



2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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Editorial

Dreamer's Dilemma

You are all too familiar with the fairy story or is it nursery rhyme, of Old Mother Hubbard who made a survey of the cupboard to get her hungry hound a bone, only to find that the larder was full of nothing. Well, that dear old Mother had nothing on your humble Editor. The key to the Post Office box has acquired a high shine from constant usage in daily trips to the G.P.O. The net result: "Sweet Fanny Adams."

There is nothing for it but a vivid imagination of people and events which didn't happen. If a "Courier" is to be published it must contain news. No positive news—therefore plenty of dream time. The poor old scribe has decided that he must take up the opium pipe, suck deeply, lie back and hope the result will be a readable "Courier".

Whenever one does meet one of the gang they always express deep regard for their news-sheet and say they look forward to reading the contents avidly, but a good 90 per cent do nothing about providing anything for the Editor to get his teeth into.

If you are dissatisfied with this month's issue just let me know and

I will change my brand of opium and possibly switch to "snow" in an all out effort to please.

Ever played "Stacks on the Mill" in your schools? You know, the old game where everyone that could hopped onto one bloke's back till the weight ground him into the ground. Well at the moment that is how your scribe feels, everybody on his back and nobody assisting. As has so often been pointed out in these columns if all who receive this journal were to write just one letter per year to the paper that would be something like 480 letters in a year, say 40 a month and what a paper it would be! It would take the "D" out of "DREAMS" making the amount of material available into REAMS, which is the result we all want to achieve.

If you don't want your Editor to be picked up by the Vice Squad as a dope addict just provide some "dope" of your own and at the same time give your mates a treat by providing a morsel of news about yourself.

In the meantime your old "dreamer" will go on dreaming as hope springs eternal in the human breast.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

MARCH MEETING — 1st March

Carpet Bowls Championship. A good night for all

West Australian Whisperings

Committee Comment

The usual Committee meeting was held at Monash Club on Tuesday, Feb. 16. Roll up below average as appears to be the case at this time every year.

Secretary was able to report the Country Convention at Wongan was definitely on. Jack Fowler had consented to organise from the Wongan end. Committee members each undertook to contact members to make the roll-up from the city adequate.

President advised that financial position was sound and that at long last the account for Christmas presents had been received and would be paid immediately.

President also reported that he had been in touch with the Dept. of the Army regarding the claim by our Association for Theatre and Battle Honours. He said the news received was at the very least disquieting as the first signal army had received was that these honours would not be granted to Units below battalion strength. A second signal indicated that the committee appointed to deal with these honours was reconsidering the whole position. Your Committee decided to await the outcome of this reconsideration and to attack mightily if it were adverse.

A letter was received from the National Fitness Council which although phrased vaguely did give some hope that a plot of land at Point Peron may be made available to the Association. Once again your Committee decided to await the outcome of events and a deputation of two was appointed to meet the National Fitness Council if that body decided that a deputation was necessary.

As one of the country members was anxious to know the date for the Annual Re-union so as to organise a party to come down to the city for the dinner, discussion took place on this and that date was fixed for Saturday Aug. 20., 1960, and venue to be same as last year, namely Irwin Training Centre, if this were available.

The question of the Association acquiring a plant to provide better

cooling for the refreshments provided at meetings, Re-unions, etc., was brought up. It was decided to make enquiries re costs, etc., and report to next meeting.

The meeting closed at 10 p.m.

Association Activities

February meeting being held while a big amount of the lads were on some form of annual holidays, did not attract a very big crowd. The weather took a turn for the worse and it was one of the very few evenings this summer at which we could cavil.

Those present took a look at Association Affairs and had a lengthy discussion in general terms of things to come. All were keen to see a good fist made of the Empire Games Re-union and discussion mainly centred around this subject. Arthur Smith retold mainly of the functions provided by the Victorian Branch for the Olympic Re-union and warned about over planning of visitors time as this could be fatal if events programmed by our Association clashed with events at the Games. Most agreed this was a good point and very careful consideration would have to be given to the various functions, trips, etc., so that the maximum result could be obtained without too much infringement of visitors' valuable time.

It was pleasing to see Bernie "Boomer" Giles along at the meeting and he was a bit disappointed that more of his cobbers were not present.

MARCH MEETING

This meeting on March 1, is the annual Carpet Bowls Night with the Association Championship at stake. The championship carries with it the President's Cup and present holder is Ron Kirkwood who throws a mean bowl. With quite a few of the gang now actively playing bowls the challenge this year could be very strong. Mick Calcutt plays with East Fremantle, Fred Napier with Floreat Park, Kev Waddington with Cottesloe, just to name a few

and these and many of the 'jaggers' could make it hot for Ron in trying to complete a hat trick, he having also won the title the previous year.

Here is your chance, boys, for a good night out with tons of fun and good humour. Remember—Monash Club, Tuesday, March 1.

COUNTRY CONVENTION

The Country Convention will be held this year at Wongan Hills on the long weekend of March 5, 6, and 7. Although the notice is short a great time is guaranteed to all who attend. Arrangements are in the capable hands of Jack Fowler and the Sadler Bros., and that assures a perfect weekend. Jack Carey will be handling details from the city end. All you chaps in the near vicinity of Wongan should get in touch with Jack Fowler and make a certainty of attending especially on Sunday when the meeting proper will take place in Wongan Hills with an afternoon show yet to be arranged. Any city folk wishing to attend should get in touch with Jack Carey (59641), Col Doig (23 0161), or Ron Kirkwood (23 1341). Your accommodation should not provide any difficulties. It is hoped that a few of the Geraldton folk may be able to make the trip and so make it a real country show. All who have attended one of these functions in the past cannot speak too highly of them so here is your chance for a bit of good fun.

EMPIRE GAMES RE-UNION

At long last a firm date has been fixed for the holding of the Empire Games at Perth in 1962. The dates will be from Nov 8 to 22, 1962. At that time of the year it should be delightful in Perth with the early summer weather or should I say late spring, making for great sport viewing. The W.A. Branch can now go to the task of at least general planning of an itinerary for visitors both interstate or from the country. Two functions are certainties, one the annual Re-union, and the other a kiddies' show. There will also be a big night for the ladies. Those who travel interstate will be able now to plan ahead

with a full two and a half years to save the necessary boodle to make the trip possible. A quid a week from now on would give you £150 by the time the Games got round and with accommodation mainly provided that would go a long way towards making the holiday possible.

Every month from now on an article on the Empire Games project will appear just to jog your memories.

Personalities

Once again it is our sad duty to chronicle the loss of a father of one of our members. This time Fred Sparkman is the person whom we have to condole with. We pass on to you, Fred, the Association's sincere regrets at your loss and hope that time will prove to be the great healer.

Down in the Big Smoke for annual holidays was Bernie "Boomer" Giles. "Boomer" is maintenance carpenter on the Hill 50 mine at Mt. Magnet. He brought his wife and family down and unfortunately got stranded in Perth owing to the floods in that portion of the State putting all rail and road communications out. He saw quite a few of the lads while down and was able to attend the February meeting. Hope you managed to get back O.K., "Boomer". Quite a few of the lads are eager to hear from you.

Sighted for a brief time in the street was Terry Paul. Terry and a mate are running a sleeper mill at Boyup Brook. Says the game is a bit tough with demand for sleepers at an all time low. Extracted a promise from Terry to try and make the annual Re-union in August and pick up any of the gang in his area.

Also taking a bit of time off from the farm and down in the city to enjoy himself was Alf Hillman. Alf looks extra well and said the season had treated him quite well. He still plays tennis with Katanning and golf at Broomehill. Alf hadn't sighted Bert Burgess for some time but from reports he was O.K. Alf saw Ken Mackintosh at Katanning one day when he was in town to pick up a tank for his fire fighting equipment and he pressed Ken into service to help load it. He said

Ken had done very well with Elders and was most highly regarded by that firm.

Gordon Rowley was in town on one of his brief visits and ran in with Ron Kirkwood. Gordon regretted that he had been unable to make any of the Association "dos" of late but being in business at the moment he was at the beck and call of all and sundry and found it difficult to get away especially at weekends.

Ron Dook, Agnes and family have returned to Adelaide after about a month's sojourn in W.A. Afraid I didn't see as much of Ron as I would have liked but with the Christmas holidays, etc., our paths just didn't cross.

Both Charlie and Stan Sadler and their families have been down to the seaside for their annual break away from the farming business at Wongan Hills. They stayed at Rockingham. Geo. Boyland ran in with them a few times and said all looked wonderfully fit.

If any member is interested in a 10 per cent discount on clothing requisites see Dave Ritchie at the Don Clothing Co., William-st.

Jack Fowler and family were down at their second home at Mandurah to take in a drop of fishing and swimming. Didn't read where they had won one of the fish pots but that would put them in good company as I don't know anybody that did do any good. Jack also rang me to advise that convention at Wongan would be O.K. and would offer no particular problems of organisation.

It seems a big number of the lads from the country were down for a holiday as Ted Monk was also at Safety Bay. Geo. Boyland is my informant. He said Ted was most keen at the thought of the convention at Wongan and would be right in it.

Gerry Green ran in with Reg Harrington at Safety Bay and reported him to be in good nick with five boys and one girl. We can never quite catch up with the Harrington family. Reg was very keen on the scheme started by Don Turton and said he wished to be in it in a big way. Thanks a million Reg, we will further advise you about this at the Wongan Convention.

The daily press brings me information of that ever-green cricketer Arthur Marshall, down in Perth for the annual Country Week Saw where he got among the runs and the wickets and showed he has lost little of his skill. How do you do it Arthur? I find three deep breaths and collapse is the extent of my exercise these days.

Ron Kirkwood was my spy as far as Bill Drage goes. Said the big man was down from Northampton in the biggest car in W.A. No room to park it in such a cramped area as Perth only good for the wide open spaces of Northampton. Could use the boot to carry two hundred ewes and a couple of rams at a pinch. Rumour has it that it has a glass partition between front and back seats to stop the sheep dog licking Bills ear while he is driving. Back to more general things. Ron says Bill looks well and prosperous and will try and make it for the Re-union. Still manages to sink a nifty lager.

Saw Warrick Crossing in the street the other day looking, I thought very well. He hoped to get away shearing again shortly. He is a much married man now with three small children. He said his health hadn't been too good lately and that the Repat had recognised it to the extent of 100 per cent pension.

Slim Holly took advantage of the school holidays to go away down the south west for a spot of leave. He saw Terry Paul while down there. Slim says he is a certainty for the Wongan Convention.

Eric Thornander I believe has changed his place of domicile from Collie to Kalgoorlie but as my informant was most unreliable I will await Eric telling me himself.

Dame Rumour also has it that Wendell Wilkerson had sold out at Goomalling and was now at Armadale, but once again can't vouch for this as a fact so will await further advice from Wendel.

Merv Ryan is still battling it out at Hollywood but latest advise is that his stay is nearly at an end and that he should be home and at work very shortly.

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Random Harvest

B. J. "PETER" BARDEN, of P.O. Box 310, Geraldton, writes:—

This is the "Voice of the North" calling, with news of a few ex-double red diamond types. Eric Smyth made a hurried return trip to Eastern Island of the Rat Group of the Abrothos Islands, last Monday, and returned with a lot of fish—but a nice dose of sunburn. Eric says the fishing is really phenomenal over there, and that although he didn't take any bait, he used little rock crabs and shell fish for bait and caught eight proper up to 10 lb. in weight, and three lovely schnapper. He wasn't fishing very long either, as he mainly undertook the trip to help the fisherman unload his stores, etc. If any of you are looking for a real holiday, Eric recommends the Abrothos Islands as a "fisherman's paradise". A couple of days after the trip, Eric entertained Jack Denman at his home one night, and they reminisced over a few noggins.

Eric Smyth visited Busselton area during the Christmas period and called on Bob Palmer, whom, Eric says, seems to be "the same old happy Bob". It was a welcome reunion, because they hadn't met since about 1948 or 1949. I mentioned to Eric that the city-ites would be looking forward to at least one car load of folk from the Geraldton area visiting Perth for the Association Re-union, so here's hoping that Eric or Jack Denman might be able to talk one Bill Drage into taking the boys down in his latest Ford.

A fisherman in Geraldton, Herb Whittaker, wishes to be remembered to Geoff Laidlaw and would be pleased to have a few noggins with him on his next visit to Geraldton (with such a nice Ampol service station now operating here, we feel that Geoff must come this way soon!). Herb was in the Freshwater Surf Club at Sydney many years ago and has been crayfishing at Geraldton for four years; he was also in the hotel business over that way, and his wife, Maisie, is now a barmaid at the Freemasons Hotel, Geraldton. Geoff will recall that Paul Ryan married Herb's sister, Dot Whittaker, from Manly. Herb

says he remembers Geoff and brother Aub as fine lifesavers.

As members of the Geraldton R.S.L. Sub-Branch we're all concerned at recent reports that the strength of the C.M.F. in Western Australian is to be reduced to a regiment of volunteers, and that eventually country depots will be closed. We've taken the matter up with Western Command and sought the support of R.S.L. headquarters, having pointed out that since the all volunteer "D" Coy. of the 28th Infantry Battalion was formed at Geraldton, both the recruitments and the attendances at parades have been high, showing that Geraldton could maintain its strength of a company. We have strongly urged that the Geraldton Coy. be retained because of the port's strategic position and the willingness of its youth to serve. Advice just to hand from G.O.C. Western Command, Maj.-General Knight says he's very conscious of the support given to the all-volunteer C.M.F. Coy. by the citizens of Geraldton, and that every consideration is being given to the question of retaining a coy. there.

Well, I must be away now, as floodwaters from the Murchison River are keeping me busily occupied in supplying Perth news room with material for the weekend State news bulletins (my news bulletins from 6GN Geraldton are from Monday to Friday, so if there's any big news during the weekend I phone it to Perth news room).

Kind regards to all the boys.

Stop Press! Met Bill Drage at Geraldton races on Saturday and said he would take a car load to the next Re-union, if the date suited his farming arrangements. Please forward me the date so that I can phone it on to Drage.

ERIC and MARGARET WELLER, of Dumleying, writes:—

Just a few lines to thank you for the presents from the Christmas Tree. The children were thrilled. You will see by the address we have shifted again. We have three houses to build here so it will be a fairly long stay for a change.

We have been on holidays at

Peaceful Bay. It was very good too and the fish were beautiful. We thought we might see Gordon Rowley and family there but someone said Mrs. Rowley wasn't well. I hope that she is better now. The weather wasn't the best this year but we didn't get flooded out like the rest of the State so we considered ourselves better off than most.

Coming home we had the bad luck to lose one of the wheels off the caravan but the damage was small and we were able to put it right without much delay but we tore up quite a stretch of the highway which, believe it or not, the road maintenance men had repaired before we had fixed the caravan.

I'm up to my neck getting the children ready to go back to school so I had better get this letter done.

We met Bert Burgess at Katanning a fortnight ago. We went over to try out the swimming pool there and had a very nice day. It has been terribly hot here but today looks like being cool which will be a blessing.

Eric had to go over to Kojonup and took Patricia with him. There will be trouble from the others when I break the news. I'm writing this in bed and my wriggly small daughter isn't being much help.

Well, bed is only for the idle rich so I had better high me up and get on with the day's chores. Eric left at daybreak so it is still quite early.

We will be in Perth for the week end but I see by the "Courier" that it's too late for this month's meeting and too early for next, but we may run into someone, we often do

Eric's father is still very ill but then the fact that he is alive at all is a marvel.

Well I best close hoping everyone is well and as happy as this world will let one be.

MRS. GEORGE TIMMS of Quahup,
writes:—

Thank you very much indeed for the lovely Christmas presents you sent my five children. They were really thrilled with them. They especially love a parcel through the post.

"LEST WE FORGET"

FEBRUARY

Airey, Pte. Donald H., killed in action, Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 21.

Alford, Pte. Frank J., killed in action Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 21.

Gannon, Sig. B. I., killed in action, Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 29.

Lane, Pte. A. J., killed in action, Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 21.

Murray, Pte. R. H., killed in action, Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 23.

Pollard, Pte. J. A., killed in action, Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 22.

Simpson, Cpl. J. F., killed in action, Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 36.

Walker, S/Sgt. J. W., died as P.O.W., Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 23.

Chalmers, Pte. R., killed in action, Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 23.

Chiswell, Sgt. G. A., killed in action Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 23.

Stanton, Pte. C. L., killed in action, Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 22.

Marriott, Pte. H. W., killed in action, Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 35.

Hogg, Pte. K. T., killed in action, Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 22.

Crowder, Pte. F. T., killed in action Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 25.

Alexander, Pte. R. G., killed in action, Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 24.

Smith, Pte. Fred C., killed in action Timor, Feb. 20, 1942. Age 20.

Heard This?

"Before we get married," said the young man to his fiancée, "I want to confess some affairs I've had in the past."

"But you told me all about those a couple of weeks ago."

"Yes, dear, but that was a couple of weeks ago."



Hubby went out with the boys one evening, and before he realised it, the morning of the next day had dawned. He hesitated to call home and tell his wife. Finally he hit upon an idea. He phoned his wife, and when she answered he shouted: "Don't pay the ransom—I've escaped!"

Special Mentions

WONGAN CONVENTION — 5th, 6th and 7th March

This will be Good. Do your best to be there. Wongan and Geraldton lads please contact Jack Fowler. City boys Jack Carey is your man

MARCH MEETING — 1st March

Carpet Bowls Championship. A good night for all

ANNUAL RE-UNION

A good way off but mark it on your calender
Saturday, 20th August, 1960, at Irwin Training Centre

EMPIRE GAMES RE-UNION — 8th to 22nd November, 1962

Paste it in your hat

Historically Yours!

CHAPTER 6 (continued) WAR, BLOODY WAR

Events moved swiftly in a series of disastrous climaxes all over the island. The glorious battle of No. 2 Section on Dilli drome in which they met the whole force of the Japanese landing, performed their object of drome destruction and made good their get away with loss of three of their number in Pte. F. C. Smith, K.I.A.; Sig B. Gannon, K.I.A., and Pte. Merv Ryan, wounded and taken prisoner, was not to be the end of that particular picture. Arch Campbell's No. 7 Section was to fair worst in the events of that terrible 48 hours, but we will leave the recounting of those doings to Lt. Campbell in our next edition as it is better to have these momentous occasions chronicled by one who was most nearly concerned with everything.

While Lt. McKenzie and his gallant section were encountering Nipponese might, Capt. Callinan was with Dutch Headquarters in Dilli and was in contact with McKenzie for as long as the telephone could be kept open and wires remain intact. Afterwards Pte. Doyle performed herculean tasks as section runner keeping Callinan informed of events as they occurred on the drome.

Capt. Callinan proceeded to jog Col. Van Straaten (Dutch Commander) into action but his only reply was that "We are not prepared for the night attack." As shells fell thick and fast chaos reigned supreme with the Dutch defenders in a daze. Towards morning the order was given to the Dutch forces to withdraw from their positions and Callinan decided that he was about to receive a lesson in the withdrawal and defence by Van Straaten (after all the Dutch Commander had previously been professor of military tactics at Bardoen Military Academy and Callinan rightly thought that here was the master of tactics about to give the lesson to the pupil) so he hung on to the Dutch forces as an uninvited liason officer to enable him to keep Major Spence informed of the

change in tactics and the new plan of defence.

The Dutch force moved smartly out of Dilli along the main road toward the south west with Callinan tagging along awaiting the withdrawal to the next fixed position. After many hours of marching and no attempt at further defensive positions Bernie knew that this was a case of Felix who kept on walking. The big disillusionment was swiftly upon him, the master mind of tactics had apparently left all his tactics at Bandoeng and had no intention at that moment of joining issue with the invading Japanese. Callinan made haste to give away the Dutch forces as he knew that as far as this battle was concerned they were out of it and had no intention of getting back in. He made haste to contact Major Spence at Railaco and advise him of the position.

One amusing incident occurred during the early shelling of Dilli. Pte. Peter Banovich who had been alleged mechanic to the two trucks on Company strength had been in Dilli ostensibly to get spare parts for one of the trucks which he managed to keep out of order. When the Japs started to shell the town Pete worked it out very quickly that this was no place for Mrs. Banovich's little boy Peter and proceeded with much alacrity to put distance between him and Dilli. According to Peter he "Copped the second shell" the Jap threw as he scarpered smartly out of town toward Company H.Q. He had a few gravel grazes to show and had his leg bandaged for the rest of the war in Timor. From that incident on he was known as "Seconda Shell".

To get events into the correct perspective it is necessary to remember that the Unit and Dutch in Portugese Timor were only part of the overall Sparrow Force. The main body was still that force given the greater task of defending Penfoei Drome in Dutch Timor.

With the bombing of ships bring-

ing reinforcements to the force in Dutch Timor and subsequent return of these forces (2/3 Pioneers, American Artillery) to Darwin the new role of Sparrow Force of defending Timor to the last man was in jeopardy. Brigadier Veale did not know where he stood. Without adequate forces he could not carry out the new objective and he knew insufficient of the overall plan of denial of the drome and other facilities of Dutch Timor to the enemy to exercise command of the force.

The landing by the Japanese in Timor was a simultaneous affair taking in landings at both strong-points (?) of Koepang and Dilli. The main fleet sailed in from the east along the north coast made off through the Roti Straits as if to make the actual landing on the west or south coast. This fleet, for that is what it was, upset any plans that Colonel Leggatt had. He was not easily befuddled but immediately despatched his mobile reserve to meet the challenge which never eventuated. The Jap shelled, strafed and bombed Koepang and made the actual landing as originally expected in Koepang Bay. By now everything was at sixes and sevens and the opposition to the landing was not terrific as once again the Jap was preparing a surprise. After sailing about all night and stalling here and there the real threat happened! This was a parachute landing by some 500-600 troops on a large grassy plain behind the defences of the 2/40th Bn. and right across the line of supply back to rear H.Q. at Jamplong. At the first thought of a landing Brig. Veale did the correct thing and handed over command to Col. Leggatt who proceeded to carry out his plan of demolishing the airfield at Penfoei.

The unopposed landing of paratroops was an event which even the astute Leggatt had not bargained on because it had not been one of the tactics previously employed by the Nip in his previous landings at other areas. Leggatt decided that it would be best plan to attack this force in his rear and re-establish a defence position in the Jamplong area. The charges on the airfield were fired and the Battalion and auxiliary troops deployed to attack

the paratroops. No contact was made during the whole of the day and during the evening of the 19th February an attack was mounted.

Early in the morning of the 20th a further parachute drop was executed by the Jap in the same position but this time the 2/40th were in a position to meet the enemy. All hell let loose as the parachutes opened and drifted towards the ground. Even the Mortar Platoon had a go with air burst mortar shells. Bren guns fired magazine after magazine into these paratroops as they drifted down. Just plain duck shooting! Hardly a live troop hit the ground. This showed very clearly that the element of surprise must be present to allow for successful parachute landings. The 2/40th fought the whole of this para force, those already landed and in position and the new threat from the air. They practically cleared the area but after all it was only another delaying tactic by the enemy to enable them to land practically unopposed in Koepang Bay. The force was sufficient to contain Leggatt's men while an armoured force was landed and swiftly caught up with this major portion of Sparrow forcing an early surrender. Some 20,000 Japs had landed in all and the position of the defenders was hopeless.

Many are the stories of gallantry told of the 2/40th Bn. and attached troops, how Col Leggatt led a bayonet charge personally swinging his pistol from its lanyard in most nonchalant manner, how Major Rolfe attacked a dug-in machine gun post that was holding up mopping up operations and lost his life in the successful attack, how Kev Curran's brother went crazy with a bayonet sticking Jap after Jap in a headlong surge, it was to be all of no avail as with complete lack of intelligence of the position at rear H.Q. the commander had to send a patrol forward to discover if this H.Q. was still intact and if Jamplong could be used as a defensive position. Before this patrol could return the main body of the enemy was upon the gallant band and Leggatt did the only sensible thing available to him, that was surrender.

This feature is not being written to tell the history of the 2/40th or

other troops who fought on Timor but to give the story of the 2nd Independent Coy., therefore if what has been said of the brave deeds of the other portions of Sparrows seems to be unnecessarily sketchy then the reason is that the history of that force will be better left to other hands more in possession of the facts than the present writer. It is necessary however to give the background of Sparrow Force and what happened to it. Really the 2nd Ind. Coy. never thought of itself as Sparrow Force, it was forced down its throat at a later date when Brig. Veale joined our forces and contact was established with Australia and Sparrow Force was as good a code name as any other.

In all these operations of 2/40th Bn. the 2nd Ind. Coy. did have some minor part as Lt. Doig and Ptes. Charlie Dodge and Ted Potts were at that time attached. These three were due to return to the Unit in Dilli but the small boat which was to take them from Batu-Poti to Dilli failed to materialise and they were returning to Battalion H.Q. and got as far as Jamplong when the balloon went up.

Brig. Veale was then at Jamplong and Major Jack Chisholm who was in charge of H.Q. Coy. 2/40th, was also there having escaped from his H.Q. when the Jap paratroops landed and attempted to capture the hospital. Major Chisholm brought out a large number of these hospital cases and these and a few Army Service Corps personnel provided the defence force of Jamplong. Doig and his two men were speedily used by the Brig. to help with the defence. Because the Brig was completely out of contact with the main party Doig and his party volunteered to try and get around the paratroops and contact Col. Leggatt. This was on the evening of the 19th. Brig. Veale vetoed this suggestion but did allow Doig Dodge and Potts to take a utility down the road towards the paratroops early on the 20th. Contact was made with the enemy some two or three miles down the track when snipers opened fire on the vehicle from up coconut trees.

Dodge was driver of the vehicle and on the narrow track had difficulty in turning the utility around as being only a rear wheel drive

the wheels would spin in the wet grass as soon as they left the coral of the roadway. Doig and Potts hopped out of the vehicle and returned the enemy fire while Dodge tried to turn the vehicle round. A sniper had the range perfectly and inflicted two superficial wounds on Doig's ears before Potts dropped the sniper like a mountain duck out of a coconut tree. Dodge decided it was best if he took off in reverse until a better turning spot could be found. So the other two hopped on to the back of the ute and gave some sort of fire over the canopy while Dodge drove in reverse. After a few hundred yards a good spot to turn was found and it was 30 miles an hour back to Jamplong.

On return Veale decided to set up his H.Q. at Soe a further 10 or 15 miles in rear and behind the Sue river. He took with him most of the troops leaving Chisholm, Doig and Scott (A.S.S.C.) and a handful of men to look after Jamplong. Not long after the Brig. departed the patrol sent off by Leggatt got through to Jamplong and this platoon from "C" Company stayed to strengthen the defences while the other officer who was from the 2/11 Field Engineers returned in an armoured car to advise Leggatt that all was clear at Jamplong.

As stated earlier his mission was a vain one as the main body of the enemy had caught up with a bogged down Leggatt. Oh the what might have beens! If only Leggatt had known that after clearing the paratroops that the way was clear perhaps he and his band may have been able to guerilla out the war effectively in Timor just as we were able to do. When some person wrote that old verse about for the want of a horseshoe nail a war was lost he didn't know how truly he spoke just a few words of intercom and the whole course of a battalion's history was changed.

Hardly had Chisholm and his small gang settled down to defend Jamplong than Brig. Veale decided that it would be better to concentrate defences at Soe giving orders that Major Stevens (R.M.O. Sparrow Force) was to stay behind to attend to any wounded that Leggatt may have. So it was off to

Soe in the late afternoon of the 21st. Doig and his party bringing up the rear to blow the bridges over the Sue River and Benain River. Each of these was a bridge-blower's delight. Each spanned a river in a deep gorge with perpendicular sides. Each was capable of complete destruction. The bridge over the Sue was a swinging bridge which went down with a crash when the steel ropes were blown with cutting charges. That over the Benain was a key arch bridge and beautifully built of masonry. Some engineer's heart must have been broken when the centre span was blown and down went the whole structure. Chisholm was of the opinion that the strongest possible defence positions should be set up on the far bank of the Benain as this offered a superb barrier difficult to cross, no fordable positions as far as was known and good lines of fire. Doig agreed wholeheartedly but Veale was not convinced he even gave Soe away and headed for Antamboe. This was another typical Dutch barrack town having a small but usable airfield and the usual barracks. It was close to the north coast and very near the Portuguese border.

Here it must be recounted that the air force had flown out all its air personnel just before the attack was made and the ground staff with the radio link to Australia took off for a rendezvous on the south coast where they were to be picked up by submarine at a later date. Veale allowed these birds to fly and he and his staff must have been aware that the radio link had gone. This set was later taken to Antamboe and destroyed in the bush nearby. Another piece of useless vandalism as not one radio stood between the enemy and victory and how sorely it could have been used by our force at that very moment.

Veale was not very comfortable at Antamboe and in a very few days gave the order: "Every man for himself." He suggested that the south coast was probably the best route. He and his staff comprising Major Cape, Capt. Arnold, Capt. Neave and Capt. Parker, plus the Brig's batman, took off for Porto Timor.

Prior to dispersal at Antamboe the remnants of No. 2 Section in

Pte. Fowler, Pte. Poynton, Pte. Thomas, Sig. Hancock and Pte. Banovich, arrived in the town and joined up with Doig, Dodge and Potts. On dispersal Dodge and Potts and a couple of 2/40th chaps and one Englishman from the Anti Aircraft Battery, went north with the idea of getting a boat and sailing to Australia via the islands. Doig, Fowler, Poynton, Hancock, and Banovich took off for the south coast with the same idea but determined to make it direct to Aussie. Dodge, Potts and their companions did eventually get a boat and did make it to an island but unfortunately this was Jap held and they were nabbed and taken prisoner and stayed as guests of the unspeakables for the rest of the war. The story of this epic will be told later on by one or both of the survivors.

Doig and his party eventually arrived at a village called Kletek on the flats among the estuaries of the south coast. En route they encountered for the first time the unrivalled hospitality of the Timorese natives. Arriving at nightfall at a small village tired and hungry the local Chef offered a meal. A rooster was killed and in what appeared to be no time at all it was served as a stew, beak and all. Being ravenously hungry all sailed in with big mouthfuls. Ye gods—their first taste of Timor cooking with chillies! The tears ran down their cheeks, their tongues were on fire. The old Chef was in tears with apology. Another bird was slain and this time no chillies and at about 10 o'clock at night the meal was eaten.

At Kletek an old Ambonese who said he had sailed many times in his life from Timor to Port Darwin, was found and for 97 guilders would build a dugout which he said would comfortably sail to Australia.

After quite a few days this contraption was ready for launching. It comprised two large dugout canoes (hollowed out tree trunks) joined together with poles for and aft. The jointing was done with cane. A mast of sorts was stepped in and a sail made from curtains purloined from the barracks at Antamboe made. It was a squarish affair on a long bamboo pole and

was a kind of mainsail and jib combined. This was the frail coracle that was to take them over 350 miles of ocean to Australia. Provisions consisted of coconuts, a few tins of bully, roast chickens, and a few gallons of water in earthenware pots. The launching was made, assisted by the Ambonese, who incidentally wouldn't accompany the party to Australia, late one afternoon on the ebb tide out of the estuary. This was quite simple and the craft appeared to be quite seaworthy. As the party went down the river great crocodiles wallowed in the mud alongside and the old Ambonese got quite excited for the first time. It appeared that killing and skinning crocs was his line of business.

Once out of the river mouth it was a different story. No rip tide to assist, no wind to assist and a sea that seemed desirous of putting them back on the Timor coast. Doig was navigator—at least he had the compass which was about all he knew about navigating. Joe Poynton was helmsman as he had some idea of steering a boat. The rest of them paddled. They paddled all night and headway made was negligible. They paddled in a broiling sun all next day, sunburnt and attended by sharks. The necessities of nature were handled in the tin hat and tipped into the sea. No over the side with the buttocks with those "Noahs Arks" about. There was less than two inches of freeboard and backsides would be perilously close to those sharks' jaws.

The evening of that day, the second night out, it was decided after council of war that the attempt must fail for lack of provisions so it was decided to turn back and make an attempt at a later date. This time the sea swept the little band swiftly back and the rollers soon crashed the coracle on the beach, breaking the two dug-

outs adrift. Nobody was really unhappy when the venture failed. A good thing it did fail as the party could have only given completely wrong information as to the doings of the 2nd Ind. Coy. who they then thought had broken up and probably were in the hands of the Japs.

Not many days later found this small party at the Portugese outpost of Lebos and here we heard of Brig. Veale and his party who were at the next outpost at Maucata. Veale sent for Doig and he was ordered to return to Dutch Timor and to try and bring together the remnants of the party previously dispersed. Veale had contacted Major Spence and Capt. Callinan and knew that the 2nd Ind. Coy. was fighting on regardless.

Doig and Fowler went back into Dutch Timor and contacted quite a few parties and sent them on their way to join the boys of the Double Red Diamond, but quite a few had been captured while they slept by natives of Dutch Timor and handed over to the enemy.

After quite a few hazardous days Doig and Fowler returned to Lebos. Fowler, Poynton, Hancock and Banovich were ordered to return to their sections, while Doig was sent for by Major Spence who was at Maucata and told to command a detachment of 2/40th, 2/11th Engineers and other refugees and take over Malianna, a village right down on the flat near the Dutch border.

That practically sews up the connection between the two original elements comprising Sparrow Force. Its telling was necessary to get a full picture of how we as a Unit ended up out on our own commanded briefly by a Brigadier. It also gives an understanding of how we were reinforced, if that word can be used, by lads from the other elements of Sparrow Force. A case of integration, then disintegration, back to integration.

(To be continued)

SPECIAL MENTIONS

EMPIRE GAMES RE-UNION — 8th to 22nd November, 1962

Paste it in your hat

Address All Association Correspondence to Box T1646, G.P.O. Perth