



2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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Editorial

Forward To The Sixties

This edition of the "Courier" marks the start of a new decade. We go forward with high hopes into the Sixties and look back in retrospect to the Forties and Fifties.

The Forties saw us born as a Unit and gave us our tradition. It built the foundations of everything for which we stand. Out of the Forties grew our friendships which have cemented us into the strong body we are today. Late in that decade saw the founding of our post war Association and we struggled grimly in the early stages to get a firm footing. Many a time and oft it appeared that the Association would go the way of many others founded after World Wars I and II which spring up like mushrooms only to fade just as quickly.

With the advent of the Fifties we leapt forward in leaps and bounds. Wise executive work by branches in all States, saw the Association prosper. We won our battle for subsistence in Timor in this period and this acted as a goad to force us onward to greater efforts. It would take much space to chronicle all the many successful events that occurred in the 10 years of 1950

to 1959. Suffice to say our whole existence was enriched by riper friendships. Possibly the greatest single event was the Re-union held by the Victorian Branch at the time of the Olympic Games and this again spurred the Association to efforts previously thought impossible. This decade can surely be called the Fortunate Fifties as far as our Association is concerned.

Now we are looking and pressing forward, the past is history and the future history in the making. We are now most firmly based and better positioned to meet the challenge of futurity. Many and varied are the tasks ahead of us. Let us to the job and make the Sixties rebound to the name of the 2/2nd Commando Association. Let us show all who care to look that here is a body strong in talent, outstanding in the will to get the job done. Let us be a force in the community equal to our famous traditions.

The Sixties greet you full of promise. Now is our chance to take full measure of the things to be done and the deeds to be achieved. Let not the curtain ring down at the end of the decade on a failure of any description.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

REMEMBER — Meetings commence again on **FEBRUARY 2nd** with an Ideas Night at Monash Club. Come along with all your bright and witty ideas

West Australian Whisperings

Committee Comment

The Committee met for the first time in 1960 on Tuesday 19th to prepare for the months to come. A good roll up of members was particularly good to see.

The Committee expressed pleasure at the excellence of the Children's Party and a vote of thanks to the sub-committee comprising Tom Nisbet, Arthur Smith and Clarrie Varian, was carried with acclamation. The selection of gifts evoked high comment from the Committee although the over-all price was much above that spent in previous years.

The Bucks' Night was reckoned to be a success and a vote of thanks was expressed to all who worked for its success, especially Jack Carey for his provision of supper.

A letter was received from Minister for Water Supply expressing regret that he was unable to accede to our requirement for use of sprinklers in Kings Park. After discussion it was decided to arrange a working bee early in winter to rehabilitate the area and carry out much needed planting of grass.

The following programme for the rest of the year was arranged:

February: Ideas Night, members to be asked to express their own idea of how the evening should be spent.

March: Carpet bowls championship.

April: Rifle shoot. Anzac Day.

May: A sports night versus the Maimed and Limbless Soldiers Association, also bowls against M. and L. later in the month.

June: Picture night.

July: Annual general meeting.

The meeting closed at 11 p.m.

★ Heard This?

"Offisher, I'm looking for a parkin' plashe."

"But you've got no car."

"Oh, yesh, offisher, I have; my car is in the parkin' plashe I'm lookin' for."

Association Activities

Owing to there being no edition of the "Courier" in December much of the activity of the Association is now getting a bit stale but to bring things up to date here is an outline of what has occurred since last we went to press.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

This function was held on Dec. 8, 1959, at 16th Bn. Drill Hall. The muster was above normal and there seems to be no end to the children appearing on the scene. Once again thanks to the hard working effort of our sub-committee comprising Tom Nisbet, Arthur Smith and Clarrie Varian, the organisation of this function went off without a hitch. This is one function in

"LEST WE FORGET"

NOVEMBER

KEMP, Tpr. L. B., killed in action New Guinea, Nov. 12, 1943.

THOMAS, Pte. J. E., killed in action Timor, Nov. 11, 1942. Age 29.

SMEATON, Pte. A., killed in action Timor, Nov. 11, 1942. Age 24.

LUDLOW, Cpl. Stanley, killed on service Western Australia, Nov. 18, 1945. Age 28.

DECEMBER

SWIFT, Dr. R. R., accidentally killed Timor, Dec. 15, 1941. Age 22.

DAVIES, Tpr. J. M. O., died of illness New Guinea, Dec. 31, 1943.

MOULE, Sp. L. C., 2/11th Field Coy., killed in action Timor, Dec. 10, 1942.

NORTHEY, Tpr. J. E., killed in action New Guinea, Dec. 6, 1943. Age 30.

JANUARY

Cole, Tpr. A. J., killed in action, New Guinea, Jan. 7, 1944. Age 33.

Hopper, Lt. P., killed in action, New Guinea, Jan. 27, 1944. Age 28.

Ramshaw, Tpr. D., killed in action, New Guinea, Jan. 10, 1944. Age 20.

Beardman, Tpr. R. L., killed in action, New Guinea, Jan. 10, 1944. Age 22.

which everybody seems to bog in and do his utmost to make a success. Frank Fenn once again provided most of the amusement for the children and thoroughly earns his small fee and it takes so much work off the parents. Thanks to Arch Campbell and Ampol a very excellent picture show was provided to keep the children happy for a long period.

A new innovation this year was a Fairy Floss machine which we were able to have thanks to "Spriggy" McDonald who ran it down to earth and assisted mightily in the actual running of the machine. Kids of all ages up to 50 seem to enjoy Fairy Floss and this is a must in future years.

Of course the Old Gentleman with the whiskers also arrived to make the day complete and he handed out good advice and presents to the children with right good will. This year the Committee decided to give toys instead of books and thanks to Clarrie Varian and the sub-committee a crackerjack selection was made and was highly commended by all present.

Afternoon tea provided by the ladies bringing or sending a plate of good things to eat made an enjoyable interlude for the harassed parents.

All in all one of our really good children's parties in which enjoyment was the focal point.

CHRISTMAS BUCKS' PARTY

This function was held at Monash Club on Tuesday, Dec. 17, and took the form of a guest night when members were bidden to bring along a mate to assist in making the evening tick.

A quiz arranged by Col Doig got the evening away to an hilarious start. A panel of four "experts" was called to the platform and they were in turn requested to give their opinion and answer to questions from the audience. Everyone entered into the spirit of the thing and much enjoyment was had.

Thanks to Jack Cary we had a pianist for the evening in the person of Ron Westall and he is one of those versatile chaps who can play anything you ask him to play.

The community singing sounded pretty good but it may have been

that the amber fluid dulls the senses more than somewhat.

Mick Morgan rendered his famous "Why Should the Dustman Get It All," Joe Burridge gave forth with many of his old favourites and also conducted the community singing. Frank Fenn came along and showed just how good an artist he is by singing in every range of voice from boy soprano to basso profundo.

"Rusty" Christianson, one of the guests, also obliged with quite a few songs and it is marvellous how soon the night was gone.

That genius Jack Carey produced a cray fish supper just like a magician out of the hat and this truly rounded off a good night.

The roll up was the best for some time and we hope to see more of those present at future functions.

* * *

Your Editor expresses regret for failing to produce a copy of the "Courier" for December, but many circumstances completely beyond his control made this impossible.

The December edition must go to press much earlier than usual owing to the closing down of the printing works for annual Christmas holidays and this year the Editor just couldn't cope with the timetable.

Personalities

Over in the West for a holiday was Bill Gallard, from Sydney. Bill has put on a bit of weight since army days but looks just as cheerful as ever. He managed to have quite a few hours with the boys especially Mick Morgan. Joe Poynton, Ron Kirkwood and Col Doig also ran him down and had a noggin or so. Bill says he is more than a prospect for the Empire Games Re-union.

We are sorry to have to report the death of Ken Bowden's father who died just before Christmas. We extend our most sincere condolences to Ken and hope that time will erase any painful memories for yourself, your mother and the rest of the family.

Eric Thornander also lost his father early in the new year and we take this opportunity to express our sincere regret, Eric.

Dave Dexter will be back in Australia by now from India to take up his new post as Secretary of Universities Commission. David's wife Freda, passed through Fremantle on Christmas eve on the Stratheden, bound for Melbourne but owing to extreme pressure couldn't get down to say hello. Better make an early trip to W.A. Dave, to have a look-see at the W.A. University and look up a mate or so.

Robbie Rowan-Robinson in town on one of his periodic visits to attend a directors' meeting. Dropped in to say hello and pass on his good wishes to the gang. Robbie says he showed the film "Men of Timor" to a crowd down at Bridgetown and it was thoroughly enjoyed.

Merv Ryan and "Bruss" Fagg have both still been in Hollywood Hospital. I believe that "Bruss" hopes to return to Northampton early in February. Hope the cure is effective "Bruss". Merv has had a very long spell of it this time and we sincerely hope this will be his last sojourn in R.G.H. for a long while.

Sighted Jack Fowler and Jean in town briefly the other day. Just time to wave good day, cheerio, before catching a bus.

Saw Don Turton for an hour the other day. He says he is managing to struggle along and that the season hasn't been too bad to date.

Saw a news item the other day where Tommy Martin paid a fabulous figure for a Landrace pig. 1,850 guineas was the price and believe it or not Tom wasn't even at the sale which was held at Devon port in Tasmania. You couldn't get me to trust anybody else with that many halfpennies let alone guineas. Good luck to you Tom. Hope the sow has many and large litters to help you recover plenty from your game venture.

Bill Howell has had a change in his place of employment. He is now in charge of the bar in the new club rooms of the Mandurah Bowling Club. Quite a nice set-up too. His hours of work do not allow of his attending any do's but when winter comes he hopes to be able to be with the boys.

It was most pleasing to have a chat and a few drinks with Peter Barden. It enabled me to thank him for all he has done in giving

such a good coverage of news to the Geraldton area. Peter looks extra fit and says he really enjoys his job reporting and announcing the news at Geraldton for the ABC.

Down from Talgarno after Christmas was Don Hudson. Asked Huddy if he was one of the P.M.G. linesmen who collapsed with heat exhaustion. "Not this chicken—not that soft yet," quote Huddy. He must be one of the fittest jokers I have ever seen, never carries a surplus pound and always looks as if he is ready to fight for a world title.

Most acceptable presence at the Bucks' Night was Dave Ritchie. It was extra good to see Dave back on deck again and thoroughly enjoying himself. Hope you can come along good and often, Dave.

A brief good-day from Kev Millington at Donnybrook, sending in particulars of his family. Thanks Kev hope to see you one day especially at a Re-union.

A nice little note from Verna Pierce, wife of our one and only "Pigeon". Sorry to have to write that the Pierce's were burnt out recently in a fire which completely destroyed their home and contents the only thing saved being a washing machine. Verna says they hope to catch up with Reg Harrington in the new year. Verna says Chas has done well for himself. Hope you are now safely over the worst of that fire Pigeon. Hope 1960 brings you much better luck than you seemed to enjoy last year. Thanks very much for your note Verna. Pleased to print anything you may write on behalf of your "writer's cramped" husband.

A Christmas card from Harold Goode who wishes all the boys the best for 1960. Gives a new address 8 Ernest St., Windsor, Brisbane. Thanks Harold, will arrange to have "Courier" despatched to new address.

A card from Dud and Audrey Tapper to wish everybody all the very best. Thanks Dudley, will really get around to writing you.

A nice card from Jack Hartley showing a photo of "Hartley Mansions". The garage door features a huge Double Diamond. It pays to advertise, Jack. As for Mortien "When you're on a good thing stick to it."

Random Harvest

BILL TOMASETTI, of Tapini, Goilala District, Papua and New Guinea, writes:—

It seems many months since I last wrote, so, on this quiet Saturday afternoon, here goes another small contribution to the perennial and valued "Courier".

As you will have seen from the address I have transferred to another station since (I think) my last letter to you. After my last leave, which was a short and rather mixed up one, I was sent here to do two years. (That sounds bad.) It is a part of the Territory in which the Company did not operate although the 2/6th Company did some work in part of it during the Kokoda Trail campaign in 1942. It is actually in the Owen Stanleys immediately to the north of Port Moresby (on the southern fall) and to the west of the Kokoda Trail area. An interesting place and the job here is interesting. One of my stations is about 40 miles away and the only way to get there is walk which I do every two months. A round trip of 80 miles—I am losing some of my two stone overweight. The trip before last, unfortunately, I split a cartilage in my right knee but it is well on the mend now.

The people here are not very interested in what the twentieth century can do for them (unlike many other parts of the Territory) and are permanently involved in a cycle of dancing which absorbs a huge part of their energy. They are noted for their periodic axe murders of each other—however, it is not all gloomy and there are a few progressive elements here and there.

So much for Tapini. I plan a long leave next time and perhaps, if I can afford a good enough car, we will spend some time in the West.

A cheque herewith—and very best wishes to all.

B. J. (Peter) BARDEN, of Box 310, Geraldton, writes:—

Apparently my last letter arrived after the deadline, although I thought I would just make it. However, it will probably appear in the next issue. Just a few lines now

to let you know that most of the Double Red Diamond types up this way are apparently enjoying fair health—with the exception of one Brush Fagg, whom we understand is in Hollywood Hospital.

Jack Denman had a few noggins with Bill Drage, of Northampton, yesterday. Jack says Bill is looking well, and that he's just got himself a brand spanking new Customline. Drage will be going to Perth next week, so be prepared for a session or two, you cityites.

Jack Denman's 13 year old son, John, is a prominent member of the Geraldton Swimming Club, and is top swimmer in that age group. He is a member of the Geraldton High School lifesaving group which at the annual schools' lifesaving carnival at Crawley gained the country shield for the second consecutive year. Incidentally, they have a wonderful coach in Jock Drysdale, who has just been awarded an Honorary Associate Certificate and Badge of the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia for his untiring and successful work in the teaching of lifesaving methods.

If any of you can make it, or happen to be visiting the northern areas around the long weekend in March, it would be well worthwhile calling at Geraldton on the Tuesday, as a mammoth athletic carnival is being planned for that day. It will feature Australia's stars, who'll be visiting W.A. at that time for the Australian track and field championships. Herb Elliott has already taken part in two Easter carnivals at Geraldton, and he will again be amongst us for the forthcoming carnival.

Seasonal greetings to one and all. Yours truly, wife and two sons will be on the Midland bus for Perth on Dec. 28 for a fortnight in the Big Smoke.

A Further Letter from Peter says:

The wife and I and the two boys have returned to Geraldton after a most enjoyable fortnight's vacation in the Big Smoke, and with pleasant memories of our meetings with some ex-Double Red Diamond types. It was a particular pleasure meeting our "Happy Editor" and having a session at the Royal.

Let me, on behalf of all the boys, heartily congratulate you on the excellent job you are doing, Col, and the Association for continuing to produce the "Courier" in its interesting form, because the production of such a magazine on a monthly basis by an association of comparatively scant numbers would probably be unique throughout Australia, if not anywhere in the world.

During my sojourn in Perth I met up with Don Hudson, still as tough as ever but always sporting a smile. When "Huddy" said he was at the rocket township, Talgarno, with the P.M.G. lines department I inquired sarcastically if he was one of those who was overcome by the heat wave. However he quickly assured me that "our Huddy" was no chicken.

Wife and I had a few noggins with Huddy at the Savoy and later saw this suave, debonaire Ceasor Romeo type sporting a "cutie" at the trots. Having used so many taxis, yours truly insisted that Taxi Boy was the bet of the night and went for the big plunge with success. However, Huddy could not see beyond Frosty Nelson, which, sad for Huddy, "bit the dust".

I had a couple of sessions with Alf Coupland who said he had just come out of hospital after 14 months with a badly fractured left arm, sustained when helping a neighbour operate a lathe. Alf said he was not covered at all and as he has lost most of the power in his arm he was flying to Melbourne a few days later to join his sister on her dairy farm.

I was pleased to meet up with Jack Carey at the trots, he looked well and fit. I also came into contact with Tom Fitzgerald and he certainly seems to be enjoying life.

Wife and I were buying a few things at the Don Clothing Co. when we mentioned being from Geraldton. The gentleman attending us replied that he had several army mates there, and, of course, he proved to be none other than Dave Ritchie, whose brother Jim I knew particularly well.

At last night's R.S.L. annual general meeting I mentioned to Jack Denman about the desirability of a Geraldton car load for the annual Re-union and we are hoping that

perhaps Bill Drage with his beautiful new car might feel inclined to take down some of the boys to this big get-together. Jack Denman as a former R.S.L. president was busy last night at the annual meeting, he occupied the chair for the election of president, then handled the numerous ballots necessary for the election of most officers. Jack continues to slam home the importance of civil defence, and successfully moved that State R.S.L. Headquarters endeavour to push the subject along by asking R.S.L. Federal Congress of any results from W.A.'s motion on civil defence from the State Congress. Incidentally yours truly was re-elected sub-branch publicity officer.

Kind regards to all the boys.

BULLA TAIT, of Box 492 Ayr, writes:—

Don't faint, as I can assure you the shock to me of putting pen to paper to write a letter is just as great as the one you will receive when you open it.

Will get down to the main reason of this scrawl then if writer's cramp has not caught up with me will give you any "G.G." I have on any of the boys up this way.

Now to a bit of general news.

Myself, married, three children, two stockmen and a nurse, occupation cane farmer, relaxation "the local". If you start a campaign "Eat more sugar," may make the Empire Games otherwise no hope. Things very quiet in the sugar industry, the boom having come to an end just a year or so too early for us. Had just acquired another farm and got a bit of gear together to really get going when the bottom fell out of the overseas' market but still making a quid so no good whinging about what might have been.

Geo Shields, Box 374, Bowen, not on "Courier" mailing list. Met him about six months ago in "the local". He was then a traveller for Borthwicks Meat Export Co., but has now retired and purchased a tomato farm at Bowen. After having been doing a few years part-time farming George is married, has three daughters and his relaxation is bowls.

Alan Soper, foreman with local Electricity Board, married, five

children, two boys and three girls, address F. R. E. B. Ayr., will mind him.

Jim Foote lives in Proserpine, but have not seen him for a few years. Also struck Jack Seeley in Proserpine about two years ago when down there for a rugby game.

Cyril Chapman still resides in Clon curry best part of eight or nine years since I last contacted him. A mate of mine struck him out there last Easter to then was still single and prosperous cattle baron.

Lucky Goodnere is somewhere on the Albert tablelands at Ravenshoe. I think has a painting business this is only what I have heard, can't swear it to be right.

I see by the "Courier" Bingham was here there and everywhere at the Legacy day at Turton's. Beats me how Brooker hasn't thrown a net on that bloke and put him in a cage. Marshall seems to be always skiting about that "super spreader" of his, when I knew him he was a "super spreader" then, but it was generally "bullsh" or "furphies" he was spreading not phosphate. So he has not changed his occupation much.

Well will bring this scrawl to an end, trusting you will be able to attend to the needs of young Hunter and hope this finds your wife and self in the best of health.

(Am attending to your little matter "Bulla". Thanks a million for the letter. Write again soon—Ed.)

FRED OTWAY, of 98 Wecker Road, Mt. Gravatt, writes:—

Well, here's the new year on us again and I'm not much better off than this time last year. I'm still painting and running a few bees, well I've got more than a few now, though the season isn't the best. We got six inches of rain before Christmas and that finished the nectar. We have had plenty of rain these last few months, with the hot weather the grass just shoots up over night, it's hard to keep ahead of the damn stuff.

We, that is Angus Maclachlan, Eddie Timmins, Bill Connell, were expecting to see Don Turton any tick of the clock, but he never made it. The boys are well spread around in Queensland, occasionally one drifts in, as did one Patrick Wilby. Paddy has been knocking

around in all sorts of places. He has been to Argentina or Brazil, I forget which, and Formosa, apart from that his natural habitat is around north Queensland. We had a bit of a night at Angus's place. Bill Connell was away up at Cairns and missed out. Eddie Timmins gets around the country a bit. He just missed seeing Jack Shields at Bowen. Paddy Wilby saw the old Hoop at Roma, says Hoop might try for selection for the Country Party at the next elections. Paddy says he is not getting his "Courier" but that's his fault as he is not in the one place for too long. I hope in the future to be able to give more time to anyone who drops in on me, as it is now, a man has to go off to work, and more or less leave a visitor flat. I've still got my two pay books. They give a wealth of information and more if I could understand a lot more of orderly room jargon. The West Aussie recruits got their first pay on July 4, 1941, at Caulfield (that is of course the "hush hush" boys), July 31, 1941, at Foster. The last pay at Foster August 28, 1941, and left Foster on my birthday, Sept. 3. First pay at Wayville, Sept. 29, 1941, last on Oct. 16. Katherine first pay on Oct. 28, last Nov. 25, then two entries Dec. 9 which is crossed out and labelled no entry, also crossed out and labelled no entry is Dec. 18, Koepang. Also credited is embarkation 8-12-42. This I'm sure is a mistake and should be 41. First pay at Dilli 24-12-41 signed Laidlaw Capt., last one before the Japs landed Feb. 18, 42. Then a long gap to Aug. 17 which was £4. This was commandeered by Dex in "A" Troop anyhow and rightly so, but what a job we had getting it back from the army. The next pay was 30-12-42, must have been when we were back at Adelaide River. Also credited is a sum of £11/6/- for the rail fare from West Aussie, around to Brisbane, I suppose. This was when a certain Major of L.T.D., Claremont, decided to make all A.W.Lers pay their own fares over. I soon got mine back when I broached the matter with "7" Special. Did anyone else get refunded?

I took the family down to Canungra one day. I called in at the cemetery but did not see Gordon

Mulqueeny's grave. We went from Canungra to Mt. Iamborine. It certainly is a fine view. Dick Doran is running around this State somewhere, someone bumped into him.

Well, this should fill up some of the space in the "Courier".

MRS. T. MONK, of Latham, writes:

A few lines to thank you all for the exceptionally nice and most acceptable Christmas gifts received by the children. They have provided many hours of enjoyment for them.

Ted has now finished harvesting but is still busy carting in wheat and cleaning up generally, after which we hope to enjoy a spell at Mandurah for a few weeks.

Ted joins me in taking this opportunity of wishing you and all members of the Association a more than happy and prosperous 1960, and every success to the "Courier" during the coming year.

B. (Pat) GILES, of Mt. Magnet, writes:—

As yet I have to meet you all some time but as Bernie never seems to get around to writing thought I had better drop a few lines. Since I last wrote which was from Meekatharra I think, we have added a son and heir to the family. Bernie still has a swelled head. Wok's like Mike, will be another Giles all over.

Met one of the boys as he was on his way to Talgarno up here a month or so ago, name of (Huddy) Hudson I think Bern said his name was. They had quite a few cheers together and a long talk. Cricky I thought women could talk but now am not sure.

Received our much looked for "Courier" yesterday. Will you please let us know how our subs are. Should be behind I should think. Maybe in Perth around January, maybe Bernie will see some of you again. His arm is good now, not much he can't do except that it will never be straight. Still alls well. Weather up here is as bad as Perth is in winter, windy and with a few hot days.

Will close now. Best of luck to all and a Merry Christmas.

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

Your November editorial asking if we had done enough for our Timor boongs, and referring to Porto Government cold shoulder in the past makes me wonder whether action by our little Association at this stage might not be just the straw to break the camel's back in a big way and be the means of getting a better deal for all the natives of Portuguese Timor. If our political leaders were approached with a concrete proposal for—say—an agricultural scholarship for the child of a former creado, it might get such publicity as to renew before United Nations the question of Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter as it applies to Portugal. Declaration regarding non-self-governing territories.

Portugal became a member of United Nations on Dec. 14, 1955. In February, 1956, the Secretary-General of U.N. drew the attention of Portugal and 15 other nations which became members at the same date, to Chapter XI, and under its terms invited them to inform U.N. whether they were administering any territories where the people had not attained self-government.

Portugal answered that it had no such territory under its administration. Their representative declared that Portugal had a unitarian constitution, and that from a legal and from a de facto point of view, the European and the overseas provinces were under the same organs of sovereignty and in exactly the same position. He said that although certain rights were conditional upon certain qualifications, both the rights and the qualifications were the same for all inhabitants, irrespective of race or situation. He said that there was no racial discrimination.

You, Mr. Editor, may think, as I do, that this is largely gobbledegook. If civic rights are dependent upon "certain conditions" and you are the man to make those conditions, clearly you can work things to ensure that though all men are equal, some will be much more equal than others.

I was talking the other day to a man from Tanganyika, and he said that conditions for the boongs were still very bad in the African Portu-

gese territories of Angola and Mozambique.

So yes, let's have a go at our own Dilli Plan. You never know, it might lead to something that affects for the better the lives of millions.

ERIC AND MARGARET WELLER, of Dalwallinu, write:—

Just a few lines to ask when the Christmas tree is on as we have to go to Perth and we thought we could kill two birds with one stone. We were going to come down for Ladies' Night but I was sick so that settled that.

What about the bit that says any other particulars you should know. Looks like the score is three and stays that way.

Eric was very sick a while back. He had a collapsed lung but he is quite well now. This Dalwallinu is a dusty hole. Wouldn't care to have to spend the rest of my life here.

I love the bit, if you have a wife hand it to her. That is one of the unsaid lines of marriage, with all my worldly goods and my correspondence. I almost think my husband has forgotten how to write.

There never seems to be much news. Hope everyone is well.

KEV WADDINGTON, of 14 Alexandra Ave., Claremont, writes:—

Am enclosing cheque. Will you please put it towards the Christmas Tree and subs. I have no idea how I stand. Expect Fred will catch up with me one of these days.

Sorry I will not be able to be present at the Christmas Tree as the sub-branch are helping the Women's Auxiliary who are entertaining the Diggers from Lemnos on that day and I have promised to go along and help.

Thanks for ringing me up re the ages of the children. I will have to watch it more carefully in the future. I don't seem to be able to catch up with half the things that I should do these days. The sub-branch holds its meeting on the same night as the Unit which makes it awkward as far as attending meetings is concerned.

Will say so-long for the time being, wishing you every success with the Unit's activities and the compliments of the season to yourself and all the boys.

GERRY MCKENZIE, of 295 Nell St., Watsonia, Victoria, writes:—

Having read with growing interest chapters 1 to 5 of "Historically Yours," I'm hanged if I know whether the whole effort has been reproduced from your memory or whether you have been assisted by able contributors. However achieved, the idea to my mind, is most commendable as it has no doubt refreshed many memories and to quite a few who joined later, has filled in lots of gaps.

Perhaps we in the Eastern regions lean too hard upon your energies back home in the Golden West. We were obviously expecting something new and different to turn up in the "Courier" and hey presto—who thought up the idea of "Historically Yours"?

It's a winner and should be a best seller. The Association as a whole deserves to benefit from such achievements and I am sure it will (if only from the point of view in keeping alive that so necessary trading name or non-de plume) which is part, parcel and the acme of all ex-servicemen's organisations of a like nature—Lest We Forget.

Maybe many of us have forgotten too much already, but I for one do not think so. How and when could you ever expect to be associated with such a fine lot of men—to be truthful none of us ever met better before—that is a better bunch to become one of—and for sure none of us have ever met better associates since.

We often hear the psychiatrist ascribing that hate and fear makes human beings produce prodigious feats—they probably do have a great effect upon the foundation of character, but when, as in the case of 2/2nd you have a whole bunch of sound and very good characters brought together in presence of the one common aim. I feel that the growth of "mateship" among them is the most potent ingredient between success and failure.

Mateship we surely did achieve and who can deny that it still endures in very large parcels.

Hate the Jap we surely did—but I at any rate, never saw one that feared him—no, not really feared him. Courage is an expendable quality. The sick, the weakened

and the over-tired tend to become dispirited for the time being, but a rest, a feed, and a sleep as we can all well remember, works wonders. There were perhaps, none of us very brave but you don't need heroics if you have teamwork, team spirit, flexibility and determination, sufficient to overcome each rising situation.

"Historically Yours" will prove me right, if the good souls intent upon its continuation see fit to push on to their goal. Here's hoping the remaining chapters bring as much pleasure to our particular type of reader as I am sure 1 to 5 have already done.

We often think of you all in the West and some day, finances permitting, hope to buzz back over to see the Golden State again.

At least I keep my neighbours mindful of the fact that it's W.A. for me. I have a goodly sized Geraldton Wax—an old boomer sized Margaret River kangaroo paw and a heavenly scented Karriale brown boronia, flourishing in the front garden.

Mary and the three kids are well. Mary happily having gotten on top of her dreadful illness for the time being. She has been back nursing at the local hospital for two weeks short of 12 months now and although spasmodically she finds it tiring, she is determined to earn a shilling, the better to add to the family budget.

The kids are growing into quite large sized individuals with large sized appetites. Ian attends Watsonia Tech and is keen on architecture, didn't quite make high school but is practical, has common sense and so far no vices. Rass goes to MacLeod High next year. seems to be keen on a service career and of course is in the right place here for apprentice school—O.C.S. or R.M.C. or even better placed to join Flinders Naval College—only trouble is that Collingwood have eyes on him—at nine he won a place in his school's first 18 over 160 older lads in upper grades and this year represented district schools playing on the M.C.G. Apparently a bit of a dasher at half back and has a run on the ball. Heath, the Collingwood rover, was his teacher and coached him last year. He is also

one of Mick Twomey's (Collingwood star ruck) midgets and practices every night, summer or winter. Twomey lives a couple of doors from us. Sandra attends Nell St. Girls School, a stone's throw from 295. We couldn't be better off for schooling—girls and tech in our street and high five minutes by bicycle towards the city.

All in all we are nicely located here at Watsonia—only eight miles or 25 minutes by tram or car from the city. Naturally I have managed to find time (often at the tax payers' expense) to see a couple of Test matches at the M.C.G.—five V.F.L. finals—two Davis Cups—two Melbourne Cups—every worth while professional fight in the last six years as well as all the annual swimming championships. Of course the Olympic Games too was a highlight (we missed you though as we had for long been looking forward to a visit by you at that time). I had an "All Venues Official Pass" and as well as attending the main stadium for athletics, managed to see most of the boxing, swimming, water polo, gymnastics, basket ball and shooting. It was a terrific experience. The depot played host to over 1,000 troops engaged on Olympic duties.

On the work side. I have been O.C. Personnell Depot at Royal Park since August, 1954—by now a very old inhabitant and look like holding the job until I retire in May 1962.

The Depot is the all purpose administrative unit for S Comd. and by now I have become a bit of an expert at administration with all its obstacles, regulations, treasury controls, and duck shoving of the Too Hard files.

Have a staff of 88 all seasoned old warriors who do all for Vic and A.H.Q. in recruiting, discharge, ex-list, movement, transit and selection of apprentices, bandsmen, O.C.S., R.M.C., as well as women's services. The command carries the quadruple role of O.C. Depot, O.C. Metro troops, O.C. Soldiers' under sentence, and soldiers in arrest. As you can imagine we are preponderantly busied with disciplinary matters. I have on location the Comd. Court Martial room, staff it and keep them busy with an average of 15 cases per week.

We play mine host to an average annual through-put of 12,000 diggers. In 1954-55 with Korea demob and the termination of the first big batch of six year A.R.A. engagements (1958 to 54 era) we processed just on 35,000 all ranks each year. There is always enough to keep me busy, for this regular army of ours is still finding its feet and what with Allison Committee reports and COL adjustments (which we do not always benefit from) who could become disinterested. Soon the depot is to move from Royal Park to Watsonia—10 minutes walk from Nell St. We move into a specially designed and permanently constructed modern barracks after having for years had to fight the critical tongues. The £1,250,000 project at Watsonia is to my mind money well spent—though lavish in some respects—such as laminex walls in Officer, W.O. and Sgts. quarters—the set-up in general is utilitarian, designed specially to cater for the job in hand and most suited to expansion in an emergency. At a saving in maintenance costs to the tune of £9,000,000 annually which has been spent on the acres of wartime constructed tin huts (we selected men of the right of the line armed service) now occupy—from a national point of view, the cost price will soon become an amount detestable from the annual estimates of the defence budget.

For my pleasure hours, I have become acquainted with a selected few ear-bashing mates. A game of howls—Army Club of course—each Wednesday—sports afternoon, you remember. I bowl a most unskilled ball but talk em up close to the jack and hold my place in the team.

A crack of golf at the weekend and during the week whenever possible—Army Club again, of course. Still do a little rifle shooting but can't say the dresser is covered with trophies and each year the V.R.A. pay me a fifty guinea honorarium "allowable by the military board to an army type assisting in the conduct of a meeting," for being their Chief Range Officer. That's always a busy week—usually about 1,200 "pot hunting" old characters from all over the Commonwealth, to push through, three matches per day, at three ranges

and believe me they have to be kidded, coaxed, even bullied and some of them led (they're so old and blind) to keep the programme up to timings. Matter of fact I usually enthusiastically train for the rigours of the week for a few days prior—actually put on boots and gaiters and go walkabout to tone up leg muscles, by now almost galvanised to that well known under the desk position.

A swim with the kids in the local Olympic pool any day it gets warm enough to face the water and face the rude remarks from two very able young swimmers, about my diving, the splashes and the piece of a man's front which by now always hangs over the top of bathing trunks. For sheer damn back in the groove relaxation I have the R.S.L., have held every office including president for two terms, and this year concludes my two as secretary.

In season, I join with the hunting and shooting group to chase the ducks on the many lakes nearby the Murray and occasionally we venture in N.S.W.—Riverina, Deniliquin along to Jerildene to shoot a wild pig or so and bag a few of the many millions of rangas that abound thereabouts.

Otherwise except for an odd camping trip with Mum and the kids to as far afield as Canberra, it's a pretty dull sort of life one lives.

How about yourself? Believe you haven't been keeping the best of health of late. Hope the small but tough Doig frame is not developing metal fatigue.

Hope also that Jess is keeping well and enjoying her adoption in the Golden State.

Am glad indeed to know you have been able to get back neck and crop into 2/2nd Association affairs, and hope you are able for much longer to continue doing same.

Must be off now, got a few papers to sign and must hand in my pay book for the golden eagle coming Thursday.

Hope I haven't bored you to tears about me and us—if so I shall be more considerate next time.

Convey my best respects to any of the boys who happen along your way.

TONY ADAMS, of Coolangatta,
writes:—

We couldn't resist coming back here for our holidays. No doubt it is an ideal spot and a wonderful haven after the heat of the West.

We have had a doing—over 100 deg. every day since Nov and believe me the sea breezes and salt air are being inhaled at a rapid rate.

We are very hopeful of moving into the new bank home as soon as we return from holidays. It will be air cooled in the main rooms and when the new bank is complete I'll be able to move in a triangle—house, bank, club, as it is air cooled too!

We have little chance of gardening as the soil is too poorly drained but we can grow grass and it of course looks cool. I know you are an expert gardener.

Hope you are all well and thanks again for the "Courier" news. I lap them up.

Heard This?

"Lend me sixpence for my car fare home, old chap."

"Sorry, but I've only got half-a-crown."

"Fine! I'll take a taxi then."

★

The Hollywood film director wanted someone to play a Scotland Yard detective, and the casting office sent along a possible man. After a very brief interview the director sent the actor back with a note:—

"This man won't do. He hasn't a trace of a Scottish accent."

★

A loud grinding noise was heard. The captain ran angrily from the bridge to the helmsman.

Captain: "I thought you told me you knew every rock in this harbour?"

Helmsman: "Yes, sir! That was one of them."

SPECIAL MENTIONS.

REMEMBER — Meetings commence again on **FEBRUARY 2nd** with an **Ideas Night at Monash Club.** Come along with all your bright and witty ideas

MARCH MEETING on 1st March, will be **Carpet Bowls Championship.** Come along and try your skill at wrestling the title from **Ron Kirkwood**

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

Victorian Vocal Venturings

Dec. 5 dawned brightly for our Christmas treat and we were blessed with a very good day—by far the best day we have had yet. Some of the kiddies and parents (yes, Pete) went in for a swim. We had a very good roll up and some new faces were seen. The kiddies had themselves a whale of a time—including a treasure hunt and races on the sand and the usual novelties and presents, ice cream and drinks.

Ken and Margaret Monk and family made the trip from Poowong.

George Veitch and family from Sunbury. Norm Baxter and family Alan Boast and family, Leith Cooper and family, Gerry McKenzie and family, Alan Munro and family were some of the faces good to see—and everybody thoroughly enjoyed them selves.

On behalf of our committee I wish everybody in our Association and to all members of the Unit, a very Merry Christmas and happy new year and may we all go on to better and brighter things in the years to come. —Harry Botterill.

Historically Yours!

CHAPTER 6

WAR — BLOODY WAR!

After all our training and preparation the inevitable had to eventually happen. There was to be no gainsaying of the fact that we would be attacked, it all was a case of when? The relieving Portuguese army was long in coming if it ever was coming. Anyhow the wise acres said it was just a case of whether we fight the Jap on Portugese Timor or Dutch Timor as it now seemed certain that our sphere of operations would be this island of Timor.

When the blow did fall it fell firstly in Dilli in Portugese Timor and Koepang in Dutch Timor.

The war now became a war of parties or platoons and as No. 2 Section was the first Section into action let us hear what befell them when first our Company felt the might of the Nipponese war machine. Here is the story of No. 2 Section as written by their commander, Lt. C. F. G. McKenzie.

Having almost recovered from malaria whilst at Cactus Camp, No. 1 Section (Lt. Dexter) took up duty at Dilli drome, which was being prepared by Turton and Sappers for demolition. A couple of weeks later No. 1 Section was relieved on the drome by No. 2 Section (Lt. McKenzie) on the same day "A" Troop less No. 2 Section moved to Railaco. McKenzie was not impressed by his briefing at the hand over from Dexter. Dexter was vehement about "our indolent allies". He said: "Their concept is up the pole and they're impotent and ineffective. They're bogged down in a mass of obsolescent formulae and all Bols (the famous Dutch gin)." He impressed upon McKenzie to "stake a claim in the defence plan (if they ever make one) or else you'll be left like a shag on a rock."

Having checked over the demolition plan and ordered Unit stores stacked in old atap copra shed adjoining the large atap hangar to be camouflaged with palm branches, McKenzie lost no time in reporting

to Force H.Q., only to find that junior officers could only see the C.O. at daily conference at 4 p.m. However, the Adjutant turned on the Bols and the Q.M. promised to send a full quota of bread thereafter, and also delete the weight of goats' heads from the daily meat ration. He also confirmed the acquisition of a 1934 black Chev. sedan for the use of "Airfield Destruction Brigade".

The first daily conference attended was a burlesque affair. At 4 p.m. all officers reported to Force H.Q. (in the modern American Mining Coy. building overlooking the harbour) to be met by the "Brass" resting 61 year old feet on polished table, keeping a close eye on the passage around to all in attendance of a ration of Bols with accompanying cheese biscuit plus chilli sauce.

Reports were called for in the order of signals from Koepang, loaves and goats on hand from Q.M., liquor position from the Welfare Officer, engineers surveying withdrawal route to Atambo, no local report, statistician, Eta Canopus, Saturday. Having not been asked to report, McKenzie rose to introduce himself only to be told: "All dismissed for today." Fortifications and destructions considered on Fridays. Rising to excuse himself and depart McKenzie asked could he see the plan for defence, only to be told: "We must not tell you our plans until Major Spence reports you are selected officer of proper grade to keep secrets."

McKenzie attended only one more conference. "Fortifications and destructions," a few days later on Friday.

To discover that Force H.Q. did not know the demolition plan and that No. 2 Section was not included in the defence plan resulted in heated words which included from those in command: "But you are young and inexperienced, you have wild men, they may not like to fight, you may all run away, you are but

volunteers. Someone will be killed." McKenzie's reply to all this is unprintable.

Having extracted a promise that the Adjutant would visit the drome to see No. 2 Section Brens, etc., demonstrated, with a view to including them in the perimeter defence, and waited long enough for the O.C. Infantry Sector to advise the Q.M. his "area was running short of coconuts for his digging troops—could some be brought by lugger from Atamboa?"

McKenzie returned to the drome and set about constructing his own defences. A Bren strong post forward, reached by a tunnel from the deep storm drain, camouflaged by "sling nets" off the grounded Japanese Nanyei Maru freighter. A Bren post held back on the rough apex where diagonal runways met, to cover our demolition post and signal pit and give depth also flank protection to our forward post.

Sub-section weapon slits supporting the Brens, the whole system linked by crawl trenches, controlled from a deep command post, centrally sited. The whole earthworks being revetted by the large quantity of hewn foot square 40ft. lengths of hardwood (the Portuguese had conveniently brought there to build a modern hangar) and which was "taboo" thereby making it a sheer delight to the hefty Curran and crafty Delbridge and their sub-sections to axe into suitable sizes with competitive glee.

Having thrilled the adjutant with their "fire power" and convinced him of their marksmanship, No. 2 Section was given a 40 deg. arc of responsibility on the drome perimeter and permitted to cut fields of fire. This turned into "wails of misfire" when shortly it was discovered that a considerable acreage of "valuable palms" were swiftly felled and placed to roof over pits and posts, now bending under the weight of sand and bristling with cactus and carefully transplanted clumps of tussock, kunai grass and the like, for camouflage.

A few days later with some pits as yet uncovered, two Oscars strafed the drome during breakfast to be met by a hail of fire including rifles, Brens, tommyes and a Colt .45 Browning. There was even the bloke who threw his two goat

chops with a loud: "Cop these, Y.L.B." and the other who said: "Don't shoot the bastards down, let's take one back and enter him in the Stawell Gift. He's real fast." Their visit was too fleeting for even the most timid to think about his newly acquired A.A. pit. There was as yet no force A.A. warning signal.

That afternoon McKenzie propelled himself into Force H.Q. to argue about the plan for defence and endeavour to have the works of supporting troops in the drome sector speeded up. His answer was: "But your men are big and strong. They can work fast and they take all the timber. My troops are small, they are used to patrol not digging. There is no hurry. We will not be lucky enough to fight the Japanese from our fortress."

Having stressed that his earthworks were nothing more than protection against air attack and strongly voiced his opinion that his troops could best be used for defence if they were sited and dug-in Dilli side of the drome and co-ordinated within the whole perimeter defence with mortar defensive fire allotted and the demolition post moved to that location, McKenzie departed after yet another failing mission after having been promised that the "Defence and Fortification Division" would examine his proposal. It has never been known what came of the examination.

Mortar base plate positions and one low level O.P. were actually constructed adjoining the area but a useful defensive plan for the drome sector never did become a co-ordinated reality.

From then until Feb. 19, 1942, except for a couple more visits from the Oscars and the daily Dinah recce plane passing high over, a period of restiveness was experienced by the troops.

Monotony was broken by an occasional visit to a Chinese hash-house for a meal followed by a ding dong race home by Timor pony drawn chariot after having slaked the thirst on Vignac at the Benafico Hotel.

The section patrolled constantly the tracks and spurs south of Dilli, compass traversing as they went and penetrated as far as Lau Lora, a

hill station en route to Aileu and inland.

It was during these excursions that Curran and Co. located and constructed a "hide out" in which to cache rations and ammo for any eventual "bug out". Other excursions were—the 28 mile march for some to Railaco and back (in a day) to go on sick parade.

A meat ration of one water buffalo head plus 5ft. horns which enforced upon Bowers and Hooper the dire necessity to make away with a prime guernsey heifer from the "Comoro Research Station". Criddle played "dragnet" losing all the hide on his front from finger to toe in the process when the heifer broke in a mad gallop to escape across the drome.

Poynton shot it with Colt .45. McKenzie dressed it. Hooper and Co. buried the offal on the strip in which a Dutch staff car later bogged. The resultant smell when extracting the car prompted the Dutch Q.M. to say: "Phew, Mac, perhaps, yes please it is the offal of the ox." He had done the investigation after complaint by Porto Governor. Dave Ross—Australian Consul in Dilli—fed mightily off a full rump steak presented by the Section, and he denied most convincingly to Dutch and Porto alike, that these Australian troops certainly would not steal an ox. There is a long jail penalty in Australia for sheep stealing. True but a doubtful connection. Then came a rotten shark for a fish ration followed by Poynton and Spr. Browne and Co. "jellying" up 60 odd barracuda whilst sea borne in a purloined outrigger. Perhaps it was a Friday.

Don Hudson having tired of goat and buffalo persuaded some German "friends" Dilli side of the drome per medium of his "Achtung" tommy gun, that the drome boys loved pork, needed pork and "rat a tat tat," had bloody pork. First pig I ever skinned but the change of diet was lovely.

By Feb. 19 McKenzie still hadn't been able to discover "who will give the order to blow the drome" but he had received delegations from the restive troops after the fall of Singapore, etc., seeking an assurance that No. 2 would fight it out with the L.Y.B. "None of this

bloody surrender business." He had also discussed at length with Curran and Delbridge "what is our main task" and determined "to hell with all of them—our job is to destroy the drome and if we are ever forced off it, down goes that bloody plunger before we go." In total black out restrictions the last discussions terminated, upon duty sub-section reporting at 9.30 p.m. that all was well and the three major war lords of No. 2 put "lights out". At 11.20 p.m. Jack Hasson, on guard, reported: "There is something funny going on, on the beach. Looks like ships and it sounds like bloody winches rattling. You better have a look."

"Stand to. Listen. It's ships alright. Bloody Portugese troops probably thinks this is the harbour. Couple of the boys not here Mac, must have shot through after lights out. Send a runner to get them back. Ring Force H.Q.: 'We hear winches, see ships, think it's troops unloading.'" From Force H.Q.: "Nonsense, it is the Portugese."

"Can I speak to Capt. Callinan? Bernie, I think it is the Nips." "Can you verify, Jerry. May be the Portos. How are your digs? Are they ready for action? Check on the ships and let me know as soon as you can."

McKenzie with Delbridge and Co. proceeded to the beach. "Yes, it's ships. Christ they're are troops landing only a few yards away. Must be rowing ashore. Phutter, phutter—shit, motor boats. The little bastards. Let's have a smack at them. Down—a bloody searchlight. Keep still, keep quiet. They are looking up the harbour. Boom, boom, boom, whizz, whizz, whizz. The bastards are shelling Dilli. Silence. Crump, crump, crump. Back to the phone. "Hullo, that you Bernie? Japs all right. Yes, I know, shell just hit here. Christ. They're landing on the drome beach also in the plantation and further down on the Comoro. Are the gallants coming into position? Who is going to command this sector? Orders for blowing the drome. What about their arty? Ships are only a few hundred yards off the gun position.

"Hold your ground, Jerry. Patrol out to meet them. Fight back to the drome and blow it if you

have to move. Stay put near your phone. Keep me posted. Send a runner if your line is cut. I'll try to get these—silence—hullo, hullo."

Bloody phones gone, might have knocked it with a shell, maybe Nips behind us have cut it. Christ, put a couple near the road, Kev. Who is that singing? Couple of the boys coming home. Send someone out to meet them. Keep quiet, shh, you bastards, the Nips are here, fair dinkum. You poof-ter Pinky, have a peanut. No joking, the Nips are shelling Dilli. Get into your pits, it's on. Rotten bastards spoiled a good night.

It was the Japs alright. They had landed a sizeable force from several transports at three points on the beach between the drome and the Comoro River. They were soon probing at the drome and little did No. 2 Section know at that time that they (22) in all were the only troops who were going to try and hold the Japs' onslaught upon Dilli.

Whilst the shelling of Dilli continued with the aid of ships' search lights, Jap infantry closed up to No. 2 Section's pits. The first greeting was a hail of hand grenades followed by war whoops and a rush towards the hangar. No. 2 cut them down with their whole arsenal blazing. Some got through the cactus into the storm drain and into our crawl trenches. Curran's sub-section slipped into them with bayonets. One tall swaying Perth boy left his bayonet impaled through a Jap and into a tree stump. A small patrol from No. 2 pursued the fleeing raiders and disposed of quite a few more, then momentary silence followed by the usual reports borne of war nerves, such as: "2,000 of em near the Arab's house. Platoons of em marching up the road."

McKenzie was forced at this stage to split his force sending Delbridge and sub-section to watch the road and set up his Bren in the Dutch mortar pits. They arrived at the pits almost simultaneously with a Jap party outflanking the drome en route to Dilli. The boys on the Bren immediately got stuck into the Japs in front of them, but were quickly over run by others behind their position. The Bren was lost

and those manning it, if not killed, went into captivity for the rest of the war. Almost at once English speaking voices could be heard coming from the cactus between Curran's pits and the road: "You are our friend now. You must tell them to stop shooting. Hey, Macca, let us come in. We are friends. Don't shoot."

McKenzie and Curran together now, hearing this, decided it was a trick and concentrated all available weapons in readiness, to warn any captive that might be there and shoot up the Japs. At this stage Delbridge came in rather battered, told what had happened on the road and said: "Those so and so's can't speak English. I've been lying on the drome amongst dozens of them and all they whispered to me was 'Desuika' or something. They wouldn't have had time to get one of my blokes around from the Bren. Let's blast the L.Y.B." The Japs were promptly engaged and for quite a while all was peaceful.

Soon after this the Section runner who had been sent to contact Callinan when the phone went off, got back to McKenzie's post. He had cycled bang into the rear of a Jap party on the road between the drome and Dilli and been temporarily taken prisoner. Whilst passing over the storm drain bridge, Dilli side of the drome, he dived over the rail into the slimy drain and escaped. On his way back he contacted the artillery position and was disgusted to report: "They are waiting for daylight to sink a ship." He was later again sent off to Dilli and this time contacted Callinan whom he accompanied back to Railaco after leaving the hastily retreating Force H.Q.

By a trick of fate, low lying cloud had throughout the night obscured No. 2 Section Lucas lamp post on the drome from contacting H.Q. station at Three Spurs and as was usual at night static prevented McKenzie from contacting H.Q. by wireless. No. 2 was therefore out of all contact except by runner once the phone went out. The gallant Sig Gannon tried all night to get a message through. He was mortally wounded in the early hours whilst operating the tell-tale Lucas. He, like No. 2 Section, deserved more resolute support by

the rest of Dilli Force. Being out of contact and fearing the Japs would ambush our ration truck on the morning run down to Dilli, McKenzie sent a runner to try and get through to H.Q. He was to skirt the road until crossing the Comoro, then beat up the road and report to the first 2/2nd man he met. Unfortunately he bumped into a Jap party going up river (presumably the ones No. 2 engaged at Lau Lora next day) and did not get back on to the road soon enough to prevent a Section from "C" Platoon driving into a Jap ambush aboard the ration truck early a.m. Gallant Keith Hayes survived the resultant massacre, but his is another story. Our M.C. Orderley also ran into an ambush and was killed.

McKenzie, having drawn his heroic few remaining troops into the area of the hangar and Curran's Bren pit, with a listening post in the storm drain on the road and the two Sappers in the demolition post, waited for the next move, after booby-trapping some officer trunks and unit stores. At the break of dawn, heavy enemy mortar fire began falling on No. 2 in the hangar area, followed by machine gun fire from the paddy fields over the road and a long line of Jap infantry in extended order suddenly rose advancing on the drome. No. 2 engaged movement all along the line. God forgive if our fire destroyed any of our chaps in the truck. Now the Jap naval destroyers commenced shelling the drome at short range, but their shot passed harmlessly over No. 2 to mingle with the cacophony, including the unmistakable throb of Jap plane engines high overhead, waiting for good light to swoop. Not being trained for defensive operations, but having sat tight for seven hours all night, by now almost surrounded and short of ammo. and having long realised they were left to "go it alone," McKenzie decided the time had come to "blow and go". A quick word to Sappers Williamson and Richards—down went the plunger and up went the whole guts of the drome. It was a comforting sight, great lumps of earth, dust and smoke rocketing into the sky to crash down about the now fast-

moving No. 2 boys as they rapidly left the drome en route to Dilli. Turton and his Sappers had prepared the charges well—10 or more large craters effectively blocking both diagonal runways.

The speed with which the No. 2 boys passed through the craters to escape the heavy volume of small arms fire now directed on them can perhaps best be gauged by the remark of one gallant lad who said: "On the way off the drome I caught up with a rabbit, and said to him, move off the track bunny, and leave it to a bloke who really can run."

No. 2 had selected as a R.V. a spot in the coconut palms near the Porto abattoir—here took place a shouted check of heads, whilst moving, and on into Force H.Q. Destruction and more to come. The atap hangar wouldn't burn but the Chev car was shot to bits. There was no time to carry our gallant wounded but a brave man refused to leave his mate without water. The scene at Force H.Q. didn't boost morale. A few dead left behind, yes . . . but too many alive left to wear the Red Cross. A signal station to destroy—no trouble to Poynton and Co. Vickers guns aplenty pointing to the sky, no one manning them. Dump the loaded belts in the sea. Push on, to Lau Lora, en route back to "A" Platoon. Good road this. Let's have a truck. Chinese man, owner of truck, very argumentive. He lose argument. All aboard for Lau Lora. Overtake force doctor with Ford Car. McKenzie going ahead in the car, was driven almost into a Jap party digging on the road. He engaged in no shooting battle with the Jap officer. Neither fired a shot. McKenzie's rifle had a hole through the magazine preventing it from loading, the Jap luckily had an empty pistol. Poynton and Co. shot it out with the Japs for a while but soon became outnumbered. No. 2 didn't make it to RV at Lau Lora. They didn't all get to next RV on the Comoro off Lau Lora spur, but all who left the drome joined up with "A" Platoon by now just south of Railaco. Poynton and Thomas (who had received a bad knife stab in the foot) re-joined No. 2 some weeks later at Ainaro. No. 2 was re-inforced and

moved out to secure a flank of Laidlaw's withdrawal route from Liquica. Three days later they killed 37 Japs in an ambush, probably some of the force who had inflicted casualties on Nisbet's Section at Liquica a day or so before. No. 2 Section was the first of our troops to do battle with the Jap. Their task had been to destroy the Dilli drome prepared for demolition by the Sappers. They were not trained or equipped to take part in a defensive battle. The whole force allotted to Dilli could in no way hope to conduct an effective defence of an area as wide-spread as the town and the drome.

Once Coy. H.Q. undertook to prepare the drome for demolition our troops in succession, first the Sapper Section, followed by No. 1, then No. 2 occupied a vulnerable point and one almost sure to be a prize to an invader, literally on their own outside the perimeter. What value the commander placed on securing the demolition of the drome and how in his plan he appreciated this would be done, we will never know.

How poorly he appreciated Jap intentions in the light of known happenings is surely the most unhappy memory 2/2nd has of all the years of campaigning which followed. How well the No. 2 boys acquitted themselves in accomplishing their task, in the now epic battle of Dilli drome, may be gauged in value only by remembering that they proved what we had never doubted: "We had been well trained".

This was our first crack at the Jap. It was fought during perhaps the blackest month in Australia's history, but the "Force intact still fighting" history had been laid on a sound foundation. Though trained as offensive raiders, we were flexible, disciplined and determined enough to stand—a few against

"Historically Yours" will in succeeding chapters, endeavour to describe how often our first defensive experience was to be emulated by offensive defence of equal audacity.

To end this chapter, though any story of the defence of Dilli by us, for our readers' needs must be a critical review from memory, let us remember that we never did

have the confidence of the Commander's intentions. Were we to leave the drome once his forces became dug in, if so, presumably we were to raid from the hills, those enemy forces concentrated against him.

In that account just how farsighted his plans were, we must judge by events which were to follow.

Who knows 2/2nd Ind. Coy. was not to be used as the counter-stroke force to destroy his concentrations outside Dilli, or were we perhaps being positioned to form a wide screen—who knows?

No. 2 Section, as it was at Dilli: Lt. "Buga" McKenzie, Cpl. Kev. Curran, Cpl. "Boong" Delbridge, L/Cpl. "Gunner" Brown, L/Cpl. "Chook" Fowler, Ptes. Joe Poynton, Lofty Bowers, Neil Hooper, Duck Watson, Pinky Criddle, Fred Grows, Merv Ryan, Jack Hasson, Herb Thomas, Tiger Doyle, Fred Smith, Bruce Smith, Slim Holly, Sig. P. Gannon, Cpl. Tex Richards, Spr. R. Williamson, Pte. Scott (cook).

Awards won at Dilli: 1 M.C., 1 D.C.M., 2 Dutch Bronze Crosses, 2 M.I.D.

(To be continued)

★

Heard This?

Guest (to host on first visit to new home): "Well, Marvin, how do you find it here?"

Marvin: "Walk right up those stairs, turn left, and 'it's' two doors down."

★

Joan: "But advertising is just selling, and I've had plenty of experience selling. I learned the hard way too. I had plenty of doors slammed in my face."

Candid friend: "So that's what caused it?"

★

As reported: "The happy couple will make their home at the old Manse."

As printed: "The happy couple will make their home at the old man's."

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