



# 2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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## *Editorial*

### *Reflections On Anzac*

Anzac Day has come once again and has been honoured throughout Australia and New Zealand in various manners in the various States and countries. We have been exhorted by many speakers to remember the tradition of Anzac. How the brave few won for Australia a nationhood and a place in the councils of the world. We have been told once more that this is the spirit which is the very backbone of Australia. No one can gainsay that truism. World War I found Australia in a position to do big things, the pioneering spirit was very much uppermost. The second World War saw a terrific continuance of the spirit on the battlefields all over the world. We were still very close to the pioneering days. The vicious depression of the thirties had hardened men in a way that only enforced austerity can. The young men and women accepted the challenge of war in a truly remarkable manner. The spirit and tradition of Anzac had been furthered in a marvellous way.

But have we continued to accept the challenge? Have we remembered the true tradition which was won initially in sweat and blood on Gallipoli? Times of prosperity are inclined to soften us and we are liable to accept the word tradition as if it were a fact. Tradition can

only be continued if you are trained to it. Mere utterance of the word is insufficient in itself. Unready people will not continue the tradition of Anzac it will only be achieved by hard slogging such as was the lot of those who founded the tradition.

There must be a general rededication by the nation as a whole and its leaders in particular, if the spirit of Anzac is not to prove a hollow sham and just a mere word.

The nation must be made ready to defend what has been dearly won for us by our forebears and to a great extent by the veterans of World War II. These veterans are still mostly young men and women who must give a lead to the coming generation they are the ones with the experience.

The attitude today is one of leave it to the other chap, possibly a legacy from our semi-welfare state, but remember if everyone does this **there is no other fellow.**

The old biblical exhortation to the Jews to get upon their asses and go into the Promised Land has been interpreted in these times as: "Sit upon your arses, you're in the Promised Land".

This thinking must be eradicated and a return to the Spirit of Anzac deeply engendered

## West Australian Whisperings

### Committee Comment Association Activities

The usual Committee meeting of the Association was held at Monash Club on Tuesday, April 21. There was a very good attendance and much in the way of business was transacted.

Great appreciation was shown of the guest speaker at the April meeting, Mr. Alister Dick, and it was decided to write and thank him for his good effort. This also applied to the Maimed and Limbless Assoc. for their hospitality on April 10, with the bowls night. The Secretary was instructed to thank the M. & L. Assoc. and express the wish that this be made an annual function.

Final arrangements for Anzac Day were put in hand and this promises to be a good day once again.

Long discussion then took place on the scheme which was commenced by Don Turton. It was finally decided that it be recommended to the Annual General Meeting that a fund be started to assist the scholarship of children of members. This was decided upon as it was doubtful if your Management Committee had the power under the present rules to start the fund under their own steam.

Meeting finished at 11 p.m.

#### "LEST WE FORGET"

##### APRIL

Barclay, Tpr. C. J., died of illness, New Britain, April 6, 1945.

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## SPECIAL REMINDERS

**MAY MEETING**, at Monash Club on Tuesday, May 5

Stump Speech and Debate Night. Certain to be a great evening. Ron Kirkwood, Joe Burrige and Fred Napier preparing the subjects of debate and they should be good

**JUNE MEETING**, 2nd: Picture Night

**JULY MEETING**, 7th: Annual General Meeting

Make this a MUST and mark the date off on your calendar

For the first time for many months your Association had a guest speaker at its monthly meeting held at Monash Club on April 7. Mr. Alister Dick, secretary in this State of the Legacy Club, spoke of his experience in Malaya before, during and after the war.

Mr. Dick proved to be one of the best speakers who has addressed us and had a very sure grasp of his subject. He told of his experiences as a rubber planter in Malaya before the war and his training as a militia man in that country. He gave a most lucid account of the actual fighting when the Nipponese army arrived. He then recounted his experiences as a P.O.W. and once again showed a wonderful grasp of the question and explained in a way that we had not heard before. The last portion of his address dealt with his return to the plantation and the coming of the communist terrorist menace. He finalised his address by showing about a quarter of an hour of slides giving those attending some idea of the country.

We are very much indebted to Mr. Dick for his talk and he has the thanks of the Association for the trouble he went to to give such a brilliant address.

The roll up was well up to average, but many regulars were missing, but these were more than compensated for by the attendance of quite a few we had not seen for some time. We hope this is good augury for the future.

The excellent response to this re-introduction of guest speakers should encourage your Committee to attempt to obtain further speakers in the near future.

### BOWLS NIGHT AGAINST MAIMED AND LIMBLESS SOLDIERS' ASSOCIATION

A most enjoyable evening was spent at the Maimed and Limbless Soldiers Association at their H.Q. in Colin-st., West Perth, on Friday, April 10, when the Association played the M. & L. Association a game of bowls. The real thing this time on the beautifully appointed rinks in Colin-st.

Although we were bolstered by a few ring tails in the way of Ted Withell, Johnny Morrison, Bill Freeman, and Les Haskell, we took a nice old thrashing, not one of the four rinks winning.

Our lady folk took revenge as a four made up by Beryl Withell, Glad Napier, Lal Green and Mrs. Morrison, had a nice win over a four from the M. & L. Association.

Sundry drinks were had by all and Bill Hollis provided a slashing supper to top off a grand evening. Ron Kirkwood thanked the M. & L. Association for their fine gesture and voiced the sentiments of all present when he suggested that this be made an annual fixture for our Association calendar.

Next time we hope to field a few more of our Association bowlers, such as Kevin Waddington, Bill Hollis and Fred Gardiner, to give us added strength and so make the tussle a little more exciting for our Wingie and Stumpie friends.

### Personalities

Had a note from David Dexter who has now arrived in India and has taken up residence at the office of the Australian High Commissioner for India at New Delhi. He would not comment on India at such short notice as he thought first impressions might prove to be fallacious on more mature knowledge of the country. He thanked all who made his short stay in Perth so enjoyable and said that he and his family were looking forward to a longer stay here on their return in a couple of years. David was all praise for the feature "Historically Yours!" and promised to assist all he could at a later stage. Thanks for the letter David, and hope for further letters from you

in the near future. You can appoint yourself India correspondent for the 'Courier'.

It was very nice to see Keith Hayes at the April meeting. Keith was looking very well and says that now he has settled down in his new home at Millen Estate he hopes to be a little more regular in his attendance.

Arthur Smith who is taking further exams for his job as a technician in the P.M.G. Dept., has had to relinquish the secretaryship of the Association as he finds his spare time is fully taken up with night school and study. We are most sorry to see Arthur give up the secretaryship as he has done a colossal job over the last three years and his mastery over detail has made for excellent organisation of the various functions that have been run by the Association. We wish him well in his exams and hope he gains the promotion that his diligence deserves and also hope that he will find time in the future to again take a deep interest in Association affairs.

Jack Carey has kindly consented to carry on the secretaryship until the Annual General Meeting in July. We are once again indebted to Jack for stepping into the breach as he has done so on numerous occasions. This shows that he has the interests of the Association very much in his heart. Jack tells me he had a wonderful time in Melbourne and Adelaide and that he was so busy running round that he was not able to look up any of the lads in Melbourne which is a pity as I know they would have been eager to have met him and had a convivial hour or so.

As mentioned in the last issue of the 'Courier' Dave Ritchie has been far from well and has had a sojourn in Hollywood. He is home at present but under strict orders from the doctor not to go to work for at least a month. I'm sure all members will join me in wishing Dave a speedy and full recovery as he has been a wonderful friend to the Association and to many members in particular. Here is a great chance for those many members Dave has assisted to rally round to do him a turn.

Mick Calcutt has also been off work with a strained back but was

looking quite well on the night we played the M. & L. Assoc. bowls, in fact he was one of the few who was making our opponents stretch their necks.

Have been eagerly awaiting a letter from Ron Dook to tell us all about his new job in Adelaide but to date it has not materialised. Don't tell me you have writer's cramp, Ron, with all the writing you do in your job. How about it by return mail, mate? All the gang here join me in wishing you and Agnes and family all the best in S.A.

It was most pleasing to receive a letter from Peter Barden in Geraldton (printed elsewhere), giving news of the folk in the northern port. Deadline for copy for the 'Courier' is the 18th of each month Peter, as this gives us time to have

## Random Harvest

**PETER BARDEN, of 6GN, Box 310, Geraldton, writes:—**

At the outset it would be appreciated if you would forward me the deadline time for copy for the 'Courier' as I will endeavour to send you a few notes each month about the Geraldton boys.

Now something about the most practical application of Christianity I've ever heard, and one of those concerned is none other than one "double red diamond" type, Eric Smyth. A party of 10 Geraldton men led by the Rev. J. K. Hutchinson will leave Geraldton on Easter Monday by truck and Landrover on a 1,500 mile journey to give practical help to the natives at the Mowanjum ("Rest at Last") Presbyterian Mission, six mile east of Derby. The object of their trip is to erect a church, a dispensary, and a kitchen for use mainly of the elderly natives. The party will include a minister, doctor, dentist, railway engineer, draper, accountant (one Eric Smyth), builder and three farmers. A builder, Mr. Carl Berringer, and his wife, have gone as an advance party, and Mrs. Berringer will cook for the Geraldton folk, who expect to complete the job in 10 days. Rev. Hutchinson said he could think of no better way of giving practical help to the na-

it in the hands of W.A. members prior to meetings which are on the first Tuesday in each month.

Another of my correspondents this month was Doug Fullarton from Sarawak, Borneo. Doug is chasing recruits for his organisation (letter printed elsewhere). Anyone at a loose end and having the spirit of adventure here is a chance of getting in on the ground floor of an up and coming company. Thanks for the letter Doug. Hope you get a few volunteers and also hope you find time to write more fully in the near future.

Pleased to see Bill Epps at the April meeting. Bill looks remarkably well. He does a marvellous job of getting this journal printed, addressed and wrapped and out to you people and merits your highest approbation.

tives, who number about 200, and include 30 elderly folk who are unable to look after themselves. The mission trains men for work on stations, wharves and roads, and the women as domestics. Mr. Hutchinson said a lot of the natives' paintings and carvings have been sold in Sydney, with the proceeds going back into the mission to provide amenities and make the natives as self-reliant as possible. Hats off to Eric and Co.

Eric Smyth, apart from being a keen and successful yachtsman, has just relinquished the reins of the presidency of the Geraldton Men's Hockey Association, but no doubt will continue to play and in all probability be with the Geraldton boys at Country Week and make his presence felt on the field, as usual.

"Irish" Hopkins has been back at the Club Hotel, Mullewa, for some time now, so if Jim Ritchie or any of the shearing mob are in the Murchison "Irish" would welcome a call at the Club Hotel.

Jack Denman is keenly interested in civil defence and raised the subject at the annual general meeting of the Geraldton R.S.L. Sub-Branch. Jack said he was not referring to first-aid, but to various aspects of civil defence and to allocation of

jobs in civil defence. He suggested they get either R.S.L. H.Q. or the Dept. of the Army to send trained officers to Geraldton to help form a Civil Defence group and to train interested people. He would personally seek the help of a senior army officer in this regard, and would raise the matter at an R.S.L. meeting with a view to the formation of a nucleus of a C.D. organisation.

Jack Carey will probably be interested to know that a relative of his—Pat Carey—formerly of Bunbury is active in various organisations. He's president of the Geraldton Branch of the Air Force Association, and is a vice president of Rovers Football Club.

Well, I must be away for now, but all the best to you and the rest of the boys.

**PAT GILES, of P.O. Mt. Magnet, writes:—**

Just a few more lines. Glad to read in 'Courier' of the sweep success, also other functions held over Christmas and New Year holidays.

Received our two girls' Christmas books in new year when we went down to Geraldton. They were very pleased with them. Maybe by next Christmas there'll be one for a boy as well. We've got our fingers crossed. Should arrive about the end of April.

As you can see by above address we've shifted again. Have finally settled here now. Bern is working on "Hill 50" gold mine back carpentering. Seems quite pleased with the job. His arm still plays up a bit at times but is gradually getting stronger.

Could you please send 'Courier' to us up here now as we don't get them unless we go down to Geraldton, hence receiving two at a time in some cases.

Give our regards to all. Best of luck in this year.

**DOUG FULLARTON, Colonial Timber Coy., Sankie, Sarawak, writes**

Don't get too big a shock when you receive this note. What I am chasing is a few of the old crowd to come up this way. This company is opening up in a big way and the managing director here has asked me to see what I can do. I

know there are a few of the old team not doing so well and would jump at the chance to come up here. Could you get a notice put in the 'Courier' and anyone interested could contact me at the above address.

The type that would suit would be preferably: (1) single men; (2) married men without children (education facilities here not the best); (3) age 25 to 45; (4) willing to learn Malay.

Things are going well. Battling along quietly and managing to stack a few on edge. How are all the team? Merv Cash was one who was anxious to come up here, but believe he has a reasonable size family. If not there is a good opening here on the shipping side.

Must close, all the best to the mob.

**STAN SADLER, of Wongan Hills, writes:—**

Haven't a great deal of news. I notice from the local rag that Royce (Wendel) Wilkerson's property at Goomalling is up for auction. I heard before that he was going to sell out and move to greener pastures. We will be sorry to lose him from our area.

John Fowler I see very often. He and I are members of a committee formed to arrange the purchase and take-over of the State Hotel here by the community of Wongan. It's been a long job but I think things are fairly well sewn up now and the hotel should be ours within a couple of months. Finance could hold it up but I'm fairly certain that the public of Wongan and surrounding areas will invest enough to enable us to pay the deposit. We consider that we got the offer of the hotel at a reasonable figure and hope of course, that the town will obtain great benefit from the project.

I was down in Perth yesterday and ran into Geo. Boyland and Dick Geere. We didn't have time to have a noggin and a yarn together, but it was good to see them again.

Well that's about all for now. Sorry it's such a poor effort. How do these chaps talk their wives into writing for them? Mine won't have a bar of it, although I assure her she is a much better correspondent than I. Cheerio for now.



**PETER MANTLE, of Box 120, Biloela, Queensland, writes:—**

The lovely Callide Valley in which I live is the biggest cotton-growing area of Australia. That doesn't say a lot, as Australia grows only four per cent of the cotton it uses. But cotton is quite an important crop hereabouts, and a wonderful money-maker for some.

So at cotton harvest time we had a Cotton Festival, which was a great success and raised about £1,500 towards the swimming pool we need.

Planning started months ago. A meeting was called, to which all organisations were asked to send a delegate authorised to accept jobs on behalf of his group. We had a great list of jobs that would need to be done, and by the time the meeting was over, most of the list was ticked off. Rotary, for example, undertook to erect four "WELCOME" signs at the entrances of the town, to tee up window displays featuring cotton, to provide gatekeepers at the Mardi Gras, to put a float in the procession, and to man the bar on the main day. Though there was a central organiser, each group was expected to fix its own show completely.

Meanwhile groups nominated girls to enter for the title of Cotton Queen, raising money to support their entry.

As a male counterpart we had the Boll Worm contest. Boll worms are grubs which attack cotton plants. Men paid £1 nomination. On successive Saturdays there were contests which earned points . . . approach shot to a golf green, putting, throwing the wicket, clay pigeon shooting, target shooting, bowls general knowledge quiz, darts, snooker. Interest mounted as the scores built up. The bowls and the golf clubs gave over their bar profits for the day to their Queen entrants, put on a barbecue and so on. A great success the whole show, and made a lot of money.

So on the Thursday, Biloela had a meeting of the Australian Cotton Marketing Board, a field day at the local Regional Experiment Station, and a cabaret. Friday inter-school sports, and in the evening a Mardi Gras. For this part of the main street was cordoned off, and 1,000 people voluntarily paid 2/- to get

in. Chocolate wheels, refreshments knock-'em, and so on, plus an excellent Mock Court at which I for one was fined £1.

Saturday the procession of 20 excellent floats, mostly having a cotton theme. The procession led down to the showground where horse and motor gymkhana, athletics, goat races, displays of cotton, a mock attack by C.M.F. on an enemy strong point. This was well done with explosions going off in the centre of the ring. Though when a bang and smoke in the distant bush was artillery support, the shell must have gone into orbit round the earth, as it took a good 10 minutes to arrive. Another went off just as everyone was leaving after the show was over, and scared hell out of me for one. Then with the Pipe Band, the C.M.F. did Beating the Retreat, a very impressive ceremony.

That night the Cotton Ball, selection and crowning of the Cotton Queen, and enrobing of the winning Boll Worm.

Sunday, an open day at all sporting clubs, and a Blessing of the Plough ceremony by the Ministers Fraternal.

A lot went into it, but we got a lot out of it. A fine community feeling that brought in most of the organisations of the district (and there are a helluva lot in a place like this).

If any of the chaps are connected with a similar festival and want more detail I'd be glad to give it.

### ★ *Heard This?*

A soldier who had been stationed on an island in the Pacific for too many months, developed a crush on a half-caste girl who looked very beautiful after his many months there.

In his barracks one day he was getting very poetic about the girl, when his cobbler, thumbing through an old movie magazine, came across a photograph of Betty Grable.

"How's this?" he excitedly asked the love-lorn one, holding up the picture.

With a scornful look, the browned off one snorted. "White trash!"

# Historically Yours!

## CHAPTER 3 MOULDING A UNIT

(Continued)

Midway through the training period the platoon under Capt. Laidlaw, was called upon to provide the opposing force to the 2nd N.Z. Cadre for another Akbar stunt. This was a wonderful chance to mould and settle in a platoon as a fighting force. For the officers and N.C.O.s who had done this particular stunt in the Cadre it was something of a flying start as it gave us a head start on the N.Z. boys who were yet to experience the hazards of Mt. Hunter and Chinaman's Swamp. But the way Chapman and Caivert had changed things succinctly to take away this initial advantage.

This was the first stunt in which the feeding and supplying of troops from the air was undertaken by the Australian Army and this co-operation between the two arms, the Army and the Airforce, was looked forward to with eagerness. The Airforce supplied a plane (probably a Wirraway or Anson, as my memory is hazy on this point) based on Yaneke Drome and was to drop special parachute torpedoes of food and ammunition to the participating troops on specified dropping zones which were to be laid out in strips of calico. The plane was also to be used to accustom troops to attack from the air by buzzing them during the exercise.

Afraid this co-operation cannot be chronicled as an outstanding success as the weather fouled up the drop the first day and the bomb aimer wasn't so hot when the drop was made. Consequently for a couple of days the troops did a starve and if we lacked something in the way of a lesson in air co-operation we did receive a lesson in living off the country as Pte. Alec Thomson shot a wallaby and this was the best tasting piece of roo we ever did eat as short rations put a terrific edge on appetites and that roo tail soup was nectar of the gods to hungry troops. The other side of the Airforce co-operation

also ceased to be a joke for No. 5 Section under Lt. Doig, who had been delegated to retrieve the store torpedoes and parachute and take them back to base. While crossing Chinaman's Swamp which was ankle deep in water, this Section was buzzed endlessly and had to go to ground time and again in a couple of inches of water. Finally patience gave out and the pilot was promptly given the thumb up (not thumbs up) sign while Chief Umpire Chapman, from an eminence in the distance, was telling the rest of the gang: "That is a classical example of **how not** to take evasive action against aerial attack."

The exercise ended with everyone saturated and done to a turn. Am afraid the remarks to the Airforce pilot who was the guest of the Officers' Mess were far from complimentary but he was a good cove and next day provided flights for quite a lot of the lads.

Meanwhile other platoons were solidly training and settling down to solid entities. One stunt was a direction finding exercise when troops were taken through Lilly Pilly Gully at twilight, had evening meal and then had to find their way home. Some rushed home like homing pigeons, but these were the minority. Many wandered around in the slush for most of the night before finding the protective safety of their cots.

It was now that the question of pre-embarkation leave was beginning to exercise the minds of a lot of the Company. Having seen No. 1 Coy. take off without pre-embarkation leave some of the boys started to sound off good and early so they wouldn't be robbed of the old six days back in the Golden West. Dame Rumour ever a lying jade, had it that pre-em. was not to be, but official pronouncement on the subject was not forthcoming, those that knew were not saying a thing.

About this time Paddy Knight was called to Darby to give evidence to the Court of Enquiry which was established to enquire into the accident to the truck which Dvr. Bob Chalmers and Paddy had turned over during the Cadre and recounted



in an earlier chapter. Paddy reported to the Court of Enquiry one Thursday night clad in shorts, goggle jacket and great coat. With his enormous bulk the shorts did not reach the navel, the jacket missed buttoning up by at least a foot, as did the great coat, so Paddy appeared showing at least a square foot of bare belly. He was immediately reprimanded by the chairman who said: "Pte. Knight, that is no way to appear before a Court of Enquiry."

Pte. Knight, in no way abashed, thrust his bare midriff nearer the President's nose and said: "Sir, these are the only clothes that I have dry, and furthermore I'll have you know down at No. 1 Camp we really work. We were out on a night stunt last night and all my other clothes are wet."

Then thrusting himself further forward Paddy said: "It would have been easier for you to come down to see me than bring me up here in this attire."

"That will be enough from you, Pte. Knight."

Paddy hadn't finished yet. He said: "I wish to register a formal protest."

The Adjutant, Capt. Purves, who was scribe to the Court, then had to take up his pen to write Paddy's protest.

"You are interfering with my religion. We only have Mass once a fortnight in this camp and tonight is the night."

The poor old Adj. had to take due note of this formal protest before proceedings could continue.

Paddy had so put the Court off stride that they never really recovered their equilibrium and put him truly in his place.

While on the subject of Pte. Paddy Knight he was concerned in another incident at about the same time. The C.O. had given strict orders that the wet canteen was to close at 10 p.m. sharp and that the Orderly Officer was to police this provision personally. One evening the Orderly Officer went to the canteen and said: "Clean up your drinks and all get out." He ordered the Canteen Corporal to close up. He then went on his rounds and in a few minutes doubled back to the canteen. There was a flurry of feet as the mob rushed out leav-

ing bottles of beer everywhere. Paddy rushed around drinking the evidence as only his great bulk could, downing bottle after bottle. The Orderly Officer ordered him to bed and really tore a strip off the Canteen Corporal for defying his orders. Paddy was heard giving great basso profundo retches as he quit the excess beer in the nearest "rose bowl" proving that even the Knight's great belly had a plimsol line.

Saturday night leave in Foster was allowed about once a fortnight and quite a few used to take advantage of the hospitality offering in this small township. Major Spence and Lt. Mackintosh both had their wives staying at the local hotel and used to visit most weekends. One weekend both the New Zealanders and ourselves were on leave and one of our officers (no names, no pack drill) with a reasonable cargo of grog aboard, boasted that he could snatch a turkey off the hotel roost without waking the turkey or creating a commotion. N.Zers smartly took him up. Our officer took one of the New Zealander's leather bound canes, sneaked into the turkey pen, selected a large gobbler, tickled him under the foot with his finger and as the turkey lifted his foot placed the cane under it. He repeated the process with the other foot and there was the turkey on the cane. He walked out with the still sleeping bird on the cane and said: "There you are, what did I say?"

Before you could say "Knife" the N.Zers. had the bird in a bag and in their truck. Roast turkey was on the menu at No. 2 Camp (N.Zers.) the next day.

Great was the commotion on our parade on Monday morning as Major Spence castigated the Coy. for abusing the hospitality of the good folk of Foster by stealing one turkey. Nobody cracked a lay. As a matter of fact not many of our Coy. knew of the incident but it is just as well investigations were not too deeply carried out in the refuse bins at No. 2 Camp. Turkey sandwiches taste pretty well for supper, don't they?

Then there was the incident of the German mine washed up on the beach. This provided good practice for our Sappers and some spec-

ialists brought from Melbourne to render it safe. The mine was relieved of its burden of explosive which was burned on the beach and the casing, a large sphere some 3ft. 6in. high with large horns protruding from it was enshrined as a memento outside the Officers Mess in our camp. One night after a formal mess when we were visited by the New Zealanders these lads decided to punch the mine and take it down to their camp. The ensuing battle was known as "Mine Ball" as uniforms were torn and Officers and N.C.O.'s of both parties grunted and sweated to retain the souvenir. The victory was eventually ours but, oh, the cost to both sides in repairs to uniforms!

Don't think everything was just fun and games. These hilarious incidents were only a small part of the actual training programme and show that even at play the game was tough. We trekked to Sealers' Cove, Growles Creek (a full Company stunt directed by the C.O.), and climbed Mt. Latrobe (this was to prove too much for the great bulk of Paddy Knight who fell exhausted a few hundred feet from the top as he tried to lift his 20 stone over a fallen tree trunk).

We were brilliantly lectured by Capt. Chapman who told of his sojourn in Greenland while a member of the Watkins Expedition which existed for over 18 months in that land of perpetual ice, living on seal blubber and penican. This was a great story of survival and showed what could be done by trained personnel with the will to win.

During one of the training stunts which consisted of "A" Platoon defending the butts while being attacked by "B" and "C" Platoons using all sorts of weapons including half plugs of gelegnate as grenades, in the murky light of morning a half plug of gelly was thrown into one of the butts. It was picked up by Pte. Mal Nicholls, of No. 3 Section with the idea of throwing it back at the attackers, when it exploded in his hand blowing the hand off. This was to be our first real casualty. It showed the real seriousness of the training and the colossal risks taken to fit men for the tasks ahead. Realism was the keynote of everything that was done.

Men dived at great sheets of half inch armour plate which represented tanks, thrust sticky tank grenades loaded with powerful charges of P.E., then dropped into a trench while this grenade blew a large hole in the half inch plate with a deafening roar.

Yes, this Unit was really being moulded. The dross had been drained off and what was left was being heated and tempered in the cauldron of tough training and the survivors really looked the goods.

This was guerilla training at its best in good conditions with good material and as far as training can fit a man for the task ahead this had been achieved.

Like all good things the training period was to come to an end.

Major Spence told the parade: "You are to go on pre-embarkation leave." A mighty cheer went up. "Remember your colour patch," he said. "You will be best known by your deeds while on leave. Do not bring the patch to dishonour."

We bid our early farewells to our friends the New Zealanders and to Cants. Calvert and Chapman and Major Love who had proved to be such admirable friends and then we prepared to break camp and depart.

But the drama was not yet over. The main body was to move out on Saturday, followed by the rear guard on Sunday. At this moment meningitis struck and Pte. Ron Pearce of No. 5 Section, was removed to camp hospital at Darby where he died on Monday. By this time the troops were under way to the West. There were the usual rumours of stopping leave and quarantining all of the Coy. but this did not eventuate.

Pte. Ivor Goodall, of No. 6 Section, was taken from the train at Kalgoorlie with the dread disease and did not again rejoin the Coy.

Capt. Dunkley, our M.O., was terribly upset by all this but there was little he could do. As is well known when all sorts and types mingle together in army training camps, meningitis is always a possibility as generally speaking the country chap with his outdoor existence has not built up a resistance to diseases such as this and is often struck down while his city counterpart weathers the storm.

The trip across the Nullabor was all too brief. Rapidly at Claremont we were paid, given leave passes for six days and rushed in our various directions to spend our leave with our loved ones.

So 16 weeks after leaving Northam we were back in the West, a very changed bunch, welded together as a Unit so terribly different to the rough band who had headed East such a short time before. Not quite unique in the Australian Army but at least unique as far as West Australia was concerned we were its first Independent Coy, with our patch of the double red diamond and mighty proud to wear it.

Six days does not take long to pass and we were on our way back East again, destination unknown, our only indication was that our first stopping place was to be Wayville Showgrounds, Adelaide, S.A.

## THE VOYAGE OF H.M.A.S. KURU—A Story of Valour at Sea Into the Hornets' Nest—Alone at Night Second Instalment — By Captain J. A. Grant

Darwin was sweltering in the sticky morning heat when I reported at the commodore's office for orders on Nov. 29, 1942.

Outside the office I met two corvette officers, Lieut.-Com. J. Sullivan, commanding H.M.A.S. Castlemaine, and Lieut.-Com. D. H. Richards, of H.M.A.S. Armidale.

We were shown into the commodore's presence and offered a seat—and nothing else. Darwin was a "dry" area, and I am not speaking meteorologically.

On the commodore's table was a mosaic of the coastline of Timor. We guessed that the projected operation was going to take us to that Japanese-held island.

Sullivan and I had made trips to the island before, but this was to be Richard's first—and, unhappily, his last—voyage to those waters.

I got the impression at the briefing that Lieut.-Com. Richards was a little uneasy, as if trying to throw off a premonition of disaster.

The commodore quickly got down to business.

He told us that the Australian

And so we were to be together again, the boys from the West and the boys from the East at the capital of South Australia, famed far and wide for its hospitality to servicemen. What had the future in store? Where were we bound? Only God and the C.O. knew and neither were renowned for their talking!

(End Chapter 3)

★

My appeal of last issue seems to have fallen on deaf ears and to date nothing has been said or written which will be of assistance to the Editors. Please take my appeal to your hearts and put pen to paper to make this feature tick.

There has only been one amendment to the printed list of names in the issue of March and that is the addition of Pte. Mark Jordan to No. 5 Section, "B" Platoon.

commandos in Timor were calling urgently for more reinforcements and supplies. They also wanted the navy to evacuate 80 Portuguese women and children who had survived the Japanese atrocities on the island.

The presence of the women and children, who were being cared for by the commandos, was hampering the men's dangerous work.

Moreover, the refugees were in a pitiful plight and they were in grave danger from Japanese and island native quislings.

The plan for our joint operation was given us in outline.

The commodore impressed on us that it was top secret.

My ship, Kuru, being the slowest, was to move off first at 10 o'clock that night and rendezvous 48 hours later with the corvettes at Batano, on the south coast of Timor.

By midnight on Dec. 1 we were to land our stores, embark the refugees, and transfer them to Castlemaine, which was then to set off for Darwin at top speed.

Having transferred our human

cargo, we were then to move to Armidale and take off the party of Dutch troops she would be carrying as reinforcements for the commandos.

Our shallower draft had given us the role of ferry between the corvettes and the shore.

We were next to land the Dutch troops, pick up any wounded commandos, put them aboard Armidale, and then both Kuru and Armidale would hare for home, Armidale, with her greater speed, leaving us far behind.

That was the plan—but it did not work out exactly like that because the Nips interfered.

After the conference I returned to my ship, did a dummy run with Castlemaine to rehearse the troop transfer, moved to the wharf and loaded up our supplies.

In addition to ammunition, food, water, mail, fuel, and general stores, we took on £1,000 worth of two-shilling pieces intended as pay for the loyal Timor natives.

We then returned to our mooring buoy and after dark I went ashore again, picked up my sealed sailing orders, got a final briefing, and at 10 p.m. got under way.

We cleared the boom defence and set course for Timor. Our great adventure had started.

There were 21 of us aboard, including three officers, huddled up on a wooden, nine-knot ship 75 feet long and nine feet beam.

Our catering arrangements were poor. We had no facilities for keeping food fresh, and we had only a very crude stove to heat up the messes of dehydrated potatoes and tinned foods that our cook could throw together.

We all ate the same food—there were no "wardroom favours" on Kuru.

Our poor cook had more than his share of tribulations trying to keep us fed.

I remember one morning when he was trying to get our stove work ing with the aid of a blow-lamp that kept fizzling out, I saw him kneeling in front of the stove, his hands together as in prayer, his eyes uplifted, as he intoned: "Please, Mr. Stove, give me a fair bloody go!"

We had only three feet of freeboard, and so had to close all openings in bad weather. We had no

bathing facilities, and after a few days at sea the atmosphere below decks was pretty foetid.

At midnight I opened my sealed sailing orders, studied my course, and then called up all hands and told them what was cooking.

I set course for Timor, 370 miles away.

We had rain for most of the 48 hour trip across, which hindered navigation, as the stars were hidden.

We also got caught in currents of which I had no exact knowledge, so that when we eventually made a landfall we were some miles off our correct course, and heading into Jap-held territory, where as far as we knew, no commandos were operating.

We had to turn back along the mangrove lined coast, and eventually sighted signal fires ashore. I flashed a code signal and got the correct reply.

We had, I believed, reached our rendezvous, and the commandos were waiting for us.

But as our first boatload of stores neared the beach a voice from the shore rang over the water. The accent—and the choice of language—were unmistakable.

"Get away from here you stupid b—s," said the voice. "This is the wrong place."

I knew we were among friends, but the wrong group of them.

We had to reload the stores and cruise down the coast another six miles before we again saw signal fires, sent in our code signal, and got the right answer.

This time we were at the right place—off Batano.

But we were three hours late, and there was no sign of the corvettes. I feared they had come, and, after waiting, had had to leave again when we failed to arrive.

I was not to learn until later that a heavy air raid over Darwin just as the corvettes were due to leave had delayed them, and I was first on the scene after all.

We landed our stores, embarked the 80 refugees and waited around for the corvettes.

When the 2 a.m. zero hour came with still no sign of the corvettes I sent a messenger ashore to the local commando leader, Captain Laidlaw, of Newcastle. I asked him to send a message back to Darwin on his

set "Winnie the War Winner," the original set with which the commandos had first contacted Darwin, saying that I was returning home with the refugees.

I decided to use Winnie instead of my own wireless as the Japs were used to hearing Winnie and couldn't do anything about her, but they might have recognised the tone of a strange set and realised a ship was operating on the Timor coast.

Then I turned for Darwin, anxious to get well away from Timor before daylight. I dreaded what would happen should we be attacked when my ship was absolutely packed with refugees, who would hamper my crew in getting to their action stations.

I had scarcely any room to move myself, and when I settled down in my deck chair for an hour's sleep about 3 a.m. I had two little children sleeping on my lap.

At 4 a.m. I woke, put the still-sleeping children in my deck chair, and took the early morning watch.

About 8 a.m. when passengers and crew were having their breakfast of biscuit and water, I sighted Castlemaine on our port bow, moving slowly ahead. Armidale next showed up, a little farther to port.

We came up with Castlemaine, and transferred our passengers.

I then learned that, delayed by air attacks in Darwin and on the

way across, both corvettes had arrived at the rendezvous after Kuru had left, and the commandos had gone back to their hill hide-outs.

The corvettes had then turned away from Timor and were now steaming slowly along awaiting further orders.

Just then nine Japanese bombers came out of the cloud heading straight for us.

I immediately headed Kuru for the shelter of a rain shower a short distance away. The corvettes followed, and by the time the Japs let their first bombs go Kuru was hidden in the murk.

The corvettes were also hidden before the Japs could drop a second salvo.

As we lurked in the rain shower we all received new orders from Darwin:

"Castlemaine return to Darwin with refugees. Armidale and Kuru return to Timor and carry out previous instructions."

It was back to the hornets' nest for us.

I turned for Timor, but we never saw Armidale again. She took a different course from us through the rain shower—and an enemy torpedo-bomber sent her to the bottom.

(Next Instalment:

"Bombers Above, a Sub Behind")

## New South Wales News

I should have been making notes all last month because there seemed to be such a lot I wanted to say that I thought well at least this won't be hard to get a letter away. However I seem to have forgotten what I thought was interesting enough to write about with the exception of your letter and Angus Evans being in Sydney.

I hope you don't mind me answering your personal letter to me through the 'Courier' as you say it is hard to write every month and we may yet get some "manna" from the reeds we are hopefully casting for the N.S.W. section.

Well, your letter arrived one day and a few days later I won a prize in a two bob lottery. All in all I

considered last month the luckiest month I have had since 1942. Reading your letter was like sitting on the Posto steps at Maliana listening to you talk or telling us a yarn.

You are having a lot better luck with your contributors to the 'Courier' than I am having here even though I have called them all the rebortions I can think of, but a good blistering from you might stir the stale —s. In some of them its not that they can't or won't or haven't got anything to say, because afer the get together when Angus was down I heard questions asked, answered, argued, etc., that would start a lively discussion amongst the mob per pen, that would last some years.

Your remarks about young Eric Herd. Well he's a hairy —d boy no longer but he and I see a fair bit of each other and have worked for the same company for many years, Eric being my boss there, and now we work for the Sydney County Council doing much the same work in the transport section. No doubt the Sydney mob who use electricity have noticed the difference in the last 12 months or so in their brighter lights and services, but Eric and I can say that we don't for one moment think that we have improved it but it is noticeable. Even my mother says they are much better in the Bankstown district. Just like mothers, always proud of their boys. Alright O'Neil, and you.

Back to your letter.

I would like to run into Tony Bowman again. Max I have seen once here in Sydney and enjoyed his company. Old Jim, I would give a lot to see. I can remember well our last day on the island, walking to the coast but for the black billy bobbing along in front of my nose I would have wandered off many a time, and even though he fell down once I think his example of strength was an inspiration to us all and to this day I don't know how I kept up to get to the beach on time. I think my endurance is still there because I have no stamina now.

Regards Games Convention, Eric and I have discussed the event and your suggestion and if it is possible we will be there as we both have a hankering to see the blokes we knew when good blokes were worth knowing and still are.

You mention gardening and although I am not a keen kardener I love trees, unfortunately the position I live in is so exposed to winds and salt spray I have difficulty getting even trees that are supposed to stand up to those conditions, to grow except my Norfolk Island Pyramid trees which are a relative of the hibiscus family and put on a glorious show a month before Christmas. My wife, Dorothy, has green fingers, however, and does really well with her gardens despite the salt and winds.

You mention remembering you to various blokes, amongst them Ray Cole. Unfortunately we don't see as much of Ray as we would all like to and as he is one of the orig-

inal mob we miss his company at the rare gettogethers we do have. Johnny Rose we see for sure Anzac Day. Another bloody cross out. I hope you can read my scrawl without the aid of the C.I.B. deciphering Squad. My wife says my writing is deplorable. I have two boys, the eldest is five and youngest 24. Shane and Garth.

Sometime next month I start the extentions to our home. I only hope that the good health I have enjoyed since last October lasts for long enough to finish our home and give Dorothy the room she needs and me my workshop and that essential wet weather play space two energetic kids need so much.

I took two bobs' worth of tickets in an election fund raffle for the Member for Kogarah the first prize being a £25 watch. Well, my stars must have been right on the ball when they drew it as one of my tickets came out.

Angus Evans has been in town—and how I know—phew!

Jack Hartley rang me, told me the news, where to be and there I was. Those present: Jack Hartley, Angus Evans, Merv Jones, Bill Coker, Eric Herd and yours truly. (Oh, my self-inflicted wound.) We met at Ushers, I, for one, never having been there before. Eric and I arrived first splitting up, we circumnavigated the bar keeping a wary eye out for Angus, etc., and the other on the queer types who were already congregated there, not that they were dangerous but queer I have never seen such a mob of queers congregated together anywhere like they were there. However we met Merv who had done the same in the other bar and also drawn a blank. We ordered our drinks and then the others arrived, all thinking the same and remarking about what in the hell is coming over the town. Well they didn't (they being the effeminate types heretofore mentioned as queer) interfere with our drinking the medicine distributed.

Time gents, and others. 6.30. So we migrated to the Cathay Restaurant for a Chinese dinner, much to my eventual horror and discomfort. Thanks, Bill, but I lost it all at 2.30 a.m., plus a black out.

After a very amusing dinner we once again attacked the bar at Ush-



ers where we were literally pushed out at 10 o'clock.

I listened to some interesting stories of the Unit and its doings in the days before and after I was one of its members.

Also some scattered tit bits of what some had done since. I learned that Merv was pretty handy with his fists, also Angus's stories about Kiwi throwing or should I say falling under a tram for a bet in Brisbane. So much was told, so much did I laugh and listen that I think that is why I had such bad luck in losing my intake later in the night.

Well I had to do an "Elliot" down Martin Place to York-st. to get my bus and of course this unaccustomed exercise may have contributed to my later upset.

My bus took its usual one and a quarter hours to get to my stop, and although it was a very still night I am not sure why the centre of my street kept on moving to the right and the damn street lights kept rushing at me, but as I say, perhaps I got someone else's strontium and acid and if there is one thing I don't like in my medicine it is heavy water. You can't carry the damn stuff it's so heavy. Altogether as I say it was quite an eventful month.

There is every possibility of an increase in a certain family who most of us know but as it's rather early I don't want you all rushing in with congratulations to them until we are sure. As I have remarked before, holidays are good for you and as you sow so shall you be kept awake walking the floor.

Merv Jones will be starting on his home at Warriewood (between me and Narrabeen) this month, so if any of you blokes are muscle bound through not writing to the 'Courier' you can unwind at Merv's as every penny saved is a help.

Speaking of muscles Bill Coker is developing quite a few around his chest but has trouble keeping them from interfering with the belt on his trousers, and Angus seems to be getting quite a few in the same area. Bill mentioned something about concreting in the back yard at home but I think looking at him he's still studying the book "how to do it". Course, I could be wrong, but seeing is believing, and watching that wool and beef grow

is very stimulating if Angus is any criterion.

Curly has done the right thing, I hear now, and joined the Daily Mirror. Boy, are they in for a shock.

Anyone know where Bunny Anderson is these days? We are interested.

The story of the Kuru reminds me that I read a book loaned to me by Eric Herd about Darwin. Darwin Drama, by Owen Griffiths. There is a very good snap of The Bull and some of the boys with their creados in it and the full story of the small ships and what happened to them on their trips to supply us. It's worth reading.

Went along Kendall-rd., West Pymble, looking for Jack Hartley on Saturday on my way to Yaralla to visit my Dad. Couldn't see Jack's place because I didn't know the number but shopped at their local shopping centre and although far from finished it is certainly an attractive place to shop. It's a lovely area and pretty homes are there and going up but boy those funnel web spiders would have me worried. Jack has killed a few already.

Well I hope to be able to write a letter of interest about Anzac Day and mention people you all know and how they are getting along in this nutty old world for next month and as my phone is still connected my wife being very considerate and paid the bill promptly as Merv Jones has to get paid promptly for his hard work and overtime and it won't cost you very much to ring and tell me when and what we are all doing so as to keep N.S.W. in the news. Phone GX3629, I'll talk to anybody, there is no pride in our family.

Until next month mine's a strontium and brandy with rockets.

—RON TRENROVE.

### *Heard This?*

#### What Could Be Verse?

I wish I was a wittle egg  
Away up in a tree,  
I wish I was a wittle egg  
As wotten as could be:  
And when some brass executive  
Would start to shout at me,  
I'd frow my wotten wittle self  
And spatter down on he.

## Victorian Vocal Venturings

Committee meeting held Wayside Inn, Tuesday, April 14. Present: H. Botterill (in chair), Johnny Roberts, Max Daxies, Bert Tobin, Bluey Southwell, Jock Campbell, Jim Wall Freddie Broadhurst. Apologies from Des Williams, Gery Maley, George Humphreys, Gerry O'Toole.

Main business for the evening was final arrangements for Anzac Day Re-union. Usual place, George Street Drill Hall. Re-union to start 5 p.m. after the march. Refreshment arrangements were finalised and all other arrangements connected with this function were dealt with satisfactorily.

It was decided to hold a barbecue on Sunday, May 31, next, to be held at Kallista in the Dandenongs. This should be a very good turnout and we ask all to come along and enjoy themselves—a circular on this event will be sent to all members.

Meeting ended 10 p.m. with supper.

Our picture night held March 6 at the Matman Street Drill Hall Theatre was a great success. We had early misgivings when we discovered that the army in their usual style had let us have the theatre and then locked up the projection room—and we finished up having the films in the Sergeants' Mess. A bit late starting but all finished very well and everybody thoroughly enjoyed themselves. These picture nights are a great treat and anybody who has not been to one yet must make the next one we have a must.

Bill Tomassetti and family were very pleased to be able to meet some of the boys and their families. Bill had to return to New Guinea in April but it was good to see him again and I asked him to write about the present day Goroka (where Bill is District Officer) which he very obligingly did and I enclose it with this news. Bill will be pleased to hear from anybody who likes to write to him. Bill Tucker and Joan and family made their first appearance with us since their return from Queensland, all looking very well and they thoroughly enjoyed their stay in Queensland. Gery Maley was not looking too well that

night and speaking to him yesterday found out that he has been on the sick list and at present is having two weeks' sick leave. Look after yourself Gerry and get well in time for the re-union.

Campbell Rodd is back in Melbourne again. Is still with Australian Paper Mills in fact is working in the same building as Bert Tobin. Cam's new address is Flat 3, 16 Tentern-ave., Toorak, Victoria, and no doubt we will meet up with him at the re-union. Two other members who are not receiving their copies of the 'Courier' through change of address: Arch Clarry, Carboor, via Milawa, and Frank Sharp, 5 Martini Parade, Lithgow, N.S.W.

I had lunch with Jim Fenwick prior to his departure to Queensland. Jim has been transferred to 101 Wireless Rgt., Carbarlah, Toowoomba. It brings him nearer home and his wife Joan, comes from that area, so they should be much happier now. Jim said that Don Fryer is up that way and he will look him up. Anybody who happens to find himself up that way is assured of a warm welcome if they look Jim up.

Bert Tobin looked up Arch Clary and family recently when he was motoring near there. Arch is 22 mile out of Wangaratta, turn off from Myrtleford-rd. Arch has a property of 260 acres, practically virgin bush and he has put in a lot of work to get some of it cleared. Milks about 25-40 cows and has about 150 sheep and some pigs, and is kept very busy as he is on his own now (his brother was with him for a while). Bert said he looks very well. Arch has five kiddies, including two beautiful twin girls.

Well that's all the news for this issue until next time, all the best.

#### **BILL TOMASSETTI, of Goroka, New Guinea, writes:—**

You will recall that at the last evening the Victorian Branch held you suggested I should write something on Goroka for the interest of the blokes who knew it so well in 1943: so here goes.

I should start by saying I have been there for two years only but in that time I have had a good look around the district.

Where the Unit was camped is now the Police Training Depot and the small airstrip along that ridge is now the main parade ground. Goroka town extends from the eastern side of that ridge across the small valley (the Zokizo'i Creek) and around the nose of the next small grassy ridge to the top of the new airstrip and is spreading down both sides of this airstrip (aerodrome would now be more correct). Goroka, and immediate surroundings, now has an Australian population of about 500. It is an extremely young population and people over 60 are few—among the single people women are in a minority—and re-act accordingly. The town has, electricity (300 k.v.a. from a hydro generator) and ample water supplies from tanks and races. There are now three stores, two banks, one pub, one guest house and a club which is the centre of most of our social life. We have tennis, golf, a swimming pool and a variety of footballs which reflect the number of states represented in the territory population. Goroka is the centre of the coffee industry in the Territory and produced most of the 800 tons in N.G. last year. A substantial, and rising, percentage of this production is from small native owned and worked holdings—this, of course, is actively fostered by the administration.

The main aerodrome is one of the more important junctions in the Territory and planes are literally arriving and departing all the time—nothing bigger than a DC3 at present. Qantas use it frequently. Goroka is also the headquarters of the Eastern Highlands District which covers almost 7,000 square miles and includes a population totalling 32,800 people. It covers as far east as Kainantu and as far west as Kerowagi and this includes Denglagu so well known to all. We have nine administrative stations in the district and all can be reached by road or air (both in some cases). At present, for instance, we are making a road from the Upper Asaro valley over the pass into the Upper Chimbu valley and our blokes are trying to find a route for a road from the Upper Chimbu (Gembogl-Denglagu) down to Kundiawa. All the southern parts of the district (i.e. down to the Papuan border)

are now controlled and administered except for the extreme south-eastern corner where we have about 10,000 Kukukuku still running wild. We hope to have sufficient staff this year to move into the area and start something. Large numbers of the highlanders each year now work on the coast and come home with a pocket full of money and feeling that they know all the answers. In the Kainantu area last year gold mining earned the native population about £20,000—this shows what can be done by some of the stay-at-homes. We have also made a start on some political development and now have three members (native) on the District Advisory Council and have also started two Native Local Government Councils which are roughly similar in function to an Australian rural Shire Council: one of these is centred on Goroka and the other on Kundiawa.

Well, that is a brief look around the place as it is today, much different, I am sure, to 1943. An interesting part of an interesting Territory that has most of its development still in front of it.

If anybody wants to know anything in more detail they have only to write to me.



### *Heard This?*

As Brown took the vacant chair, the barber treated the company to an eloquent wink and a "Now gents get ready to smile" kind of look.

"You must find that inconvenient in your speech rather inconvenient at times, Mr. Brown."

"Oh, n-n-no, everybody has his own little p-p-peculiarity. Stammering is m-m-mine; what is y-y-yours?"

"Well, really, Mr. Brown, I am not aware that I have any."

"W-w-which hand d-d-do you stir y-y-your tea with?"

"The right hand, of course."

"W-w-well, that's y-y-your peculiarity. Most p-p-people u-u-use a t-t-teaspoon."



Dave says he has a neighbour who couldn't pay the garageman because she had given everything she had to the iceman.