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Commando Courier

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Editorial

THOUGHTS ON CHRISTMAS

Yesterday I wrote two editorials. The first one was a solemn pedantic effort; it pointed out that the true spirit of Christmas was lost nowadays and that most of us were Christians in name only, etc. On re-reading it I found it was the most depressing thing I had seen in years—so I tore it up. The shoemaker to his last: let those with knowledgable authority point out, and no doubt correctly so, the failings we Christians have; let them show that the average man's attitude towards Christmas is yearly getting more un-Christian. I would rather take the pleasant way out and leave those words of self-reproach and condemnation to others.

Christmas has a dual function. Firstly, it is a significant time—a time to remember the first Christmas, and to keep fresh in our minds and to try to emulate those wonderful events nearly two thousand years ago which formed the very beginning of our beliefs. Secondly, the Christmas season is a time for rejoicing and happiness; a time for laughter and goodfellowship. Christmas Eve is that one night of the year when countless little children fight against sleep in the hope of hearing that round and jolly gentleman descending the chimney, or even in the hope of catching a glimpse of him. A time of fanciful yet harmless makebelieve climaxed on Christmas morning with the cries of wonder and joy at the toys lying at the foot of the bed.

As we grow older, it is very regrettable but inexorable, that the old gentleman no longer calls upon us! But perhaps he still leaves one gift for each of us—the half-forgotten memories of our own earlier Christmas mornings: and perhaps those memories are partly responsible for that feeling of peace and tranquillity which pervades even the most morose of us at this time of the year. Whatever it is, the feeling is there—a spirit of goodwill and comradeship towards our fellow men. Above all it brings to us a feeling of happiness, when our biggest worries lose their significance and our heaviest burdens become light.

Let us, however, in the midst of our own Christmas happiness, give thought to those less fortunate than ourselves—those unlucky ones who for a variety of reasons cannot rejoice and make merry at this merry time. Let us if we can, by word or deed, make this particular Christmas more joyful for them. By bringing happiness to others, surely we will also make our own Christmas happier for ourselves.

To each and every member of our far-flung little Association—**A MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR!!**

J. C. BURRIDGE, President.

West Australian Whisperings

Committee Comment

The committee met once again in November and another good attendance was recorded and many matters of importance to the Association were discussed.

Foremost matter discussed was the arrangements for the Xmas Party to be held on Dec. 20 at the Crawley Bay Tearooms. Mr. Dave Ritchie was appointed M.C. for the evening to make the party go with a swing. It was decided that a barbecue supper be the order of the night and arrangements have been made accordingly. The Social sub-committee is to arrange a programme for the evening.

A great deal of time was taken up with a discussion on the Association's policy in regard to advertising in the 'Courier'. Finally it was decided that all advertising be at the discretion of the Editorial Committee when space is available and rates be 5/- per column inch. Advertising will not take precedence over news in the 'Courier'.

The secretary reported having written to the Minister for Army giving the names already to hand of helpers in Timor and requesting that a further investigation of our claim that these helpers be recompensed, be made at the earliest possible convenience.

The matter of holding a silence at all meetings in honor of our fallen was brought up and it was resolved that this matter be attended to at the next and all subsequent meetings.

It was decided that the pattern from which our memorial plaque was made, be obtained and Mr. Freestone kindly offered to take care of it.

The treasurer gave a rough statement of the recent sweep which showed a profit in the vicinity of £190, and this now puts the Association's finances in a healthy position once more.

To assist the financial position of the Xmas Party it was decided to conduct a small raffle among city members to be drawn on the night of the party.

Association Activities

The usual monthly meeting was held on Dec. 4 at Monash Club, and we had a very good roll. Unfortunately arrangements for a guest speaker broke down at the last minute, owing to our speaker having to travel to the Eastern States. Mr. Ken Doak, of the No. 1 Independent Coy., who was present at the meeting, kindly consented to give us a brief chat on the activities of the No. 1 Coy. after it left Foster, and this proved to be of interest to all those present. We have to thank Ken for so kindly stepping into the breach at a moment's notice and so help fill in an enjoyable evening for us.

A couple of hastily arranged working bees have been held to assist Mrs. Ludlow move into her new War Widow's Home at South Perth and to plant the lawns for her. Our thanks are due to all those who were able to make rapid arrangements to be present at these working bees, especially Geo. Strickland who so kindly brought along his truck for the furniture removing and also Frank Freestone and his friend Mr. Pat O'Malley, who brought along a rotary hoe to do the ploughing up of the area and so save a terrific amount of work for those present.

By the time you receive this issue the Xmas Party will have been held and a full account of the night will be written in the next 'Courier'. We have hopes of a really smash evening and all that is required to make it go with a will, is a good attendance.

There will be no meeting in January as the first Tuesday in the month is New Year's Night with all its attendant attractions, so the next monthly meeting will be Feb. 5, and you will be further advised in the January 'Courier' of what form the evening will take.

Remember the annual Re-union is not so far off as it takes place on Saturday, Feb. 23, so please mark this date in red on your new calendar and make a certainty of being present.

Personalities

Our congratulations to Jerry Haire on his successful management of the Jubilee School Boys and Girls Team to compete in Hobart. The team has obtained three firsts and quite a number of placings so Jerry has every reason to feel proud of his little brood.

Dick Crossing and his good wife are heading East for a trip just before Xmas, and Dick hopes to be able to contact quite a few of the lads while in the East. Bon voyage to you both, Dick.

Ron Kirkwood is the proud father of a daughter since we last went to print and we add our congratulations to all the rest, Ron.

Keith Hayes is another on the parental front. Keith has a daughter and once again we would like to add our congrats.

Another letter to hand from Reg Harrington to give us a peck of news. Reg says he was lucky with the recent hail storms as he had very little damage although near neighbors were knocked flat. Says the queer season is interfering with his harvest in a big way and still has about 700 acres to strip.

Mal Herbert writes to say that he is in much the same boat as Reg Harrington. Has had some hail damage, but it is quite small compared with others in his district at Nungarin. Mal met Stan Payne at a recent R.S.L. meeting where Stan was installed as president. Congratulations Stan, we know you will do a good job for the local sub-branch.

Had a letter from Alf Coupland after months of silence. Alf is now at Kalgoorlie, but afraid he did not tell me what he is doing. Will be writing you personally very shortly, Alf, re the matters mentioned, but in the meantime don't worry as everything is under control.

Barry Lawrence (Blossom to you) sends in the name of his credo and wishes me to send on his regards to the gang wherever they be. See you at the Party, Barry.

Bert Burges has been seen in town a couple of times and is looking in the pink. Reports that he is doing extra well at Broomehill

and has big hopes for the future. Jack Carey, a most hard working type these days, what with fat lamb exports, etc., he is flat out at Robbs Jetty. Jack seems to thrive on work as he is looking in the pink.

Saw Ralf Finklestein the other day careering along the street and appearing to be extra busy. Says he is a busy man these days and wishes me to remember him to all the gang.

Believe Doug Fullarton is heading East (to Cairns) on behalf of his firm soon after Xmas. Have a good trip Doug; and if you see any of the old gang up in North Queensland remember us to them.

The old "Ajax" Harrison is back in khaki once again and is doing duty at Swanbourne Camp. He is as big a menace as of yore and seems to thrive on army life.

Saw "Ning" McCraig recently. He was looking extra fit. Had just had a session in Hollywood and also at the Edward Milne Home, but says he is now recovered. He wishes to send a cheerio to all the boys.

Fred Humfreys is now in Pinjarra in the baking trade. Fred does not seem to put much flesh on, but says he is O.K. and likes the bush very much.

"Slim" James had the misfortune to have quite a lot of his furniture and effects burnt in a fire at Victoria Park quite recently. Unfortunately was not covered by insurance either. "Slim" seems to be bearing up very well under the strain and we all wish him a ton of success in the future to offset his bad luck in the past.

Another of the lads to have a misfortune was Jack Spencer who was knocked down in a traffic accident and had his leg broken, finger fractured and severe scalp lacerations. Jack is now home again and I believe in excellent spirits. He would very much like to see any of the lads who can spare the time to visit him. His address: 53 Normanby Street, Inglewood. We all wish you a speedy recovery, Jack, and keep the chin up son.

Wilf Marsh has been on holidays I believe to Geraldton, once again. Wilf has been a good friend to the

'Courier' in more ways than one and we take this opportunity to thank him muchly for his efforts.

Believe that "Blue" Prendergast has given away the country and is back in the city again for a spot of toil. We hope to see a bit of you "Blue" at a meeting or so in the future.

Jim Ritchie noticed back in the city after a successful shearing season, both in the north and in the wheat belt. Jim looks a picture of health and says he never felt fitter.

Jim Smailes has been in the city recently and he really does look well. Jim has big hopes of passing his surveyor's course this year and hopes to be able to complete his Mining Diploma course part time next year. Jim's effort in this sphere is nothing short of amazing and we would like to congratulate him on his success.

Understand Jack Sheenan's still going very well at Kalgoorlie. He has a truck on the woodline and pays an odd visit or two to the 'game'.

Ken Doak, of No. 1 Coy., has been to the last two meetings of our Association and we were most pleased to welcome him. Ken is doing a school with the P.M.G's. Department in the city but is normally stationed at Katanning.

Tom Bateman tells me that now the whaling season is over he can

stop for a second and listen to him self think. He is with the Australian Whaling Commission and says the feverish activity that goes on during the season has to be seen to be believed.

Arthur Marshall is wheat carting again in the Merredin area and stops occasionally for a game of cricket. I believe he has made a couple of centuries at his last two times to bat, so he can't have lost any of his old form.

Reminders

Firstly the February meeting to be held at Monash Club. Make sure you are there, boys, and swell the crowd, we can guarantee a good time will be had by all.

Then the Annual Re-Union on Saturday, Feb. 23, at Monash House. Make this a **MUST**, boys. If you live in the country try and arrange a car load from your district and so help some one else to attend. This will be followed on Sunday, 24th, with our Commemoration Service and this surely should merit your attention.

We will still be pleased to receive names of creators or helpers in Timor to bolster our case with the Department of Army. If you have not already sent in the name of your helper do it immediately.

Random Harvest

Another note to hand from Tony Adams. Tony and his wife were unfortunate in losing their latest baby after only five days. We sincerely condole with the Adam's in their bereavement. Tony currently was holidaying at Broad Beach in Queensland and says it brings back memories of quite a few of the gang especially Gerry Green who had a flat there and Ray Cole who kept a shop there for some time. Tony included a cutting from a Brisbane paper about "Kel" Cathew who is a fireman with the brigade in Brisbane. Apparently "Kel" was assisting his children

with a bonfire on Nov. 5 when some of the neighbors thought it was a shed on fire and rang the brigade who turned out only to find one of their own men much in command. Thanks for the note, Tony, these letters help more than a little in compiling the 'Courier'.

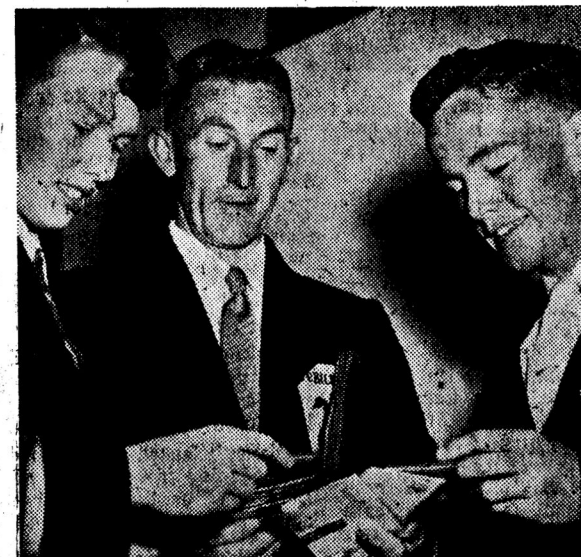
Next on the list is David Dexter who writes from Canberra. Dave has had a busy year writing his Volume of the Official War History and returns to the Department of External Affairs in the New Year and is to be posted to Tokio. You certainly do get around David. Thanks muchly for all the good

dope on the Unit History and also the cheque received in due course. Dave is now the proud father of two boys and one girl so he is up to the usual average of the gang at parenthood.

Dave has run into a little trouble in his writing of the War History and asks our assistance on a small matter. He has a small chapter to write on "Bena Force", but is handicapped for lack of material in the way of war diaries, action or patrol reports. Now if any of you chaps who served in N.G. especially round Bena Bena have any information which you think may assist him, will you please forward to Dave, c/- Department of External Affairs, Canberra, as soon as possible. Anything at all will be acceptable as Dave will be able to sift out what he requires. Don't think that what you have or know is too small to warrant attention, send it on to Dave and let him do the deciding. Rally round, chaps, and give Dex a helping hand.

Peter Mantle also writes from the Federal Capital. He says he has had a month's leave forced upon him and he is using it to advantage to bring his new home into something resembling order. Apparently Canberra is a garden city and the authorities supply shrubs, seeds, etc., free of cost plus the fact there are no water meters in the area, which should make it a gardener's paradise. He says a friend has drawn up a futuristic plan for him to work to and he has hopes. Peter states that he has seen Dave Dexter on occasions, but none of the other chaps as yet. He will be spending a few days in the New England district shortly and thinks he may run into a few of the chaps there.

That story, Peter. Your sojourn in India has got you out of the way of things, that one (which is a good one mind you) went the rounds a couple of years ago. Still, Pete, keep trying you may find a newy for us next time.



Jerry Haire checks out from Guildford for Hobart with his schoolboy and schoolgirl captains, Hugh Davies and Evelyn Bruce.

Victorian Vocal Venturings

Firstly with the approach of the Festive Season allow me to wish all Victorian and Interstate members all that they would wish themselves for Xmas and the New Year. I would like to thank members for their co-operation in the past year and sincerely hope for redoubled efforts in 1952. The 'Courier' is now well and truly launched and we in this fair State want to do all in our power to supply our fair share of the news and views that appear in its pages.

So I appeal to all you good members to make it a new year resolve to write in more frequently and supply your editor with news to carry out our part of the bargain and generally keep these folk within our own State and also outside States au fait with the doings of the gang in Victoria.

Personalities

Ken Monk writes to say he is busy harvesting the maize crop and also planting a new crop. Has already put in a couple of stacks of ensilage to keep the milkers going. His good wife is busy cooking for 6 to 8 hungry hands so she too is paying the price of summer. The season has treated Ken kindly and he has topped the herd testing in the district. He will not be able to make the Re-Union on Dec. 14, as time is most precious. Ken sends his regards to the lads.

George Kennedy writes to say he is well and would like to be remembered to all the old gang especially "Irish" O'Brien. Geo. brings news of Freddy Broadhurst who is now complete with a wife and home. Freddy is keen on a few more "smokes". Aren't we all, Fred, but organising them is the big strife.

Bert Tobin safely ensconced in his new home and is up to his ears what with getting the place into order and doing a day's work for the paying task master.

Jack Servante asks me to send his best wishes to all the gang and say that he is tip top.

Gerry Maley in the throes of organising a head wetting for his latest offspring and is he proud?

Bernie Callinan and Rolf Balwin in the pink and looking forward to a record roll up at the Xmas 'do'.

News to hand of Dan (Combined Ops.) Thomas. Dan lives at Boronia and is back in the army after fourteen months of Civvie Street. Says that with work, bike riding and house building, he manages to keep boredom at bay. He has been married five years, but no young Thomas's yet, wants to know the formula from some of the more successful parents. No personal applicants, please. Dan brings news of Mick Wellings who is wielding a paint brush for a living and lives at 99 Thames Street, Box Hill.

He says Jack Fox is Q.M. in the 5th Scottish Regt., and a hard man to toss for the Q stuff.

Dan has been most successful in the sporting sphere, having won a couple of trophies for pedal pushing and three more for footrunning. Steady down the violent exercise a bit, Daniel old man, that may be the secret formula you are looking for.

Kevin Curran seen in town the other day. Reckons he is the greatest father alive. Kev is a bit doubtful as a starter in the footy business next year he says. He sends his good wishes to the gang especially the WX landers.

Max Davies still on top of the world and looking as large as a cyanide vat. Max just ooses bonhomie and also wishes his respects paid to the mob.

Reports to hand say Campbell Rodd is going extra well at Morwell and most well thought of by his employers, the A.P.M. Ltd.

Haven't heard a word from Gordon Stanley for an age. Come on Blue, give us the G.G. about yourself.

Well, boys, that is the end of the penny section, or in these times of inflation, the fourpenny section, so till the New Year—Cheerio.

—ARCH CAMPBELL.

New South Wales News

Personalities

More words of praise for the infant 'Courier'—this time from none other than Blue Beresford. Any epistle which can draw Blue out of the Dean Maitland silence which he has maintained for the last five years must be pretty good. Anyway, Blue, it was very gratifying to have you come good at last, and I shall look forward to seeing you or at least hearing from you more often in the future. Blue reports being married with one son, a year old, and says he has ideas about a mate for him, providing mum concurs. Blue has been share farming at Pyree near Nowra, but at the time of writing looked like going back to the old game of sleeper cutting as the farm was being sold. Blue says he would love to see Curly O'Neill again and would risk alcoholic poisoning just for the pleasure. I wonder why the name of O'Neill and alcohol are synonymous. If you're coming to Sydney to consult a specialist on your health, Blue, I'd advise you to give prior thought to the time when you entertained Curly, Kiwi and Griffo in Queensland, and ponder awhile upon the wisdom of a possible recurrence of the performance. In closing Blue sends regards to all the gang. Thanks for the sub., Blue.

Ron Trengove has joined the band of temporary Australians and is the owner of a motor bike. Ron has left the telegraph and has a collar and tie job with Eric Herd, at Larke Hoskins. He has had a lot of luck lately and has a lot of timber on the job ready to get a move on with his home. Ron tells me Eric has brought a new bedroom suite with a double bed and is looking for a flat or house or any thing with a garage where he can stow the red buggy. Eric was up to see me a few weeks ago re the fifteen quid subsistence money which he still hadn't got. Is there anyone else who hasn't been paid yet? Let me know and I'll send you another application form. Thanks for the name and the ad-

dress Ron, I'll write to the Moule family as soon as I can find a few spare minutes.

Had a short but very welcome note from Dave Dexter this week. Dave has just completed a year with the War History section and after a spot of leave in Melbourne will rejoin the Department of External Affairs and expects to be posted abroad early next year. Many thanks for the Stat. Declaration, Dave, and best of luck to you when you get your posting.

A real dyed in the wool bushwhacker from out Wilcannia way, dropped into town a couple of weeks ago with the idea of joining the army again, but I'm pleased to report they knocked him back. Yes you've guessed right—Kiwi Harrison is the name. The thought of Jack Stafford, Charlie Anderson, Ray Parry and the rest of the boys having all the fun in Korea got too much for Kiwi and he wanted to be in it too. Anyway I met him in town together with Alan Luby, Curly O'Neill and Sammy Fullbrook and after Curly and Sammy shot through on business appointments Alan and I went up to Joe's room at the Sydney and had a great old earbash and a few bottles. Kiwi has been out at Wilcannia for about three years doing contract fencing and making a pile of dough at it. Says he loves the country now and if he missed out on the army would not be able to get out of town quick enough. Anzac Day in Wilcannia is a great turnout according to Joe—they march there three days running and stop at every pub along the route.

Two more of our eligible bachelors have bartered their freedom for a cook and I don't blame them a bit—here it is 8.15 and I'm still cooking my own tea—Don Woodhouse went off three weeks ago and according to Drip Hilliard it was a great occasion, probably because the beer flowed freely for four hours. Congratulations, Don and Mrs. Woodhouse.

The other victim has been dodging the ties for a long time, but last Saturday up at Narrabri he fin-

ally said, "I will". I refer, of course, to the Hargan Akkus, Best of luck, Angus, and congrats. from all the boys.

PICNIC

As usual we sent out a stack of notices about the picnic day, hoping to get about 30 people there—we had thirteen. Apologies were received from Jacky Keenahan whose three nippers all have measles, Freddy Ottway who had to work, Alan Luby who was on duty, Fred Stewart who was house painting, Jimmy English who was playing cricket, and Sammy Fullbrook who was sick in bed with a nurse.

It was a beautiful day; dull but warm, and it didn't rain all day. The party consisted of Frank and Betty O'Neill, Ron and Phil Hilliard Jack and Claire Iles, John and Dot Went, Bernie and Gwen Weir, Eric Herd, Von Townsend and yours truly. At Sutherland we were met by Russ Symons who came up from Cronulla to say hullo. Russ has bought a place at Cronulla and has

a lot of work ahead of him putting it in order. He also has a nice Austin station wagon and is going for a long holiday trip up to Queens land soon. We arrived at Garie Beach for lunch and after a hearty meal, washed down with plenty of beer, we went for a surf. The surf wasn't much good so it wasn't long before the grog was copping another hiding. We had four dozen and as the ladies didn't drink much it left plenty for Drip and Curly to soak up. Bernie Weir was pretty much under the thumb and fought madly to escape when we bound him to a tree to prevent him from going home. On the way back we called in to have a bo-peep at Jack Iles very nice new home at Gympie. To sum it up it was a hell of a good day and I have no regrets about getting home after midnight.

Before I close, I'll take this opportunity on behalf of our committee to wish members all over Australia a very merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.

—JACK HARTLEY



"The Courier"

extends

Christmas Greetings

to all the gang