



2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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Editorial

OBJECTIVITY

As the month of July starts a new year as far as West Australia is concerned and also as this month is the birthday month of our Unit, it is a good time to speak of objectivity.

When we were formed we were created with a special object, to do a special job of work. None can deny we did what was asked of us and more. Never did we shirk the burdens of war and many a time and oft did much in excess of requirements. Well can it be remembered how we stayed in the Ramu Valley after other shows who were later on the scene than us, had departed to centres of leave. This all points to the fact that we had an object well instilled into us and the goal was pursued relentlessly. Without that object and without that purpose we would have been a foot-loose rabble.

The success achieved as a fighting unit shows the drift of the wind as far as we as an association should proceed. Without object we will be as a rudderless ship, without steerage, without control. Mostly in past years we have found an object to work for, sometimes with a mercenary character such as "Subsis-

tence for Timor," "Kit Allowance" and a few other things. Most times the object has been selfless and has greatly added to the prestige of the Association.

If the desire is to keep the Association on a high plane then the time is fast approaching when we must re-examine our motives and find a worthwhile object and pursue it with the same relentless purpose that characterised our war-time efforts.

It is not the function of this column to say what that object should be but it is the function of this paper to draw attention to the necessity for objectivity and that is what I hope to spark off all round Australia by this article.

Let us set the sights high and aim for the general good of the community of which we can in our own way be true leaders. We have proved we can fight together and over the last 14 years we have proved that we can stick together. Now let us get down to work together and make this splendid Association of ours a true force in the community for those not so fortunate as ourselves.

SPECIAL MENTIONS:

SEND THOSE SWEEP TICKETS BACK RAPIDLY

**ANNUAL RE-UNION, Irwin Training Centre, August 15, 1959.
Liquid Refreshments at 6 p.m. Dinner Commences 7 p.m. Sharp**

West Australian Whisperings

Committee Comment

The first meeting of the new Committee took place at Monash Club on Tuesday, July 21. The roll up was excellent only Fred Napier, who was confined to barracks under doctor's orders, and Tom Nisbet, who could not make it, being absent. Under the capable chairmanship of Ron Kirkwood a bundle of business was transacted.

Final arrangements for the Annual Re-union to be held at Irwin Training Centre were the main feature of the debate. Mr. Bill Hollis who will do our catering, was present by invitation and outlined a very nice line in catering which the Committee agreed to with alacrity.

A small sub committee comprising Arch Campbell, Gerry Green and Col Doig, was appointed to have a good look at Kings Park and prepare a report for the next Committee meeting.

It was resolved that a working bee be held to prepare the hall at Irwin Training Centre for the Annual Re-union and also to clean up Kings Park prior to the Commemoration Service.

A sub committee comprising Tom Nisbet, Arthur Smith and Clarrie Varian, was appointed to go into the whole question of conduct of Children's Christmas Party and the purchase of presents for same. It was hoped that if an early start was made on this that the Association may be able to buy to better advantage than in the final scramble at Christmas time.

The President reported that £200 worth of Commonwealth Bonds would be maturing in September and suggested that this money be reinvested in Special Bonds which are easier to negotiate in event of the Association urgently requiring funds. This suggestion was to be followed up by the President who would report to the next meeting.

The following programme for the first six months of the year was agreed to:

August: Film Night (supplied by Ampol Ltd.).

September: Annual Sports Night.

October: Ladies' Night (venue to be arranged).

November: Guest Speaker (possibly Mr. Tydeman).

December: Children's Party.

Party near Christmas similar to that held at Joe Poynton's last year.

Mr. Campbell brought up the matter of the Association assisting Legacy and suggested that there were quite a number of small jobs which could be effectively done by small working bees. This was agreed to and Mr. Campbell is to advise where the Association can best assist within the limit of our resources. Mr. Doig outlined a plan which also could assist Legacy most materially and this was deferred for further investigation.

Mr. McDonald raised the matter of the Association conducting a Treasure Come Scavenger Hunt by car one spring weekend and this was considered to be an excellent opportunity for an outing and Mr. Campbell promised to report on a similar trip which he is undertaking in the near future.

Meeting concluded at 11.30 p.m.

Association Activities

The big news of the month was the Annual General Meeting. This all-important meeting was held as usual at Monash Club on July 7. Thanks to the efforts of the Secretary and others who handled the advance publicity, a good muster of approximately 30 members turned up. Many apologies were tendered from members who could not make it.

Initial proceedings went with a will under the competent chairmanship of President Ron Kirkwood. The publication of reports and financial statements had allowed members plenty of time for study and cut down the time needed to read these at the meeting. Those present voted this a good scheme.

Votes of thanks to the President, Treasurer, Auditor, Warden and Editor for the excellence of these reports were carried with acclamation.

Certain recommendations by the Committee for Life Membership were heavily debated and finally it was decided that time was not yet

ripe to appoint any further Life Members.

The election of officers resulted as follows: President, R. S. Kirkwood; Vice President, K. C. Bowden (both re-elected unopposed for a second term); Secretary, Jack Carey; Treasurer, Fred Napier (for the umpteenth time of asking); Editor, C. D. Doig; Auditor, G. Boyland; Warden, J. W. Poynton; Committee, Messrs. T. G. Nisbet, A. Campbell, G. Green, A. Smith, C. Holly, C. Varian, R. McDonald; Country Vice Presidents, Goldfields, P. Campbell; Great Southern, D. Turton; Wongan area, J. Fowler; South West, W. H. Rowan-Robinson Geraldton area, P. Barden.

Competition for places on the Committee was particularly keen and it was good to see so many persons eager to accept office, a feature definitely lacking in previous years.

Much discussion took place regarding the future of the fund started by Don Turton with his oats project last year. The argument often became quite heated and motions and amendments flew backwards and forwards. It was eventually decided that a fund be started and the object of the fund be further discussed when it had reached a figure in the vicinity of £400, when it was generally agreed much more planning could be done.

Kings Park Honour Avenue came in for debate. Most speakers agreed that progress had been made but considered that this had been slow and a more purposeful effort would have to be made if this was to become a show place.

The meeting closed in the wee sma hours.

WARDEN'S REPORT

During the past 12 months it has been my duty as Warden to report to your Committee the state of our area in Kings Park. I have found, although we had busy bees to clean up our area, we did not gain the results we had expected. Since we have implemented Mr. Burridge's scheme whereby each section has their allotted area to attend. There are some sections whose efforts have been disappointing. In the western half of Honour Avenue the grass is still bare in many places,

and it needs greater effort by all in the coming year if we are to achieve the aims of our Association. We will need to plant a lot more grass and concentrate on a certain area at each busy bee. I would like to thank all those who made my job more easy by turning on the water during the times when I could not get there, and also thank the Committee for their thoughtfulness and co-operation during my term of office.

SOMETHING OF THE NEW FACES ON THE EXECUTIVE

ARCH CAMPBELL: A terrific stalwart of the Association in three States. Arch was a moving force of the original branch in N.S.W. and did a tremendous amount of work when shifted to Victoria. This is Arch's second term on the Committee in this State. On the previous occasion he could not give Association activities his full energies as he was country travelling at the time. Should be a great acquisition and bring new and brilliant ideas to the Association.

CLARRIE VARIAN: Clarrie has always taken a great interest in Association affairs and has been one of the most consistent attendants at all working bees. Clarrie has held executive office with the Tramways Union and therefore should bring sound executive experience to the Committee.

R. (Spriggy) McDONALD: Returning to the Committee after a spell of a year. Was previously Vice President for a couple of stanzas so has had oceans of experience on the Committee. Full of bright ideas and with an infinite capacity for work. A Life Member of the Bassendean Cricket Club for which he has toiled unceasingly as player and executive.

C. (Slim) HOLLY: Joins the Committee after a record term of three years as Warden of Kings Park, where he has done a wonderful job. Meeting with the Committee on numerous occasions in his capacity as ex-officio member, owing to his status as Warden, he will be no stranger and is not afraid of work. We welcome him and can assure him of plenty to do.

JACK CAREY: Takes over once again as Secretary. What was said of Jack last year holds good once again this year. An outstanding secretary judged by any standards and we must count ourselves lucky that he made himself available once again.

ARTHUR SMITH: Returns to the Committee after three terms as Secretary. Could not afford the time to act as Secretary once again, but his experience will be invaluable as a Committee member. The Association can never really properly thank Arthur for all the good he has done for us.

All other members are as of yore and the pen portraits of last year hold good with possibly a little more lustre added after another year in office.

Your Association can look forward with confidence with the type of men at the helm as it has this year.

We look forward to the Country Vice Presidents giving the necessary boost in their particular areas.

ANNUAL RE-UNION DINNER

As mentioned in the previous "Courier" this will take place on **Saturday, August 15th**, venue Irwin Training Centre, Karrakatta, the place where most of you got your final discharge and known only too well to you all. Parking will be no problem as there is a tremendous courtyard in the rear. Look for the lovely brick building called Hobbs Artillery Barracks on the opposite side of the railway line to Karrakatta Cemetery and you are right there.

This promises to be the Re-union to beat all other Re-unions. The catering will be terrific and drinks long and plentiful, the company always good, the venue attractive from all stand points, so mark it off on the calendar—**Saturday, August 15**—and make it a **MUST**.

You country folk make up a car load from your near neighbours who were in the Unit and break all attendance records. Let us top the century this year.

Remember also the Annual Commemoration Service which will be held at Kings Park on Sunday, August 16, at 3.15 p.m. To all who

possibly can attend this is a duty you should pay to your friends. Arrangements will be as for previous years and if you have not a vehicle then contact the President, Secretary or Editor and transport will be arranged.

SWEEP

As you are now well aware the annual sweep is well under way and we hope this will be the brightest ever.

Please dig those tickets out of the drawer or wherever you have hidden them and sell them with alacrity and return the butts to G.P.O. Box T1646.

One of the gang who dislikes selling tickets as much as anybody came up with a good idea. He reckoned that usually if he did not sell the tickets he usually bought them himself. He propositioned one of his juniors (a lass in this instance) and offered her a dollar a book to sell them and she jumped at the chance to earn an odd bob. Now his idea is this, instead of buying one book at a quid, take four books, round up a good seller at 5/- a book and you are no more out of pocket but the Association is a bundle in front. Now that is what I reckon is great economics if you can put it into operation. This incentive plan will be considered by the Committee for future sweeps.

Anyhow get those butts back to the organiser PRONTO and save the Association funds in paying postage for reminders to you.

Personalities

Vale S. E. (Syd) Hilliard

It was with the deepest regret that we learned of the tragedy that befell the Hilliard family with the loss of Syd and his family. We who knew him so well in the Unit, especially those members of "B" Troop, feel we have lost a real friend. We can only say, "God rest his restless, tortured soul," and hope the future will bring solace and eventual contentment to his bereaved family.

A mention in the N.S.W. notes that Barry Lawrence is attending a school (Army) in Sydney and hopes to meet up with as many as poss-

ible in both Sydney and Melbourne, where he will be staying after his school finishes. Barry was good enough to call and see what messages he could deliver prior to leaving and was promptly given a bundle of chores to perform and have no doubt he will leave the Eastern States with the nickname of "Haver sack" after he has been on their backs on the Editor's behalf.

Don Turton and his wife Vida currently touring the Eastern States by Land Rover. He breezed off much more rapidly than expected as he was able to make arrangements for a housekeeper for his children at fairly short notice and took advantage of the opportunity to get going. Don also will try and look up a few of the lads as he tours to Brisbane and return via the Murray Valley and Snowy River project.

"Nip" Cunningham sighted in town and looking extra well. "Nip" was down for a bit of medical treatment, nothing too violent and looking up more than a few of the gang while he was here. Said it was 10 years since he had previously visited the Big Smoke and was a bit shin sore the first few days. He saw Alby Friend, "Bloss" Lawrence, Dave Ritchie, Jerry Haire, Mick Morgan and Fred Griffiths, and a bundle of others while in the city.

"Dusty" Studdy is at it again. Selling sweep tickets like a bloke who really enjoys it. Thank God for the Dustys of this world, they really make the organiser's job a pleasure. The old "Dusty" never alters, seems to be of the ageless variety and seems exactly as when he first joined the Unit. Says he is off to Melbourne for a holiday shortly and will look up a few of his old Sig. mates of which there are quite a few in Melbourne.

Had a brief note from Ken MacKintosh sending in his sweep tickets and wishing the Unit well and complimenting the Editor on the high standard of the "Courier". What about a debut at the next Annual Re-union, Ken? We would be tickled pink to see you.

Norm Thornton also sent in his sweep tickets and said he hoped to see you all at the next Re-union and we hope to see you, Norm. Bring Geordie and Ron Sprigg with you.

Arthur Smith has been off work with a liver complaint which badly interfered with his examinations for Senior Technician in P.M.G. We were sorry to hear that once again the various wogs had set out to knock you down, Arthur, but like the india rubber man you always seem to bob up once again. Arthur also had the misfortune to lose his sister, who died in Melbourne quite recently. Our most sincere condolences, Arthur.

Rumour has it that "Slim" James is away on a holiday but venue has not been voutsafed to this writer. Let the pen go when you return, "Slim" and tell us all about it.

A brief note from "Johnno" Johnson to send in his sweep tickets and say "Good day" to the gang. Thanks "Johnno" but what about a good letter to tell us all about yourself or better still come to that annual Re-union.

Nino McCaig also penned a brief epistle with his sweep tickets and hopes to see some of the gang soon.

Bert Burgess in town for a Farmers' Union conference and called in on the Committee for a brief second to say "Hello". Bert is very wrapped up in the new project for disposal of wool, an article on which is printed elsewhere. Bert hopes to bring down a good gang for the Re-union.

"LEST WE FORGET"

JULY

Thomas, Tpr. L. G., died of illness, New Britain, July 9, 1945.

Heard This?

A census-taker asked: "In what State were you when you were born?"

"Well," hesitated the blushing spinster, "well, er-er nude."

★

The teacher of English wrote on the blackboard: "I ain't had no fun all winter." Then she called upon the class: "What should I do to correct that,"

"Get a boy-friend," helpfully suggested a precocious youngster.

Random Harvest

SHORTY STEVENS, of Yallunda Flat, South Australia, writes:—

Having just received and perused the last "Courier" I'd better pen a few lines or I'll find time will have gone and the next issue arrived and I'll have not written.

Firstly the last month has been a little on the busy side. We have just shifted into a new district—different district to be more correct—and I'd appreciate it if you would note the new address.

When the government announced the land settlement in S.A. would end in June I made enquiries and as it looked like me not getting a block I took a chance at getting by on my own and have bought a property on Eyre Peninsula, approx. 25 miles up from Lincoln. Bought is hardly the word, the bank has bought it and I will do the work.

Still I'm hopeful of making out. It has a good rainfall (over 20 ins.) and is supposed to be a good sheep district so I'll be able to get it a bit easier when I catch up a bit.

The property is badly run down and fencing and general maintenance will be the order of the day for quite some time. Still a chap is working for himself now and it does make a difference.

We have been lucky so far and while the rest of the State is singing out for rain we have had quite a reasonable start.

It was rather a quick decision, we inspected and bought and moved over all in a matter of weeks, in fact we've been here one month and we still are waiting for the papers for final settlement.

I don't think there are any of the boys on this side of the Gulf so I'll not have any news of them to pass on.

Am enclosing sweep butts with cheque and hope you have a successful sweep. I have taken the book myself and you'll note I started off by giving my old address but have crossed out same and left the address on the others.

Am afraid my time is limited so will leave any more news, etc., till next time.

CHARLIE SADLER, of Box 24, Wongan Hills, writes:—

My sweep butts and cheque for same are enclosed.

I have a pile of mail about a foot high to go through so must not delay too long on this.

The season has been very late and a little on the dry side and unusually warm for this time of the year. Plenty of pests around, lucerne flea, red mite, web worm and cut worm, up to the present we have not found it necessary to spray.

Tomorrow is a big day in Wongan—the opening of the Community Hotel. I believe they are supplying free beer for an hour or so, so I guess there will be a fair crowd.

Well, that's the lot for this time.

PETER CAMPBELL, of Gibson, writes:—

Enclosed sweep tickets for Kalgoorlie sweep, also cheque for £5 for tickets, subs., and the rest, if any, for general funds.

Fair opening season down here and if we get a bit of rain to finish off should be payable.

The district is very quiet at present. The damn Yanks give us a scare now and again, but will come good some day.

Regards to all, hoping sweep is a mighty success.—Should be at the Kalgoorlie Cup this year.

JACK SHEEHAN, of 36 Piccadilly Street, Kalgoorlie, writes:—

Enclosed please find sweep butts and cheque. The balance is for the Association as I'm well in arrears with subs.

Noticed that Herby Thomas has had a mention in recent issues of the "Courier". If you see him about would you ask him to drop me a line.

Kalgoorlie is a much quieter place than it used to be but this round looks like being a pretty lively one. Should any of the boys be here for the races I can generally be found at a spot about five miles along the Broad Arrow Road and would be very pleased to see any of them.

SEND THOSE SWEEP TICKETS BACK RAPIDLY

Historically Yours!

CHAPTER 3. A UNIT ON THE MOVE (Continued)

Katherine was a camp that seemed to bring out contrasts in the various members. The best came to the surface in many chaps while others seemed to sink into the depths of despair.

Keeping morale at a reasonable level tried the leadership of everyone from the C.O. to the lowliest L/Corporal.

To make certain that the pure chore of camp building didn't eat too deeply into the military training it was decided that piquets and guards would be mounted. One full troop was required to handle the camp fatigues, mount guard and supply the piquet. Piquet duties included the policing of the hotels in Katherine itself and supply overnight sentries on certain stores. The guard handled all other sentry posts and the main gate to the camp site. The actual need for a guard was most doubtful but the training and mounting of a guard provided usual military discipline. This was a full officer's guard comprising a section. The section supplying the orderly officer and orderly N.C.O.'s. The other section supplied cook house and other fatigues.

The mounting of the guard on one occasion provided Paddy Knight and his minions with a great opportunity for their idea of fun. On this occasion "B" Platoon was duty platoon with No. 4 Section (of which Knight was a member) did the camp fatigues; No. 5 Section provided the piquet with Lt. Doig Orderly Officer and Cpl. Loud Orderly Sgt.; No. 6 Section with Lt. Mackintosh in command provided the guard. One of the duties of the fatigue party was to place out the "Rose Bowls" in the various strategic positions for overnight usage. As the guard prepared to march on for the usual hand over take over Paddy and Co. proceeded to play them on using the "rose bowls" as drums. This caused terrific merriment to all those not on

duty but was more than a trifle embarrassing for the assembled piquet and the marching guard and of course to the C.O. and Orderly Officers. Paddy as chief progenitor of the escapade had a strip torn off him by the Orderly Officer and at a later hour by his own officer, Lt. Nisbet, who unfortunately was in having a shower at the time of the incident. Although it provided a great laugh at the time it was the beginning of the end as far as big Paddy's domination of the rank and file went. The whole incident had violent repercussions in high places and Paddy became a marked man. Discipline was tightened to a tough degree. For the first time "Pack Drill" was introduced as a means of punishment and officers cracked down on even the most minor of breaches.

All the while camp building went on apace and we were to soon learn of the versatility of those who had joined this Unit. Such men as Pte. H. H. (Mick) Calcutt, Pte. Norman Thornton, Pte. Jim Corney and Pte. J. Williams proved to be outstanding carpenters and joiners and soon took charge of the actual hut erection. To see chaps handle concrete mixing one would think they had been at it all their lives. The Sappers and others did the drainage scheme laid out by Engineer Bernard Callinan. The drains dug and shored up with pandanus palms made a perfect get-away for any excess moisture which was expected when the monsoonal season arrived.

Before leaving Adelaide the officers put in and purchased a phonograph and each bought a bundle of records they liked best. Practically any night this gramophone could be heard beeping out the pop tunes of the age like, "Oh, Johnny," as purveyed by the Andrew Sisters, "I Watched a Man Paint a Fence," Gracie Fields with several numbers including "Ave Maria". Capt. Baldwin had a lovely

selection of near classics which used to come out quite frequently to the great enjoyment of all. This phono was to prove a marvellous boon for a long time to come.

Peter mantle organised a concert and unearthed a wonderful amount of talent. Peter himself no mean actor and comedian, compered the show. Big Paddy Knight had a real good basso profundo voice and Bill Holly a nice baritone. Jack Penglase was a nice tenor. Wilf March playing the stomach warlitzer and Sapper Dick Adams performed on the concertina. Generally speaking it was a good night's fun.

As time went on some thought was given to getting on with the real job in hand. This was the role for which the Unit was supposed to have come to this God forsaken hole. We were to patrol the whole of the near north westwards to the Roper River and east to the Daly.

The first such task was to be a reconnaissance right to the West Australian border via Victoria River Downs Station and to the Jasper Gorge. Lt. Doig was placed in charge of this operation with Lts. Campbell and Turner as observers with Driver Bob Chalmers and Pte. Clarrie Palmer, Doig's batman, as general factotum. The route took the party through Manbalu Station on to Delamere Station, thence to V.R.D. The first stage to Manbalu saw the party bogged in the quicksands of the King River and it took all the afternoon to dig the truck out. It was decided to camp the night on the bank of the river, and boy, those mosquitoes. Dr. Dunkley had given the party a supply of mosquito repellent ointment which was to be tried out. Well, these mossies proved to be completely uncivilised and didn't seem to understand they were being repelled. The next evening saw the gang at Delamere Station where a queer old hatter who had been a donkey teamster in the years gone by was the sole white occupant. When first the party arrived he did not seem to be too happy as probably he didn't like to get caught with the great gang of lubras who were in attendance. These took off over one of the many ridges along with the herd of goats which seemed to comprise the main population.

The old boy proved to be quite an old character on further acquaintance and seemed to know everyone who had ever been in the north.

The third evening found the small party at V.R.D. The manager was Mr. Martin who had come to this huge station then the largest in the world, from the Kimberleys. V.R.D. was like a small township and was gloriously placed on the Victoria River which must rank as one of the most beautiful rivers in Australia, fringed all the way with weeping trees and gums with countless thousands of white cockatoos and galahs flying and squawking their way through the verdant foliage. Small fresh water crocodiles abounded and we managed to shoot a couple but didn't worry about recovering them as it looked to be a case of courting suicide to get in those waters with all those crocs. Somebody said they were harmless but we didn't put it to the test.

V.R.D. provided the party with a lovely evening meal complete with cold beer and it was here we met Capt. Harry Morgan who had trained with the cadre at Wilsons Promontory and who was doing a complete recon of this area and into the Kimberleys. Capt. Morgan informed us that the Jasper Gorge provided one of the best natural barriers that could be imagined turning the tracks that entered this area from both West Australia and the Territory into a bottleneck defile.

Overnight the first monsoonal rains came and the mailman who was also at V.R.D. having come in from Vesteys great station Wave Hill, had with true Territorian aplomb decided to sit down until the "wet" was over. We being impatient to get back and report and also not so used to the effects of the wet decided to push back to camp the next day. We borrowed chains for the tyres and a kangaroo jack from a contractor at V.R.D. (quite a character this chap, as much at home without boots as any nigger and said to be the best bushman and tracker in the north, having been brought up by natives and had acquired their lore and had improved on their techniques). The mail man must have been affected by our party's enthusiasm and decided to take a risk and accompany us.

The trip back was something of a nightmare. The torrential rains had turned the black soil plains (which were a speedway on the way out as they were completely without corrugation and perfectly flat and speeds were only governed by the ability of the vehicle) into a quagmire. Boggings were the order of the day and many a time it was only one truck getting to a bit of firm footing and pulling the other out that enabled the trip to be completed. On more than one occasion a wire strainer was used to pull a truck out of a bog by using a convenient tree as an anchor and a stout length of fencing wire which we had provided ourselves with at V.R.D.

One of the most remarkable sights was to see Bingarras (those huge dragon-like lizards) which can usually travel at a rate of knots, bogged, as their web-like feet got inches of cheesy clay adhered to them.

We were dead lucky as the rain ceased for a time and allowed the road to dry out and after passing Delamere the road improved out of sight. The speed with which the green grass shot through and turned the baked brown land of three days ago into a sea of green was astonishing. Scrub turkey (Bustards), brolga (Native Companion) abounded in this area and it was a sight for sore eyes to see the great herons dance and caper in the new green grass. The party had many shots at turkeys and kangaroos and managed to get quite a reasonable bag even if the expenditure of ammo was excessive (Lt. Doig had a please explain at a later date from Major Spence about this). These found their way into the pot at Katherine on our return.

Crossing the King River on the return journey was a hair-raising experience as this dry creek of a few short days ago was a raging torrent. The banks were terrifically steep and we wasted considerable mileage in finding a safe fording spot.

The party returned to Katherine dirty and muddy but happy to have done something most territorians wouldn't do at that time of the year and that is attempt the trip from V.R.D. to Katherine. The performance was invaluable as a train-

ing piece and had acquired considerable information of terrain and climatic conditions which could be expected in the next six months when we would be expected to perform most of the work.

During this time there had been a number of breaches of discipline at Katherine and quite a few fronted the C.O. on charges "Contrary to good order and discipline" as laid down in A.M.R.&O. The C.O. had decided to take the firm line and awarded sentences in military prison which was situated at Adelaide River. The "prisoners" were despatched under a guard of the biggest Sgts. and N.C.O.'s the Unit could muster and they were an impressive bunch. As time was to show they did not serve very long of their sentences.

Some of the senior officers had been to Darwin to get the feel of the area and to be further briefed as to our role in the Territory.

Just before these happenings the subalterns of the Unit who were incensed at the treatment they were receiving, especially at the hands of the C.S.M., asked for and obtained a conference with the C.O. to try and straighten out their grizzles. This very nearly developed into a slanging match but Major Spence took firm control and promised to see that the C.S.M. treated the Lts. with a bit less condescension in future (as a matter of fact one Lt. reckoned "he would knock the bastard down if he used his patronising manner any more."). This showed the level to which morale was descending and only the onset of the wet managed to revive good spirits.

All good or bad things must come to an end. Absolutely out of the blue the camp was thrown into chaos. It was the night of the fifth of December, 1944. and the camp was quiet and possibly everyone was thinking of the onset of Christmas and wondering just what it would bring. Lights out had been whistled at 10 p.m. and the 2I/C. and C.O. were having a quiet chat, the Orderly Officer was on his rounds when a chap on a bicycle came over to the camp from the Katherine Post Office with an urgent telegram for the C.O. The effect of the message was like an electric spark in a highly tuned motor. The message requested that

our signallers come on the air to take an urgent message. The actual text of the message is not available to this writer but it certainly started a stampede. The C.O. called for the C.S.M. and Orderly Officer to put all troops on parade. The troop straggled out wondering what misdemeanour had brought about this rude awakening. The C.S.M. handed the parade to the C.O., who said:

"You wanted action. You'll get action. Up north. Pack all your gear and prepare to move first light in the morning."

A mighty cheer rang out and if ever the C.O. came close to being loved it was at that moment as the feeling of release from the prison of Katherine was intense. As events were to prove: "How bloody silly can you get?"

The hurry and bustle of packing in the late hours of the night and the early hours of the morning was accompanied by a nervous chatter as chaps began to wonder out loud as to our destination.

Some of the hard heads reckoned it would be a good moment to broach the famous beer cellar and clear the contents as this might be the last opportunity for a good long cool drink.

The first rays of light saw a working party move in the direction of the station at Katherine. There were no empty carriages available, there were no empty cattle trucks available, but there were some loaded trucks filled with cattle which had been loaded the night before ready for an early shift to Darwin the next day. These were swiftly unloaded. What manure could be shovelled from the clefted floors was removed. Sand shovelled in to cover the murky mess on the truck floors and then the Unit's main body straggled down to load on these contraptions complete with **kit bags, packs, sea kits and even Officers' trunks.**

The trip to Darwin was more like a picnic than a troop move-

ment. The trucks in the N.T. have no roofs on them and as it rained steadily most of the way and the sloppy manure sand on the floors became unbearable troops perched on the tops of the trucks for all the world like a flock of sparrows.

Our sister battalion, the 2/4th M.G.'s supplied us with a meal at Adelaide River and we then proceeded to Winelli Camp at the 20 mile out of Darwin as the guests of the 2/21st Battalion who were later to be so ill fated as Gull Force on Ambon.

This was to be our last night on Australian soil for a very lengthy period, although of course we did not know this at that time. The hospitality of the 2/21st was overwhelming and most went to bed with more than slightly thick heads.

This body of men who only seven months before had left Northam Camp to train had begun to fill its destiny. The trials and tribulations of training were coming to an end, to be replaced with God only knew what. Many were having second thoughts on whether Katherine was such a horror camp after all. Had not we got it nice and comfy, beds and all? Yes, all good things come to an end! What of the future? What of our destination? All gnawing question marks with only the very few with the answers.

(End of Chapter 3)

(The Editor's thanks to Dudley Tapper for further assistance in compiling this history. Much more assistance is required and quickly. Events in Timor are swiftly looming up and if assistance isn't given quickly many blanks are going to require filling. One thing I would like and urgently, is a nominal roll of those who joined the Unit ex-Koolana. Campbell Rod here is your chance for everlasting glory.—Editor.)

(Printed for the publisher by "The Swan Express", 10 Helena Street, Midland Junction, W.A.)

SPECIAL MENTIONS:

AUGUST MEETING: August 4, at Monash Club, Picture Night supplied by Ampol with plenty of sporting features

You can bring a guest

New South Wales News

Oh Marie, Oh Maria, what a party, what a party.

From that opening, ladies and blokes of both sexes, you can gather "Bloss" arrived and we, that is to say we being those who were able to get there, there being at Hartley Mansions, West Pymble.

Firstly let me mention those who we know would have been there but for other commitments. Bill Bennett, because Bill was doing a good turn for a friend stock taking (meaning to account, not take from), and did not expect to finish the job until very late. Frank O'Neil (otherwise known as Curly, amongst other things) because he works until very late Saturday nights. John and Nance Rose and Trengoves being amongst the last to get there, not because we were lost, but a little on the late side leaving the coast, were a wee bit behind in the drink stakes, but soon made leeway. Those present were as follows: star of the evening (and not the one on the — door) was "Bloss" (don't call me Blossom) Lawrence, looking younger and every inch an officer Captain (may I say) should look, in fact if ever Hollywood, America, films Ridge and the River, I'll see a friend about a test for this upstanding and shining example to the younger generation of soldiers. Maria and John Hartley and Chris, their eldest son, playing taxi with the traymobile and in-laws, who have recently moved into their lovely home and it certainly is something to see, with a Double Diamond Red featured kitchen floor, so modern it was a shame to use it.

Well those who were there at least now know why Hartley developed that front verandah for which the taxi business received the blame It won't work any more. What eats, Maria, and how that mob can eat.

I won't mention names, but a few women who come from the back of beyond, well they had young Chris Hartley spearing hot dogs or should I say cocktail frankfurts (it's easy to slip) for them so as they wouldn't waste time, then encouraging him with flattery every time the traymobile was loaded to wheel it to them, no wonder

their husbands said, now you know why we are always broke.

At 9 o'clock a certain team was picked to (volunteers) attack the Greengate Hotel and withdraw carrying four dozen of the enemy's ale supplies. This foray which should have taken 30 minutes or so lasted about, or, ah, well closing time is 10.15, and our heroes staggered back about 10.30, mission successful and able to carry on. Those cited for extra duties in future will be as follows: Jack Keenahan, Snowy Went, Jim Hallinan and I think Bill Hoy.

Eric Herd and wife, Eric was seen to be watching Heather carefully and after her tenth Pyms decided she had had enough. My how women love the expensive grogs. Just as well J.H. mixed half a bottle of Coco Cola with the Pyms cup because they would have tasted the olive oil added.

Paddy Kennealy who looked a little sad as he should have been without his wife there, who was at home looking after the little troubles, nevertheless managed a drink or two for medicinal purposes only.

Jack Keenahan and Norma, now there's a double, if a party didn't go with them well it would only be a zombies turn out and I think the zombies would soon be zooming and zaming when Norma started to dance. By the way girls don't let anyone tell you it's not true about (you know who) being issued with three boots when he was in the army.

It had to happen, against all Nance Rose's entreaties. John Rose (he's her husband) at least if he's not I don't know where those two fine strapping boys and delightful brunette young daughter came from must sing and just as well he did because that sure unlocked the springs of tension. Zing (now I seem to be running out of ink, whoops, a fresh flow) Well that man sure got things going, then the dancing, which reminds me I must stop dancing by myself. Some one remarked about me being queer or a queer, ah well I guess the drink affected both of us.

Did anyone notice how that Jim

English kept on spotlighting how much June was drinking? You all know why? Every time the eyes were on June, Spotlight English whipped another full glass off the sideboard. June's nose red after four drinks. Jim, don't look in a mirror after 44. By the way he comes from Seven Hills, one more after the six from Parramatta. Never mind, June, we know it was only a cold, night not drinking icy lemonade made your nose red.

Don Woodhouse and wife seemed to enjoy all and everything and I guess we will see more of them now and all of us I hope.

Bill Coker who spent a couple of hours trying to find Hartley Mansions (lives in the district) was also minus his wife who had two extra children (at least Bill said they were) making five altogether. I suppose that's as good a way as any explaining things, the extra two. Drunk again father.

Roy and Mavis Harris well it was nice to meet you Mavis. Sorry you have such a load to carry but never mind it could have been three or four stone heavier. Roy tells a mighty good yarn so many in fact I forget them. I am enclosing your 10/- in this letter Roy.

Me, I disgraced my wife by turning up without a tie. Rather informal you know, not quite pukka, but, damn it sir, where are we, Poona? No, old bean, Pymble, and west. However it could have been worse, I could have arrived without my tweeds. Now girls, form a queue this only happens once in a party time. To my rescue ties were immediately put at ease.

Snowy Went and Dorothy. What a wife, what a pal, what a sport. When I enquired quietly where IT was she took my hand and showed me. Steady, steady. The little room at the end of the hall. I bet they were ahead of us then Dorothy. So was I when you grabbed my hot little hand and said look over there, flathead.

Jimmy Hallinan and wife dance well and once more it was nice to meet another lady of the 2/2nd.

Bill Hoy and his better half Dorothy were in the thick of everything and I guess those girls must have been saying poetry backwards the way they screamed with laughter every few minutes.

I had to keep a sern eye on my wife also Dorothy. She kept on leaving me on the dance floor to dance with Silent George. She drinks, shush. Seriously George and Norma were good to watch when they danced. Pity Jack's got two left feet, Norma, still you can't have everything, can you? Don't answer that.

I don't know what provoked this question by Snowy Went. I overheard this part. "Bloss, how do the Yanks do it?" Bloss: "Same as anyone else." Now what in the blue blazes would a question like that be asked of at a party? Military strategy between two students, or just strategy and keen students.

The rumour flew around that Merv Jones and Marj could not come because Mrs. Jones' little boy had caught the flu. Well, if you stand around all day swinging the lead instead of the hammer or paint brush getting lung fulls of the southerly view what else can you expect.

Well I guess you read these letters otherwise I wouldn't be getting so many bouquets from you all at gatherings. I think I understand just how big a struggle the "Courier" has had to keep going and what a job that has been done in the West by the boys over there to keep us interested and in the picture. I started to write this letter at 7.30 p.m. It is now 9.30 p.m. Two hours for five pages. It would be easier if I could write shorthand notes at a gathering but I can't and most of what I write I have to improvise and it is not until the letter is on its way that there are things you wish you had thought of at the time of writing.

Which brings me to what I want to say. That it is not easy to compile the "Courier" and now I for one appreciate what has to be done to get it to the printers. If you think it's easy try to write two pages of foolscap with interesting tit-bits (keep Sabrina out of this). Whoever types or rewrites these letters is worth his weight in gold because he has to put them into paragraphs, punctuate where necessary (and I write as I talk).

So if you could help by dropping a line to the "Courier" it would at least make it easier for those who are responsible to get it out

Well girls, what about rationing these blokes so as they will write a line or two now and again. They can write. I trapped them into writing their own names recently.

I would like to mention briefly that the 2/2nd was well represented at the funeral of Syd Hilliard and family and that for me to add or try to add to anything that has been said would not help as words cannot fully express our feelings to those who have to carry on.

Before ringing off for the night I would like to say a few serious words about one of the boys who is about to leave the city for that

good old country air. John Rose. Well John, it looks as if we are to lose a real Anzac Day stalwart. May I on behalf of those who discussed it the other night say we are sorry (excuse me while I put my supper on to warm) to see you go, but we are pleased that it is a step we feel sure you will not regret. However we hope to see you again before you go to Hillston and say adieu in the right and proper manner.

Blast my buttons I haven't read the evening paper. What a man does for you lot.

—RON TRENGROVE.

Qualified Support For Addis Plan

(The following article was submitted by Bert Burges and probably will be of great interest to all wool producing members.)

The Farmers' Union of W.A. (Inc.) Katanning Zone Council, discussed the Addis Wool Plan at the normal quarterly meeting of the Wool and Meat Section, held at Katanning on Feb. 20.

Previously, a special committee had been appointed to examine the details of the Woolgrowers' Voluntary Co-operative (known as the Addis Wool Plan) and a report was submitted to the meeting by committee member Mr. H. A. Burges.

A resolution was adopted by the meeting, requesting that the report be submitted for publication.

Mr. Burges' report was as follows:—

1. OBJECTS:

1. To ascertain the practicability or otherwise of implementation of the above plan.

2. To determine if such a plan would be of benefit to growers; i.e. will it give stability at a price above present auction returns?

3. To furnish a report on its findings with a recommendation to the Katanning Zone Council.

2. PROGRESS MADE:

1. From information given and correspondence submitted, it is obvious that a great deal of work on behalf of woolgrowers has been done by Mr. Addis and he is to be commended for his zeal. His basic statements are substantiated by documentary evidence.

His correspondents include men in responsible positions in several countries and all agree that something should be done to stabilise wool prices and are keen to help farmers' organisations towards this end.

2. I am satisfied that the agent with whom Mr. Addis is negotiating is reliable and can dispose of a large quantity of wool for more satisfactory prices than is being realised at present auctions.

It is submitted that previously, buying rings have forced the manufacturers out of the auctions and many of them no longer operate in Australia, but are still desirous of obtaining wool from here.

3. The plan, which at least shows initiative and a start towards stability and more grower control could be launched in a very short time with a minimum outlay of growers' money.

3. FINANCE:

(a) Letters of credit would accompany buying orders thus assuring finance for purchases.

(b) For domestic finance see Paragraph 5.

4. POINTS TO BE CLARIFIED:

Before further advancement several important points need to be clarified, viz.:

(a) with the buyers,
(1) Amount and types of wool required to ensure sale of the entire clip.

(2) Specific prices for lines actually submitted by growers.

(b) with growers,

The amount of support that can be counted upon, not expected.

5. IMMEDIATE PRIORITY ACTION SUGGESTED:

I submit the following suggestions for immediate priority action to precede implementation and in the following order:

(a) To gain practical support from growers to raise an initial sum of £5,000, in order to:

1. Ensure practical support, i.e. for one thousand growers to contribute £5 each. Support of this number of growers is necessary to provide sufficient wool to interest such an agent.

2. Provide funds for launching of scheme and to cover initial expenses such as costs in regard to agent's visit, registration and other legal expenses, first year's salary to a competent business manager.

(b) To invite the buying agent to W.A. to crystallise several aspects, chief of which are:

1. Amount and types of wool required.

2. Prices on actual lines of wool offered by growers.

3. Amount of classing required.

(c) To make definite arrangements, with the brokers or some other wool handling firm having the necessary facilities and staff, for handling and appraising of wool.

I feel that if the above points are satisfactorily answered the plan could be recommended to growers for their support and any other

questions raised could be taken care of as routine administration.

6. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES:

Advantages:

1. Could be put into effect quickly and cheaply.

2. Only requires support of sufficient number of growers.

3. Will show immediate gain.

4. Direct dealing with the manufacturers.

Disadvantages:

Being voluntary will not give control of all wool.

Alternatives:

1. To do nothing as at present.

2. The Hart Plan. A good plan not confidently handled, seems now to be dropped. Requires affirmative vote of growers.

3. Reserve price plan.

A good plan five years ago when wool was approximately 120d. per lb., and a substantial reserve fund was available—not so under present conditions.

If the present system of auctions is allowed to continue the minimum reserve price will become the maximum price.

It would immediately require about £200 from average growers' returns with no immediate gain.

Will also require affirmative vote of growers.

If nothing better acceptable and certain anomalies in auctions rectified could be a start in the right direction of safeguarding growers' interests.

THE VOYAGE OF H.M.A.S. KURU—A Story of Valour at Sea

Seven Hours They Bombed Her But They Didn't Sink Kuru

Third Instalment — By Captain J. A. Grant

As the nine twin-engined Japanese bombers came towards us in line abreast I took a casual glance backwards at Kuru's tell-tale wake.

I saw an object which I at first took to be a seagull and then recognised as the periscope of a submarine.

This was a bit thick—bombers heading in to attack us, and a submarine sitting on our tail.

I did a quick calculation. The

sub was travelling about the same speed as ourselves. I reckoned, therefore, that if I turned and ran to meet her we would meet at a point halfway between our positions at the moment of turning, if I allowed for the time we took to turn.

I threw a small ball of paper overboard, waited until it was almost halfway between us and the sub, then swung Kuru around and headed her for the piece of paper.

At the same time I ordered two depth charges to be set to explode at a depth of 100 feet. The sub had lowered its periscope, and was apparently submerging.

But before we had covered half the distance to where I reckoned the submarine was the Jap bombers released their first salvo.

A near-miss from a bomb can "jump" the firing pin of a depth-charge, and as I couldn't risk the ship being blown up I had to order a seaman to withdraw the "pistols" of the depth charges, rendering them safe.

As the bombs hurtled down I watched them, and took evasive action. They landed cross our wake, well clear of us.

I hope they gave the sub a fright if nothing worse.

For the next seven hours waves of Jap bombers kept us too busy to worry about the sub, but we never saw it again.

The nine bombers next split up into groups of three, and moved in to attack us on a three-point tactic.

I foiled that attack by first turning toward one group and forcing them to drop their bombs sooner than they planned, then turning towards the next group, and making them do likewise.

As the bombs from the first group exploded well clear of us I again headed in their direction. The second group's bombs also missed, and the third group didn't even release their bombs.

The bombers re-formed and tried a "box" or square-pattern attack. They formed up in two lines abreast and staggered the release of their bombs so as to land them in a square with us in the middle.

To spoil their aim I started moving Kuru around in a wide circle, a manoeuvre which bombers don't like, as they find it hard to fix you in their sights.

As the bombs left the plane I watched until the last had let his go, then immediately changed course, moving outward from the circle.

Watching the rain of black dots getting closer and closer I selected a "hole"—that is, a gap between the deadly lines of bombs—and headed through it.

The Japs scored some very near misses and shrapnel from the burst-

ing bombs spattered the ship, without doing any serious damage.

That wave of bombers departed, having exhausted their bombs, but very swiftly 10 others, accompanied by seven Zero fighters and two float planes, bore down on us.

These bombers attacked in the same patterns as the others, and I repeated my avoiding movements.

Then the Zeros came down and machine-gunned us. We fought them off with our 20 millimetre Oerlikon gun, two machine-guns, and a 5 cannon taken from the turret of a crashed U.S. bomber, which was all our armament.

The Zeros scored a few hits on us, but did no serious damage. Then the bombers machine-gunned us before they all took off and returned to Timor.

I wondered how long this could go on, as I knew the party wasn't over.

I was right. A third wave of 10 bombers came at us and gave us a pasting, but they went on after a few bombing runs.

Apparently they had sighted H.M.A.S. Armidale, and it may have been this flight of bombers which joined in with some torpedo-bombers in the attack which sank the gallant corvette.

I heard from survivors later that it was about this time that Armidale went down fighting.

The first bombers had attacked us about noon, and the attacks continued until darkness fell seven hours later.

We had many narrow escapes, but one of the closest was when I tried to find a hole through a rain of bombs being delivered in one of those square pattern attacks—and couldn't find one quite big enough.

Two bombs burst ahead of us, two more on our port side, one to starboard, and the rest aft, all of them far too close for comfort.

The two that exploded ahead of us churned up the sea into a boil of waters that stopped us dead.

Those of us who were on deck flung ourselves flat as bomb fragments whistled over us and smashed into the woodwork.

Shrapnel crashed through the wheelhouse and also badly peppered the landing boat which we were towing astern. It was filling rapidly, so we cut it adrift.

When the fountains of spray had subsided and the bombers were wheeling to form up for another attack I sent a "damage and repair" party below to see if the concussion had opened Kuru's seams.

I stopped the engines while the party made the inspection, which showed us that Kuru had taken the blows well and wasn't shipping any water.

But I did not have the engines restarted, as I wanted to give the enemy the impression that they had scuppered us.

This only encouraged one of the bombers to come down low to give us the coup de grace, but as it let its bombs go I rang "full ahead" and turned sharply to starboard.

Bomb splinters wounded one of my officers, Lieut. Stooke, and two seamen, Tydeman and Cammoni.

More bombs rained down, and one fell so close that the concussion of its explosion set all the ship's bells ringing.

Signalman Jamieson looked up at the wheeling bombers and yelled in a perfect imitation of a Royal Show spruiker's delivery: "Tojo has rung the bloody bells. Give him a cigar!"

When that wave of bombers cleared off we had a look around.

Signalman Jamieson's kapok like-jacket, which he, of course, was wearing, had a piece of shrapnel embedded in the chest. Mine had a lump of metal embedded in the part that had been covering the left side of my chest.

The attacks increased in ferocity as the afternoon wore on. The Japs were apparently incensed at their failure to sink our little ship, and were determined not to be balked any further.

But when darkness came, and the enemy drew off, after they had launched 23 attacks with a total of

44 heavy bombers, seven Zeros, and two float-planes, we were still afloat. More than 500 bombs had failed to sink us.

All through these actions my signalman had been sending a running account of them back to Darwin. Unknown to us at the time the R.A.A.F. came to help us by strafing the field which our attackers were using and destroying 18 heavy bombers and three Zeros on the ground.

So the Jap attempt to sink H.M.A.S. Kuru proved very costly to them. It was tragic that they did get Armidale.

We were still heading for Timor when, at eight o'clock that night a message recalled us to Darwin, as two Jap cruisers were reported heading for us to take over the job the bombers couldn't manage.

We got back to Darwin without any more excitement, and as we entered harbour we got a wild reception from the crews of warships and merchantmen.

The commodore came aboard and thanked us. I asked him why we had got such a reception.

He replied: "The messages you were sending back, were as good as the running account of a cricket match, and everybody was following them with interest."

Well, it was livelier than some cricket matches I've followed.

While I was on leave some months later, H.M.A.S. Kuru sank at her berth when she struck the wharf during trials after a refit. While they were trying to lift her out of the water she broke in halves.

Someone watching this yelled to the unfortunate officer in charge: "You've done in five minutes what the Japs couldn't do in seven hours!"

THE END

SPECIAL MENTIONS:

SEND THOSE SWEEP TICKETS BACK RAPIDLY

ANNUAL RE-UNION, Irwin Training Centre, August 15, 1959.
Liquid Refreshments at 6 p.m. Dinner Commences 7 p.m. Sharp

AUGUST MEETING: August 4, at Monash Club, Picture Night
supplied by Ampol with plenty of sporting features
You can bring a guest