, 4, 6 and 7.

At Christmas time, when the amount of traffic increased tremendously, plain language greeting messages containing "Merry Christmas Happy New Year" were abbreviated to M X H N Y and the receiving operator typed it out in full - thus increasing the effective operating speed and pressure on the operator.

When a vacancy occurred at any station on the line - and there were many, due to leave, sickness and retirements - volunteers were called for. The Board preferred to send volunteers, especially to the isolated stations such as Norfolk Island, Fanning Island and Bamfield. Only when there were no volunteers was a man told to go.

Thus it happened that, after I had been at Sydney station less than two years, a vacancy became available for a bachelor at Fanning Island. Normally only senior operators were sent there because it was so isolated and because the signals over the long cables were so difficult to read. No one else volunteered so I decided to do so. The next day I was called into the office of the Clerk in Charge.

"You want to go to Fanning Island, Scott?" he asked.

"Yes, Sir," I replied.

"How old are you?" he asked.

"Eighteen, Sir," I replied.

"Eighteen?" he exclaimed. "Eighteen! Hmmm! Hmmm!" walking up and down as he considered the matter.

"Well," he said after a few moments, "I don't see why not!"

And so I became the youngest operator ever to go to Fanning Island.

Again there was that excitement of preparing for a transfer, this time to the most exotic of all stations. My widowed Mother took me to a department store and bought a tropical wardrobe for me. Within a few days I entrained for Newcastle where the cargo ship S.S. Wairuna was coaling. Another more senior operator, Harold Williams, was also being transferred to Fanning. We stayed aboard for a few days until the Wairuna finished coaling and then steamed out of the harbour and over the horizon for Fanning Island, 4,000 miles away.

Next episode: Fanning Island

THE CUP By "RECORDER"

In the early days of Suva, there was a good deal of betting on the Australian horse races and of course, intercommunication was always by cable. There was no radio or other methods of communication so the local sporting fraternity were entirely dependent on the Cable service for information on the latest tips and the final race results. On Saturday mornings, as well as other race days, there would always be a long coded betting cablegram for Sydney or Melbourne and in the afternoon the cable staff were pestered with telephone calls from punters wanting the results of certain races. Sometimes it was quite embarrassing when prominent citizens would try to get "inside information" on race days. We had it on good authority that one wealthy planter from the island of Taveuni nearly set himself on the breadline through reckless betting on the Australian races.

Melbourne Cup day was always universally popular and there were many sweepstakes in the various hotels and business houses, thus keeping up a very lively interest in all the horses participating. On the day of the Cup there was an air of excitement in the town. People, young and old, who had never even seen a race-course, let their hair down and joined this or that sweepstake just to have a little "flutter" in this great race. On the morning of the race numerous clerks from the Government departments and from the commercial firms could be seen from our vantage point on Victoria Parade, each with a file of papers (probably pseudo-official) wending their way to the betting headquarters and to the holders of sweepstakes. Of course, members of the cable staff were not immune to this betting fever, and indeed, they were all represented in many of the town lists.

Nevertheless, all the cable staff had solemnly signed a rather formidable secrecy bond and on Cup day we had to be particularly careful not to divulge to anyone the contents of any message referring to race results. The first result of the Cup always came straight from the Flemington race-course to the local newspaper, "The Fiji Times and Herald". We had definite instructions to telephone the editor-owner of the paper, Mr. Alport Barker, (afterwards Sir Alport Barker), as soon as this message was received. One daren't even give him the names of the horses over the telephone. The Suva telephone system was a "manual" and it was feared that the girl telephonist might overhear the results and be tempted to pass the information on to the other members of their particular sweep - The Post Office Sweep. Mr. Barker, on receiving the advice, would always call at the office and take delivery of the message personally.

One particular Cup day the race results arrived promptly, but we could not raise Mr. Barker on the telephone. We tried his home, his office, his club, and two or three hotels, but all our efforts were fruitless. As we were all involved in one or more of the sweeps around the town, here was the message we were all waiting for, and no one to whom we could pass it on.

This was too much for one of the junior members of the staff, for he dodged over to the Club Hotel, just across the street, to see who had won their sweep. A few minutes later, telephones buzzed, messengers ran excitedly to and fro, and the results were quickly known all over the town. Within half an hour every sweepstake had the winners posted on the appropriate notice-boards. All this before the "result" cablegram had been delivered. The fat was on the fire.

Somehow the news eventually reached Mr. Barker and he showed his displeasure and indignation as he rushed down to the Cable station to give vent to his feelings at this obvious breach of secrecy. Fortunately, the Superintendent had gone home and couldn't be reached.

Early Wednesday morning he returned to the cable office with a formal complaint that someone had divulged the contents of his private and confidential press telegram. Whether the leaking of the results would have any effect on the sale of that afternoon's "Herald" was open to argument, but Mr. Barker was most irate that the contents of his message should be known around the town before he himself was able to enlighten the betters. Anyway, he wanted an example to be made of the culprit.

In those days one was liable to instant suspension for any breach of the secrecy bond, and knowing this, the junior responsible spent a very restless and sleepless night. But discipline had to be maintained and he duly received a summons to appear in the Superintendent's office as soon as possible.

In trepidation he presented himself as requested, fully expecting to hear the worst, for the Superintendent was known to be a firm and strict disciplinarian. It was indeed a wonderful relief when his boss, after hurling the book at him, let him off with nothing more than a severe reprimand.

Maybe, in some way, the result of the Club Hotel sweep had had some effect on this occasion. It was won by the Superintendent.

"But That's Bloody Ridiculous!"

I'm sure that those operators located in the Sydney Operating Room, Spring Street, during the fifties/sixties would remember the late BILL SANDRY. Bill met his death because of his habit of smoking in bed and died in his late thirties from smoke asphyxiation, and his death had an effect on us all.

The following story is true - only the names have been withheld to protect the guilty.

Bill was a shy type of bloke, but once you got to know him you made the discovery that behind the shyness was a dry wit and a gentle, generous soul.

It was Bill's birthday, so having knocked off the 2p-8p shift, he repaired to Aarons Hotel where he obtained four bottles of Dr. Resch's formula (adequately chilled), and hied himself back into the S.O.R. locker-room where he sent word up to those available to join him in his small celebration. According to the rules, booze on the premises was taboo, but the Administration was inclined to turn a Nelsonian eye to these small infringements providing no one made a welter of things, (which was never done), and the work was done in good time, (which it always was). Besides, the Commission was paying lousy wages to the telegraphic staff in those days, so they were not in a position to be too pushy.

Three of Bill's mates had joined him and were just about to give the first toast to Bill when the flap-flap of the bat-wing doors leading into the locker room from the S.O.R. and the measured tread of the Supervisor on one of his rounds came to their ears. Without a word the three celebrants fled to the end of the banks of lockers on silent wings, there to secrete themselves behind the end bank. Bill was left with nowhere to go. With that innate sense of self-preservation which all drinking telegraphists seem to have, Bill took the only course left open to him. Clasp ing his glass, he sidled into his locker, crouched slightly so that his head cleared the top shelf, and pulled the door inwards so that only a slight gap of two or three inches remained. He was able to do this because he was endowed with a body aptly described by "Blue" Tulley as "being straight up and down like a yard of pump water".

Meanwhile the Supervisor reached the locker-room limits and was on his way back. By some chance he glanced down the locker row and noticed the locker with its door slightly ajar. The Supervisor, a humane person, was concerned that someone may have gone home leaving something of value in an unsecured locker. He approached the locker and flung the door open. The sight of Bill crouched within its confines was, without doubt, the last thing the Supervisor expected. He gave a startled jump, and this triggered a similar reaction from Bill, who banged his head on the top shelf. For a few seconds they regarded one another, and then the Supervisor, being the first one to recover, said. "Oh ... er ... Good evening, Bill", pushed the door back to its original position, and sauntered off.

The sound of the bat-wing doors closing indicated that the Supervisor had left the scene, and acted as the signal for the others to emerge from their various places of sanctuary, indulging in a bout of silent mirth whilst Bill related the incident.

After a few more beers, Bill became worried about possible consequences despite the assurances from the others that had the Supervisor wished to make an issue of the matter he would have done so on the spot, but try as they might, Bill was not convinced.

Finally, having decided to throw himself on the mercy of the court, Bill approached the Supervisor, who, by now, had gone back to his normal routine trying to pick the winning cards for the trots that night.

After a couple of ahems to get the Super's attention, Bill mumbled. "I think I owe you an apology for the incident in the locker-room".

For a fleeting moment the Supervisor looked at Bill, then a slow smile split his kisser.

"Bill", he replied, "I've heard of wardrobe drinkers ... but that's bloody ridiculous."

PERSONALITY

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At the Sydney AGM of the NSW Veterans, mention was made that one of our ex-AWA colleagues and a veteran, JIM SHORE, was languishing in Lady Davidson Home, a war veterans home situated at Turrumurra, Sydney, almost down at the Bobbin Head section of the Kuringai Chase Trust. I received a phone call from "Blue" Tulley, Roy informing me that he had been down to see Jim, a World War I bow-and-arrow veteran, and Jim had expressed a wish to see some of the folks he used to know in the old Beam Wireless Service and Spring Street office. I have fond memories of Jim, so I decided to go down and see him. The hospital is in a remote section, so having packed two cut lunches I took off.

I had no trouble finding Jim, having been well briefed by Roy Tulley. His eyes lit up when he saw me, but he was unable to manage a verbal greeting, being plugged up with a thermometer.

"Murse", said Jim, it not being easy to enunciate properly with a mouth full of thermometer. The nurse was in an engrossed conversation with Sister who was relating her latest conquest on the previous night. "Murthe", said Jim a bit more insistently, but no response was forthcoming. Jim finally unplugged himself and let out a bellow which should have scared the fish at Bobbin Head. He got immediate attention. "What's wrong, Mr. Shore?", ventured the nurse.

"I've had this bloody thing in my mouth for fifteen minutes", said Jim. "It's about time someone took a reading." The nurse attended at once, full of apologies. Sister, however, was made of sterner stuff. "I wouldn't rush to assist him, Nurse", quoth she. "From the way he was talking I thought it was just a Mintie he had in his mouth", giving a sly smirk, well knowing that Jim had developed a passion for this particular sweet. But the nurse entered the information in her book, apologised to Jim once again, and she and Sister moved off.

"Well", said Jim, "that's what you have to put up with." There was no animosity in the statement, for the staff at Lady Davidson treat World War I veterans like VIPs and Jim knew it.

"All I'm glad to say is that it wasn't an anal thermometer, otherwise I shudder to think where they would have put my Minties."

So you can see that Jim is doing well, though temporarily laid up.

