



2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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Editorial

The Humanities

Nowaday one can hardly turn on the radio or T.V. or open a newspaper without seeing or hearing some reference to the humanities. Usually it is some learned oracle sounding off in opposition to professional people devoting their major energies to the study and practice of the sciences such as pure science, engineering, physic, or the like, to the exclusion of the classics such as English, Greek, Economics, etc. The one thing that strikes one most forcibly is the totally abstract way such people seem to view human beings.

Elsewhere in this issue is a quite lengthy letter from a member of No. 1 Coy, Ken Doak, and this letter personifies your humble servant's idea of the real humanities. Individuals, as people not too complex as the phsycolgists would have us believe that all people must be, but plain feet on the ground citizens. Once every now and again one's thinking gets a jolt and the home-spun philosophy depicted by Ken Doak's friend gets nearer to the heart of a true human being than all the weird and wonderful studies that set out to make a human into something he or she really is not.

The tendency these days is to

create a complex problem out of simply solvable situations. In groping into the darkness to find what in most cases is not even there they make a serious problem of nothing.

If all people who have lost their sight are anything like the philosophers that Ken Doak depicts his friend as, then the time is over-ripe to give them a go at showing just what a person the true human being is.

There is definitely a good lesson to be learned from such letters as this one and if the appeal in the Editorial of last month did nothing else but provide this one lesson then the dividend that has been paid is truly terrific. Once every now and again from the most unexpected sources material, which makes one stop and think, comes to the daylight depicting the wonderful quality of human beings just as human beings and restores a flagging faith, lost most times by a surfeit of daily press accounts of the seamy side of life.

As a study in the true humanities this letter is a classic and is commended to all readers with the hope that it brings to you the same intense satisfaction in just how good most individuals are under that ordinary exterior.

SPECIAL MENTIONS
APRIL MEETING on the 5th

West Australian Whisperings

Association Activities

MARCH MEETING

The usual monthly meeting was held at Monash Club on March 1, and as advertised took the form of the Association Carpet Bowls Championship. It was "Jaggers Night Out". The noted bowlers among the gang had other commitments or being too long on the grass couldn't cope with the carpet. Champion for the last two years, Ron Kirkwood, found the task of making it a hat trick beyond him and was eliminated in the first round. Early favourite after a roll up or two, was "Rusty" Studdy, but he found one of the jaggers in one of his most lucky streaks, while Rusty couldn't keep em on the carpet, and out went Rusty.

The final was a tense match between "Rocky" Williams and "Curly" Bowden, both intent on showing just how good you could be if Lady Luck was on your side. At the crucial moment the little lady deserted "Curly" and played cupid with "Rocky" so we now have a new champ in "Rocky" Williams. All good clean fun and highly enjoyed by a good muster. These meetings with something of a competitive nature seem to be what the gang go for in a big way and a bit of friendly rivalry seems to make for deeper friendships.

WONGAN HILLS CONVENTION

Wow! Have you ever been to a Country Convention at Wongan Hills? If you haven't you sure have missed a treat.

It has just been my pleasure to attend the Third Country Convention held at this centre and I can say on behalf of all the boys and their wives that we are truly grateful for the marvellous hospitality extended to us by those great folk—Stan and Blanche Sadler, Charlie and Mavis Sadler and Jack and Jean Fowler. Their untiring efforts to make our stay a happy one were rewarded in seeing everyone enjoy themselves.

Carloads started arriving on Friday night and continued coming right up to Monday. Those who

made the journey were: Gerry and Lal Green, Fred and Glad Napier, Ron Kirkwood and wife, George Boyland and wife, Arthur and Beryl Smith, Reg Harrington and wife, Jack Hasson and wife, Don Turton, "Sprig" McDonald, "Curly" Bowden, Jack Carey, "Rocky" Williams, "Slim" Holly, and Wilf and Lorraine March. Jack Denman blew in for a few minutes on his way home after attending a swimming carnival at Cunderdin.

On Saturday afternoon our hosts were at the local "watering point," the Wongan Hills Hotel, and met the visitors as they arrived. This proved quite a strenuous event for them as they were still "welcoming" at 9.45 p.m. when the last car (for that day) arrived. It was well after ten before the various cars departed for the farms.

Sunday morning saw further visitors arriving in time for the business side of the Convention (reported elsewhere in this issue).

After the Convention a general trek was made to the Wongan Hotel in time for the "session". (This by the way, you Eastern States' readers, is a very pleasant little one hour drinking time made available by hotels outside the 20 mile radius limit of Perth, on Sundays.)

A few drinks to wash away the dust and then off to Jack Fowler's farm where a tasty spread was arranged by our host ladies. Oh, what a spread—as only the country folk can do. What with the large amounts of tucker and a few drinks together with a very hot day, most of us were quite satisfied to sit around and have a yarn. Still, a cricket game was in evidence despite the heat. Where their energy came from amazes me. Perhaps they were only working up a thirst for a lovely cold keg which duly arrived just after a 40 mile return trip to Wongan Hills.

In the evening everyone gathered round a huge barbecue made by Jack Fowler out of an old farm implement wheel. Being a "Town-ee" I couldn't tell you what machine it was off.

It was after this pleasant meal that "Spriggy" McDonald tried his hand at spotlight shooting, meet-

ing with immediate success, and bagged a fox. "Sprig" assures us that he intends to make a "Davy Crockett" cap with the tail and wear it to future occasions.

All good things have to come to an end and that was the lot for Sunday.

Monday was another matter, with some of the lads having to make early return trips home, but the bulk of them managed to arrive back in Wongan Hills just before lunch and have a few drinks at the "local".

Our hosts provided us with a sumptuous lunch at the Wongan Hills Hotel. It was during this repast when Jack Denman blew in for a few minutes.

After lunch we went to the tennis courts to try our hand against the Wongan boys. Well, they wiped the floor with us—perhaps very fitting after having made us so welcome over the long weekend.

To conclude: Thanks once again Blanche, Mavis, Jean, Charlie, Stan and Jack.

—WILF MARCH.

Jack Cary reports on the business side of this marvellous outing which was a meeting held at R.S.L. Hall, Wongan, on Sunday, March 6, 1960.

Present: Messrs. J. Fowler, D. Turton, C. and S. Sadler, R. Kirkwood, F. Napier, C. Bowden, R. McDonald, W. March, S. Holly, J. Green, G. Boyland, R. Williams, A. Smith, and J. Carey.

Meeting commenced at 11 a.m., with President Mr. Kirkwood in the chair. Mr. Kirkwood in declaring the meeting open offered a warm welcome to all present and thanked the country members for their continued support.

Business arising:

"Courier": Secretary appealed to members to supply information to the editor, Mr. Doig, to assist him in compiling the Unit feature "Historically Yours."

Point Peron Development Scheme: President read letter received from Council indicating there was a strong possibility of the Association receiving an allocation of land in the Point Peron area. Country members present indicated they were not interested in acquiring an interest themselves in the project. After a short discussion it was decided to refer

their decision to the management committee.

Reserve Account Fund: President told members this stood at £166/19/2. As no finality had been reached on what to do with the money accrued, members were asked for suggestions. Mr. Turton said he envisaged some time or other the Association having its own headquarters and suggested the money might be set aside for that purpose. He realised the project might seem an ambitious one but felt it would be a worthy objective. Other country members present spoke in support of Mr. Turton and the general feeling of the meeting was in favour of this suggestion. It was resolved to convey the feelings of the meeting to the committee of management.

Theatre Battle Honours: President outlined our appeal to Department of Army re Battle Honours and the latest reply received from the army.

Empire Games Re-union: Secretary asked members to keep in mind the Re-union planned for November, 1962.

Further Conventions: Mr. Jack Fowler speaking on behalf of the Wongan Hills members, said he would prefer to see conventions at Wongan Hills held in November, rather than March. Messrs. C. and S. Sadler supported Mr. Fowler's remarks. It was decided to refer the matter to committee.

There being no further business the meeting closed at noon.

EMPIRE GAMES RE-UNION

The various planners are steadily going ahead to make the Empire Games to be held in Perth from Nov. 8, 1962, something to be remembered.

Already completed is the Velodrome at Lake Monger. This cycling track, in which Mick Calcutt had quite a large hand in building, is considered by leading riders to be something quite out of the bag. Based largely on the Cycling Velodrome built in Melbourne for the Olympics the planners have been able to learn from the mistakes made there and get something very near to perfection. There will be adequate provision for quite large crowds to view the events in comfort. The setting near the main

other games stadiums, etc., is ideal and the big swamp area of Lake Monger provides a restful setting giving an illusion of being far from the maddening crowd without really being any great distance from the city proper.

A competition for the lay-out of the Games Village has been conducted and was won by the Engineer and Secretary of the Gosnells Road Board, a small Local Government area just out of Perth. The plan evoked high praise from the judges for its attraction and simplicity of design. The village will be laid out according to this plan and the individual houses will be built by the State House Commission in a high multiplicity of designs to break down any idea of sameness and make the overall village a suburb of great beauty when the games are over. The village is to be placed in the Floreat Park-Wembley Downs area only about a mile from the beach and nestling under Raebold Hill, the highest point of the actual metropolitan area and close to the lovely Wembley Downs Municipal Golf Course.

Readers will see that planning is well under way and that Perth has much to offer to intending visitors in the way of entertainment. Add to this the fact that the Association intends to leave no stone unturned to make the Re-union side something to live in your memory for all time. Heed the admonition to start saving now for a wonderful holiday. Make your slogan "Speculate a quid a week now, accumulate a wonderful time in 1962."

APRIL MEETING

Monash Club will be the scene of the April meeting to be held on the 5th. The evening will be a rifle shoot so come along and see if you still retain any of the old prowess. (You will be surprised just how really crook you are.) Last time we had a night of this nature the turn up was one of the best for ages and we hope that this meeting will be much the same again.

ANZAC DAY

There will not be another issue of the "Courier" prior to Anzac Day so a bit of detail of this great day will not be out of place. For

those who like to see sun rises the Dawn Ceremony is thoroughly recommended. This most impressive ceremony is in the true spirit of Anzac and gives a great feeling of satisfaction to all who attend.

The Unit will be forming under the Double Red Diamond banner in the vicinity of Pier-st. at about 9.30 a.m. for the main march. As usual it is hoped that as big a muster as possible will take place. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to meet your mates in the best possible atmosphere. Don't forget the order of dress: "MEDALS AT THE HIGH PORT". The meeting place after the march will be the normal rendezvous at the 16th Bn. Drill Hall. Get yourself a leave pass and be in it or you will be sorry for months afterwards. Anzac Day falls on a Monday this year but don't let the long weekend keep you away.

Personalities

Once again it is my sad duty to have to convey our condolences to Fred Sparkman. Only recently Fred lost his father then this month he lost his mother. A tough blow Fred, to lose both your parents so quickly and we hope that time will heal your sorrow.

Good to see Jim Corney at our last meeting. The old man of our gang had been having a tough trot with his health and it was good to see him among the gang once more. He did a great job as umpire for the bowls.

Merv Cash was another sighted at this meeting making a comeback after an absence from meetings for a few months. Merv looks a bundle of health and we hope he can make a habit of meetings in the future. If I remember correctly Merv was a bit of a dab with the rifle back in Foster days and he should give any of the gang a shake up at the April meeting.

"Rusty" Studdy told me he was playing competitive bowls with the Swan Bowling Club in one of their lower grade teams. "Rusty" is in his first year as a bowler and reckons it is a great game. He is looking forward to our game against the Maimed and Limbless Association.

Saw Don Turton briefly during

the month on one of his speedy rushes to the city. Don always eager to discuss Association affairs.

Also for about a second and a half saw Reg Harrington who had not recovered his voice after the Wongan Convention. Seemed to have had a good time and quite keen on these outings.

Wendel Wilkerson called on me the other day and confirmed that he is now resident at Armadale where he has bought a small property. Sold out at Goomalling and decided to see the neon signs for a while. Hopes to be a frequent visitor to Association affairs.

A most unexpected visitor was David Dexter who was in Perth on Labor Day in connection with his new job as Secretary of the Universities Commission. David was most impressed with the W.A. University and said it was his idea of the perfect setting for such an institution. Managed to get a few hours conversation and an odd noggin in with Dave before he departed after a one day sojourn in Perth. He was hopeful of further such trips in the near future. Just prior to his departure from New Delhi in India, David had the pleasure in his previous job with Australian High Commissioners Office, of entertaining the Australian Test team while they played in that great metropolis. Said they were a wonderful bunch of chaps and probably the best type of ambassador for Australia especially losing that Test to India. Dave said he had now settled down nicely in Melbourne where his H.Q. will be for a few years and would be linking up with the Association in that city. Get the hooks into him Harry Botterill!

Vince Swann and his brother are on a tour of many of the sheep studs in South Australia, Victoria and N.S.W., probably on the lookout for some animals for their property at Salmon Gums. Vince is a great judge of a good sheep and I believe most interested in forming a stud on his property.

Down in Perth for the Farmers Union Conference was Tom Crouch from Manjimup and Bert Burges from Broomehill. Saw Tom for a while, never changes, still as youthful looking as ever and keen to know all the news. Said he was

still in the dairy business in quite a solid way. Had had a look at the hop growing but had discarded the idea as not his cup of tea. Afraid that particular week was one of my busiest and just didn't manage to see Bert Burges for which I am genuinely sorry as it is always a sheer pleasure to see and talk with Bert. Hope to rectify that the next time Bert is down here.

One of the gang, in the person of Freddy Gowns, had an unfortunate accident at his farm at Ballidu. Fred was removing a tractor tyre when the rim blew and broke his leg in two places, once at the ankle and once at the shin. He was rushed to Perth for operation and is at present in Royal Perth Hospital, Ward 52, Bed 18, and would be very pleased to receive any visitors who can go and see him. We wish you a speedy and complete recovery, Freddy.

Harry Sproxtton has been in R.G.H., Hollywood, with a back injury. My informant, Gerry Green, who said Harry was due out any old tick of the clock. Hope you are as near 100 per cent once again, Harry, as we old codgers can ever hope to be.

Merv Ryan is out of Hollywood at last but I don't know whether he has returned to work yet. Any-way hope that day is not too far off, Merv. It has been a long, long time.

I believe one of the highlights of the Wongan Convention was a tennis match (grudge) between "Pancho" Napier and "Lew Hoad" Hasson. Both displayed terrific form and allowing for a slight hang-over "Pancho's" greater reach paid off and "Lew" had to pay up in the shape of a 5/- lottery ticket in the Association's name.

The word has gotten around that one chap is about to forsake a nickname of long standing, namely "Spriggy," for a new appellation of either "Bushy Tail" or "Foxy". Haven't quite got to the bottom of the mystery but perhaps further elucidation on Anzac Day.

Following are a few personalities by Wilf March from the Wongan Convention.

"Sprig" McDonald, as ever, the life of the party. He seems to have that much untapped energy one wonders what he will do next.

A great supporter of these conventions. "Spriggy" has the happy knack of enjoying himself to the utmost and at the same time exuding his personality and making everyone enjoy themselves too. His achievement "plus" was to bag a fox whilst spotlight shooting on Jack Fowler's property on the night of the barbecue. Some unkind folk said that he ran over it—others were of the opinion that it gave itself up. I am going to be charitable and give him full credit for a dandy piece of spotlight shooting. "Spriggy" gives full marks to the young lad who works with Jack Fowler. He emulated the mighty Brabham in his handling of the ute whilst chasing the fox.

"Curly" Bowden—bosom mate of the "Mac," was as lively as ever. "Curly" is another who considers a convention a must for him. "Curly" forgot that old father time is creeping up on him and wrenched his shoulder whilst trying to show some of the young bloods his athletic prowess. In fact "Spriggy" told me he could hardly raise a glass of beer to his lips. Boy, oh boy, how that shoulder must have hurt.

Don Turton—all the way from Wandering and looking as youthful as ever. Unfortunately Don had to travel in single harness as Vida could not make the trip. It speaks volumes for Wongan hospitality when Don can make the hurried trip when such a busy man himself. Don made the trip in his Land-Rover sleeping on the way-side overnight and arriving on Sunday morning.

Ron Kirkwood—the President made the trip with wife and kiddie, arriving on Saturday afternoon and departing Monday afternoon. A good yarn, a few jars and plenty to eat kept Ron busy. The Kirkwood clan were the guests of Jack and Jean Fowler. When Ron was departing it was noted that he had a very "rosy" complexion. He asserted that it was definitely sunburn but the general opinion was that the old blood pressure had had a bit of a hammering.

Gerry Green—the old "GIG," along with Lal and youngest daughter motored up on Sunday morning. Gerry's smiling countenance, as ever, brightened up the proceed-

ings no end. During Sunday evening Gerry and a few of the boys rendered old army songs and ditties. Gerry's interpretation of a ballet dancer, whilst not quite authentic, had much promise.

"Slim" Holly, travelled to Wongan with Gerry Green. Slim is another who has been a stalwart attendee of country conventions. Always a happy soul who thoroughly enjoys himself and loves a yarn over a glass of the amber with his old mates.

Arthur Smith and Beryl made the trip on Saturday and stayed with Stan and Blanche Sadler. What a friend we have in Arthur. A tireless worker who can always be seen somewhere around the place with pen and paper in hand organising something or other. One could never value the service "Smithy" has given to the Association. How he can keep up putting out so much energy when all the time his health is not of the best. Anyway he decided to push the ulcers and aches aside and really gave it a bash.

Jack Carey, another of those rare types whose sole thought seems to be just how much they can do for the Association. Jack is an ever-green with us and a very popular member. Whenever the ladies are around—so I am told—they invariably discuss the wheres and whyfores of marrying Jack off. Lay off him girls, he is a confirmed bachelor and doesn't even look like weakening.

Fred Napier, travelled with his wife, Gladys, in Arthur Smith's car to Wongan. Fred and Glad stayed with Charlie and Mavis Sadler. Here's another great worker for the cause. Fred, like Arthur Smith can usually be found moving around with pen, cheque book and a bundle of papers relating to the finances of the Association. Due to Fred's astuteness the finances of our show can be determined at the drop of a hat. Fred's cheery personality, and never ending quips, helped to keep things moving.

Rocky Williams, says he had one of the best weekends in his life. Arrived in Wongan on Saturday night and stayed with Charlie and Mavis Sadler. Rocky spent two years on Cocos Island living a hermit's existence and vows that now he is back in circulation he intends

to miss nothing. Look out Rocky, I can see you on the committee very soon.

Jack Hasson, made the journey from Ballidu with Norma on both Sunday and Monday. Plenty of hard work must be the shot because Jack looks as youthful as ever. Cuts a pretty fair figure on the tennis court although he seemed to find more wood on the racquet than strings. Out of practice that's what it is, Jack.

George Boyland, stayed with Stan Sadler and voted this the best Wongan Convention ever. George and his wife joined in with all the fun going and was heard to remark that there should be another "do" in about a month's time. Gee, George, you sure can take your punishment! (This is a gross libel.—G.B.)

Reg Harrington, managed to get away from his farm long enough to bring his wife up for the festivities. They arrived at the Fowler ranch on Sunday and left in the evening after a pretty strenuous day. Gerry Green and Slim Holly were to stay overnight at Reg's farm. By the way, Reg has cracked it for a daughter at last—after five bonny boys.

Jack Denman, popped into Wongan on his way home from Cunderdin where his son had great success in winning an important swimming event. Jack seems to be weathering fairly well although he'll have to watch that waistline. After a couple of drinks the Denmans had to depart for the long journey to Geraldton. Glad to see you again, Jack.

Wilf March, made the trip with his wife, Lorraine, in Rocky Williams' car and stayed with Charlie and Mavis Sadler. Wilf hasn't missed a convention at Wongan and could be seen having a good time wherever the fun was. Wilf was having a shot at Jack Hasson's tennis prowess but he didn't mention how Jack Fowler and a laddie in short pants swept he and Jack Carey off the court. Oh, well, he was writing about the boys and hoped to get away with it.

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"LEST WE FORGET"

MARCH

Mitchell, Pte. E. H., killed in action, Timor, March 2, 1942. Age 35.
Knight, Pte. P., killed in action, Timor, March 2, 1942. Age 31.
Mulqueeney, Pte. G., killed on service, Queensland, March 22, 1943. Age 37.
Stewart, Cpl. Alex, killed in action, New Guinea, March 9, 1944. Age 24.

Committee Comment

The Committee met for business at Monash Club on March 15. The roll up was excellent. Much business was rapidly disposed of during the course of the evening.

Correspondence has been received from the National Fitness Council stating that it was possible that an allocation would be made to the Association of ground at Pt. Peron. Discussion was deferred until concrete information was received from the N.F.C.

The President and Secretary gave a resume of the Wongan Convention and said it was an outstanding event and reflected great credit on those who organised in the Wongan area.

The March meeting was voted a success and the President said he was pleased with the attendance on this occasion.

The Secretary was empowered to arrange a bowls night with the Maimed and Limbless Association as soon as possible.

All details for the conduct of Anzac Day were dealt with and as this day now largely falls into a pattern jobs were swiftly handed out to those present.

A working bee at Kings Park was arranged for Sunday, April 3, to have this area ship shape for Anzac Day. The President said the area looked quite well despite the water restrictions, but a lot of work would be required to bring it to the condition that was hoped for.

News received from Dept. of the Army with reference to our claim for Battle and Theatre Honours was still hazy and until further information was received this matter was deferred.

Meeting closed at 10 p.m.

Random Harvest

B. J. (Peter) BARDEN, of 6GN Geraldton, writes:—

I received one of the most pleasant surprises of my 39 years yesterday, when reporting for the A.B.C. State and Regional News the mammoth athletics meeting held at Geraldton. Noticing a Herculean type sporting a N.S.W. athletic blazer, I made inquiries as he looked familiar, and was thrilled to renew an acquaintance a few minutes later with none other than "Sandy" Eggleton, who was one of my tent-mates in the New Britain days. Sandy is manager of the N.S.W. team, and he said they were all thrilled with the excellent organisation and hospitality in connection with their Geraldton trip. He said they were delighted with the condition of the track and the oval generally, and considered that the Geraldton trip would be valuable to those athletes who would be competing in the Olympic Games in Rome because the journey would prepare them for the travelling they would have to undergo in other countries before and after the Olympic Games. Herb Elliott was of course, the major attraction, but quite a number of Sandy's athletes put up excellent performances. Sandy looks younger than ever, and obviously keeps himself in good condition. He still competes in N.S.W. and can still throw the hammer about 180 feet and the discus 153 feet—which is not to be scoffed at. We were all sorry that we had not been notified that Sandy would be visiting Geraldton because we could have arranged a decent re-union. However, apart from "Yours Truly," he had a good yarn with Jack Denman and Nip Cunningham. Unfortunately I had to attend a municipal council meeting straight after finishing my news bulletin at 7 p.m. so I was precluded from having another yarn with Sandy before he returned to Perth last night by plane. While we're on this subject, Mr. Editor, would you make an appeal to all Staters to let us know per medium of the "Courier" when they are visiting other States, so that suitable re-unions of all ex-Double Red Diamond types in the particular areas can be organised.

We were all sorry that so short notice had been given of the Country Convention at Wongan Hills, other arrangements having been made by most of the Geraldtonites before we read of the date in the February issue of the "Courier". Jack Denman had to take a load of swimmers to Cunderdin and hoped to drop in at the convention during one of the three days, and Eric Smyth was tied up with the State Conference of the Jaycees, which was voted by all as "something out of the box" as far as organisation was concerned. Irish Hopkins—obviously a satisfied barman at the Club Hotel, Mullewa—phoned me to see if anyone was going from Geraldton, as he and Don Young were looking for a ride. However, after phoning all our 2/2nd types around Geraldton and Northampton I had to tell him that we couldn't help them out.

Jack Denman's 13 year old son John continues to figure prominently in swimming events, and won the juvenile boys' 55 yards backstroke championship in 39.9 secs., at the country carnival in Cunderdin last weekend.

The 2/2nd Commando Association was well represented at the annual re-union of the Geraldton R.S.L. Sub-Branch, when Jack Denman, Nip Cunningham, Joe Brand and "Yours Truly" proudly announced their Unit during the traditional roll call. We were all in good form—particularly Joe Brand.

ROBBIE ROWAN ROBINSON, of "Woodborough," Bridgetown, writes:—

So sorry to hear that the cupboard was bare, better stir myself into action, even if I am busy with the apples. Worked this morning, taking a little time off this afternoon for correspondence but will be back with the apples as soon as I've finished this letter. Have a little bit of news this time.

First of all to go back a bit. I met Tom Crouch at the Manjimup Show, as a matter of fact he shared a few sandwiches with us. He seemed much the same and nothing seems to worry him and just the "Good old Tom" we always knew right from enlistment days

Then on into the new year and holidays at Mandurah we met up with "Chook" Fowler and family. After a few days I leave the family there so the good "Chook" takes a run down the south west in his little Volkswagen. Call in to see Arthur Marshall at Harvey, he unfortunately is away sowing super at Broomehill or some such place. While I think of it Broomehill naturally reminds me of Alf Hillman. Congratulations Alf on getting your picture in the paper complete with your top merino ewe and ram. A great achievement and although I am not a stud breeder I do realise the years of work that you must have put into it and to those who don't know Alf lives in a good sheep area, one of the best in Australia and competition is really keen there.

Now back to our trip south. Next call is none other of course than Bernie Langridge. (We did not forget you Clarrie Turner but we could not fit everyone in and you might have been away.) Tea with Bernie and Babs plus twins and boys who were all having a swim in the dam. Had a look round the farm and orchard, picked up a few spuds and oranges and then on here to home. Although it was supposed to be summer it was wet and cold. Chook and I had a few drinks, cooked ourselves some tea which included roast maize cobs and we fought Timor over from beginning to end. Next day I showed him round but the weather was miserable and then he went off back to Mandurah. The old south west can't have been too bad because later he was to be seen making yet another trip down our way. This time with wife and family all packed into a new Holden station wagon. Hope it is going alright Jack. I'm sorry I missed you but I have no doubt that Jim and family entertained you just as well as I would have done. By the way Jack Fowler tells me he has a good television set and even way up there in that desolate country he gets a pretty good reception if that is the right word. He tells me that these machines rule the home. Evening meals are often spent sitting in the dark, trying to eat a roast off a plate balanced on one's knees. Sounds worse than

Timor to me. That is about all the news I can rake up. Hope it will help a bit. By the way I don't often go past your office now, the Narrows Bridge is the quickest way for me. That is of course if I can find my way from the city to it without crossing to many double white lines going against traffic lights and turning right when one should not. On at least three occasions, having done nearly everything correctly, I found the best I could do was to land up in the car park. Perhaps some kind city dweller would inform some country bumpkin, such as myself, just how one gets from Westfarmers to the Narrows Bridge at five in the evening without breaking any traffic regulations.

JACK HASSON, Box 46, Ballidu, writes:—

Sorry we did not see you among the crowd at Wongan last weekend. By now you will have heard about all that went on. Am enclosing the charity ticket that Fred Napier so ably won from me at tennis. It is in the Unit name as he wished and please tell him my arm has ached for a week—from tennis.

Last Wednesday Fred Growns had an accident on the farm and is now in Royal Perth Hospital. His leg was broken in two places and the Wongan doctor sent him straight on to Perth. Don't know how long he will be there but think he would appreciate seeing some of you blokes. He has been pretty crook for some time now and this has just conked the lot.

Things are pretty quiet up this way. The weather is real dry and we are just odd jobbing around waiting for it to break but like all farmers are never satisfied and do not want it to break too soon.

Cheerio for now, just having a beer and off to bed.

CLARRIE TURNER, "Killora Stud," Elgin, writes:—

Just a little note prodded by a guilty conscience. Having read the last "Courier" it tends to make one think a little. The reason for the lack of news from the country, I feel, is that we have so much to keep up with in our own little area that we tend to forget our outside duties.

Haven't seen any of the boys

much for some time although while on holidays at Dunsborough about a month ago I came across Alec Thompson and so we managed to have a few beers a couple of times. Then we arranged a crabbing party one night and although we didn't get a lot of crabs we managed a few for the women and children, and so with a good few bottles a good time was had by all. Also had a surprise by running into Bob Palmer the first time for a good many years and apart from being a little bit thinner, both in condition and on top he hasn't changed at all.

I am now President of the Boyanup Tennis Club. We have a lovely set-up now, with six grass courts and a very nice pavillion. Have just concluded the South West Doubles Championships and it was a great success. We handled 90 odd doubles pairs and saw some very fine tennis. Harvey winning the men's doubles, Bunbury the ladies, and Bridgetown the mixed, so you see we had players from very far afield. Also we netted approx. £100 for the weekend from teas, lunches, etc., so we were very happy with the effort.

I am flat out sowing super at present, as the chap next door to me joins me with that task and we have approx. 115 ton to sow. We put on 24 ton for the last two days so have made quite a start on it. I will be up in Perth on Friday week for the annual yearling sales to be held at Claremont Showgrounds on March 21. We have six in this year's sales.

Well, I'll say cheerio for the present and Grace and I send regards to one and all the boys.

MICK CALCUTT, writes:—

Is age catching up with us?

Age of course is a timeless thing but are we allowing age to absorb our thoughts as well as absorbing our physical being? Yes, I think it is so.

In time gone past it was always a pleasure to look forward to our meetings. Travel was not irksome neither was the weather. So as the thatch on top becomes lesser and greyer, so does the incentive decline, and, mark you, once we lose the incentive we have lost all.

I, and I am sure you all were particularly perturbed on reading

the Editorial in the February issue of the "Courier". How justly we deserved it. It shows just how complacent we can become. Taking stock of myself I realise that it is about eight years or so since I contributed anything, I repeat anything to our long suffering Editor. May I here with all humility and sincerity proffer my apologies. Procrastination is the thief of time, it applies to me, does it apply to you?

In the very near future we have a programme of the greatest interest to all. Let us start with Anzac Day. Why not make it a record breaker. Give your Editor at least a chance to take a few notes of what is going on in your particular sphere, instead of having him wait for the news you intended to write to him but just did not get round to it.

Following on that we have the Annual General Meeting. Be there with your complaints and your compliments and like the Boy Scout motto be prepared to accept a job if you are elected to it.

The Annual Re-union follows shortly after. Now would be the appropriate time to draw your attention to the caption of this article. Age is catching up with us. Who knows how many more times we will have the pleasure of toasting one another at a living Re-union? Don't miss them from now on.

In conclusion if you do intend to help your Editor do it now. Tomorrow may be too late.

GERRY GREEN writes:—

Further to Wongan Hills Convention was added a pleasant stay at Dot and Reg Harrington's farm at Bolgart by "Slim" Holly, my family and self. We migrated to Reg's late Saturday night, travelled 50 miles, emerged out of the dust to the pleasant sight of their modern villa which aptly enough is named "Ainaro".

Daylight found Reg and I seedy. Slim whom we tipped for the daddy of all hang-overs, was chirping like a bird and their home of 33 squares was pretty well taxed with Reg's brother and Dot's sister and four children and ourselves totalling 18 persons. I would like to pay a tribute to Reg and Dot on their

fine home, well planned with internal features in knotted pine, Tooday stone and wrought iron work and painting nicely toned and coloured, besides other modern trends I'm afraid with all these pleasant surroundings I couldn't face the relay breakfast that Dot provided but was thankful for the cuppa and Aspro. Reg then provided us with a look see at his farm which is as you can imagine Reg's farm to be in pretty good order. What amazed "Slim" and I was his abundant water supply and way he had reticulated his paddocks. Also the machinery and methods he was developing to improve his property and output. A swamp which abounds with bird life Reg protects as a sanctuary and knowing what a shot he is I don't think I'd venture within its precincts.

During the morning we met the Harringtons. Reg's brother left for home (Pingelly) and we renewed friendships with Laurie, Paul, Jerry, Glynn, (little) Reg, Mark, and Barbara Anne and what a fine bunch they are. Laurie seems to be both Dot and Reg's right hand man, yet all the boys are worthy types. They gave us a demonstration of roping and riding calves, Laurie sticking on for a good while before crashing to the rocky ground. After all that excitement we had to have a beer.

I would mention that Barbara Anne is ruling princess and with all those brothers looks like holding that title. Day was rounded off by lunch (which I ate and held down) and yarning names like Mal Herbert, Ted Loud, Don Young, among others were "roasted". Jess and Col Doig were sadly missed, maybe next time? Finally we got out of Reg's way so he could fight a bush fire and moveed home and Reg from Slim and I, thanks a lot.

DOT BOYLAND, of 77 Millcrest Street, Double View, writes:—

This is just a few lines to help you fill up your paper.

I would like to say thank you to R'anche and Mavis Sadler and Jean Fowler for the lovely spread they put on last Sunday, and on behalf of we town-ites thank them for the wonderful hospitality they showered on us over the whole weekend.

I thought the social side of the convention very enjoyable. This is the first one of these shows I've been to but if there are any more I certainly hope George will take me along with him.

I think "Spriggy" McDonald was quite the life of the party, he made most of us feel tired watching his super abundance of energy. Keep it up "Spriggy" I think you'll be able to entertain for a few more years to come.

A pleasant weekend was had by all.

H. S. (Blue) SARGENT, of Glenmaggie Weir, writes:—

Well, it's like this, I get the "Courier" regular, read it from cover to cover, feel self-conscious every time about not lifting a hand to help keep it going, so tonight, here goes.

Name, Harry (Blue) Sargent. Married, Aynsly (Muff). Two children, Dianne 11 (today), Robert 14 months, all terribly spoiled. Occupation, public servant (assistant weir keeper, Glenmaggie Weir). Health, pretty fair. Wealth, could hardly buy Flinders St. Station. Recreation, fishing (trout mostly), love a noggin or so, smoke too much.

The job carries two who live at the weir wall or rather just near and consists of the up-keep and maintenance of floodgates, motors, valves, pipe lines and surroundings.

The wall is 961 feet long, 120 feet high, of 100,000 cubic yards of mass concrete, has 14 floodgates, each 23 x 12 feet, powered by electricity with petrol motors for blackouts, etc. Capacity is 154,000 acre feet and the bason area covers 4,300 acres when full. The area irrigated would be approx 200 sq. miles, plus three town supplies. Average yearly rainfall is 22 inches. Dare say Charlie and Stan Sadler and a few others could do with some of that. The weir is east of Foster on the Macalister River, six miles north of Heyfield.

About enough work so now for a bit of news.

Had a visit from Tom and Joan Coyle just before Christmas. They brought the family and a couple of the best which were really enjoyed. Tom is still with the Traralgon Joinery Works and as fit as a trout.

Also had a visit from Tommy

Foster, late of W.A. Tom is in charge of a big irrigation scheme of the Latrobe Valley system. I have never seen a fitter looking bloke. Hope to find time to repay the visit before winter but don't know just how. I'm at present relieving the weir keeper at the Cowwater Weir on the Thomson River till the end of February then I'll be on my own at Glenmaggie Weir while the boss takes his holidays, but then what can't be done this year might be done next.

Am a member of the Hyfield Angling Club and up to date this season have 150 odd trout weighed in, the best being 3 lb. (cleaned). Have taken three or four trophies so far and well in the lead for the aggregate. Quite likely get a handicap next year.

Tom Foster is in between the Gipsland Lakes and the ocean. Surf fishing one side and bay on the other with ducks, roos and Lord knows what else in between. How I'd love to be camped in his back yard tonight, ducks opening at 5 a.m. tomorrow morning and I have not seen a bird here for a fortnight.

Haven't made a march in town for five years now but hope to be able to make this year's.

Well I'll not rattle any further. Regards to Gordon Rolly from Tom Coyle and myself.

Joe Burridge used to reckon he couldn't decipher my writing, hope you have better luck.

Regards and many tankards to all

KEN DOAK, of 10 Katoomba Street, Albany, writes:—

Your "Dreamer's Dilemma" really attacked my poor old heart and made me wonder what is wrong with the "Double Reds" that they leave you so high and dry—all alone to carry on the priceless "Courier".

From wondering about the deficiencies of others I cast my eyes a second time over the "Dilemma" and was somewhat stricken by these words: "... If all who receive this journal were to write just one letter per year ..."

Well, I too receive the "Courier" and I'd be darned disappointed should anything occur to prevent me from doing so. I only hope 479 other consciences are similarly stricken.

Firstly I must thank the Association for the kiddies Christmas gifts. They gave much joy and happiness, especially so this Christmas as Dad was in St. John of Gods, Subiaco, thus being unable to do his usual little bit towards making the festive season all it should be for the youngsters.

I have been wondering if you, or any of those who left the West in that original "hush-hush" group, remember one Bill Breslan? Bill was one of those fortunate souls that spent their entire sojourn at Darby on cookhouse fatigue—officers' cookhouse if my memory serves me right—and jumped at the chance to join the "Emeralds" when the 1st Coy. called for reinforcements prior to embarkation.

Yes, there will be many, I think, who will remember Bill!

Sometime ago I learnt that Bill had lost the sight of both his eyes and was an inmate of the Blind Institute at Maylands. He had been a particular mate of mine, having at various times given me a helping hand when I had need of a little lift, particularly insofar as morals was concerned, and during the 14 years which had passed since our last meeting I had often wondered about Bill and what had become of him. In claiming to be a particular mate of Bills I claim only to be one of a legion, for everyone who had any association with him felt that way. He made you feel that you were the most important person in the world. You see, Bill would just naturally call you "Brother," and you just naturally felt that he did entertain a real big brother's concern for you. Somewhere along the way one of the boys labelled him "Brother Bill," and the label stayed.

When the Japs took over the lease of the Bismarch Archipelago early in 1942 Bill was a member of a section of the 1st Coy., one of 20 men constituting the garrison of Manus Island in the Admiralty Group.

Eventually this section returned to Australia after a rather hazardous evacuation of Manus. They reached the shores of New Guinea after a not very pleasant voyage in a small and waterlogged craft, then made their way laboriously up the Ramu Valley, carrying one of their mates on a stretcher.

Back in Australia Bill was drafted to the 2/5th Coy. and returned to New Guinea. The cessation of fighting found him in Borneo, and still not having had sufficient of soldiering he signed on with the B.C.O.F., and was thus among the first Australian troops to set foot on Dai Nippon.

Naturally enough, when I heard of Bill's misfortune I resolved to take the first opportunity to get up to Perth and renew our acquaintance, and endeavour in some way, to lighten his load in his time of need.

When eventually I did manage to get to the city I rang the Institute, and was told that, it being Saturday morning, Bill had gone for a walk down town. I felt I knew sufficient of his habits, though many years had slipped by since we last met, to have little trouble in finding him and set out for Maylands.

I found him! With four of his companions he was ensconced in a corner of the public bar of the Peninsular Hotel, quite happily imbibing the amber fluid. I touched him gently on the shoulder and said: "How are you, Brother Bill?"

Carefully he placed his glass upon the bar and turned towards me, his grey unseeing eyes fixed far above my head.

"I know your voice, brother," he said. "Say something more, will you?"

"Remember Darby River, Bill, and Kavieng?"

"Yes, yes!" and his voice quivered a little with excitement as he delved back through the years, and the 270 faces he had known in the 1st Coy.

"Go on, brother, go on. Say something else. I've nearly got you!"

"Well, do you remember a leave spent with Lofty Moran at Traralgon and ..."

"Shorty—you little b—!"

His right hand shot out to find mine while his left arm threatened to embrace the very life out of me.

Fourteen years is a long time in the life of a man, but the years seemed not to have made any change in Bill, except for the one so tragically apparent. Here was the same old Brother Bill, in no wise cast down in spirits by the harsh treatment of fate.

For sometime I had been suffer-

ing from a form of self pity because of a bit of an ailment I have, but being the lighthearted type I was quite prepared to spare a little of my sympathy for Bill. Nothing, of course, would have been more out of place than any form of expressed sorrow or regret.

I was introduced to Bill's companions, all of whom, like him, were totally blind. Some, as if fate had decided the loss of sight insufficient, had lost hands and arms as well. Yet were they all full of joy and happiness, cracking jokes, and laughing as though derisive of fate's own cruel jests. One felt the contagious flow of their serene joy in life, and was uplifted by it.

When Bill learnt that I was returning to Albany on that night's train he was most apologetic that prior arrangements must prevent him from spending the afternoon with me.

"A mate of mine," he told me, "is in hospital. He's had a rough time. I must go and talk with him this afternoon."

Old Bill has not changed!

"But what time does your train go, brother?" he asked me, and on being told 7.55 he avowed he would meet me at the station at 6.30.

"But the train does not leave until five to eight," I repeated.

"So what? We can grog on for an hour and a half, can't we, brother?"

Most certainly Bill has not changed!

On arrival at the station I did not immediately see Bill. Someone with me, not knowing him as I knew him, suggested it was a little too much to expect a blind man to be there at all. Then I saw him!

Bill and a companion were walking towards us, their sticks tapping the pavement, their heads held high. They came abreast of where we stood and I said quietly: "Where are you going to, Brother Bill?"

Again the vice-like handgrip and the strangling embrace, while people turned to stare at us, and somehow I felt proud for them to see this man embracing me in a public place, for who were they to stare, anyway.

I led the way into the public bar, and then, with our beers before us I gently urged Bill to tell me a little of what had happened to him

since we last had met. There seemed to be so much to learn—such a tremendous gap to bridge and so little time in which to do it.

Having spent some years in Japan with the B.C.O.F. Bill returned to Australia and took his discharge from the army. After some nine years of service, like many others, he had a hankering to do a little thinking and toiling for himself, so set out to do contract boring on the stations out from Leonora.

Everything shaped well enough until one day an explosive charge failed to detonate according to plan and Bill approached the borehole. The same thing has happened to others, but it should never have happened to Bill. That charge carried his number on it, but even then, after it had exploded in his face, and he lay for months next door to death, his indomitable spirit pulled him through.

I asked Bill what it was he had gained when he lost his sight. The question was one I could not avoid asking because, although he had always been a cheerful soul, it seemed to me he had gained something—something indefinable—something serene. Without a moment's hesitation he replied: "An ultra intelligence, brother. That's what I gained."

He allowed me a little time to digest that then continued: "You see, the eyes are the cameras of the brain, and you with your sight do not use them as they should be used. They're taking photos for you all the time, but you only choose to see those photos you really want to see. When you suddenly lose your eyes you realise how careless and wasteful you have been with nature's precious gifts, and you make proper use of those remaining to you. Then you find that by making full use—FULL use, brother—of your remaining senses the loss of one doesn't really matter so much."

All too soon it was time for me to leave Bill and take my place on the south-bound train. As he wrung my hand in parting he warmly thanked me for having searched him out.

"Being able to yarn to you again, brother, has been a real tonic to me!" he assured me.

Of course, nothing would make me happier than to think that I

had been as a tonic to him, but somehow it seems to me that it is I who have partaken of a tonic. Since I spent that hour or so in Bill's company my world seems to have become a better, brighter place. Could it be, I wonder, that I am seeing a greater number of those things which exist in the world about me, and which have hitherto passed unheeded?

Perhaps some Saturday morning your footsteps may lead you to the Peninsular Hotel. If so, then go into the public bar and look for Bill. There'll be a row of white painted sticks hanging on the bar rail. You'll have no trouble in finding him. Tell him Shorty sent you, and as you sip an ale and talk to him and his mates you'll be doing him and them a favour, but they'll be doing you an even greater one.

Now must ring off, trusting you can decipher my atrocious scrawl.

DOUG FULLARTON, of Colonial Timber Co., Sarawak, writes:—

At the moment things are a little quiet on the timber front, so taking the opportunity of dropping a few lines.

The last 12 months have been hectic with the demand for timber outstripping what we could produce. Boosted up to 10,000 ton a month and still not enough. At the moment am counting the days till the next leave is due. Three beautiful months at the end of July sounds O.K. Three months after two years' service but the job goes on seven days a week so actually the leave works out at less than the usual holidays in Australia. The cash return is a little better that is all.

Have just returned from a 10 day hike over the hills up at the headwaters of the Rajang River. Believe me I still don't like hills. When I return it will be in some place similar to the Nullabor. In the old army days the pace was so many miles to the hour. Nowadays it is so many hours to the mile. You should have seen the disgusted look on the Dyak's face. The distance I covered in eight hours they could get over in two hours at the most. The area we saw has one of the best stands of maiden bush I have ever seen and goes back to the Indonesia border. That will be the

next big job here opening the area up. The hardest part will be learning about three different dialects, Dyak, Iban, Kenyah. Easiest way will be to acquire a sleeping dictionary.

The last three months have been a little haywire as far as rafting logs. The monsoon season is just about over now and the rough seas should ease off.

Off to Hong Kong on the 11th for a week or so. Purely business. The scenery there is such that a man could easily be led astray. Had hoped to get across to Japan but it looks like Hong Kong and For-

mosa only. Will drop you a line on returning and give a running commentary.

All the best. See you some time in August and sample a few beers.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Thanks to all who responded to the Editorial appeal in the February issue. Just shows what a wonderful journal this would be with a similar amount of correspondence every month. Let me see a few more take up the challenge this month. —EDITOR.

SPECIAL MENTIONS:

APRIL MEETING on the 5th
Rifle Shoot at Monash Club
Be there to try your skill on the targets

ANZAC DAY on MONDAY 25th, is a MUST
Remember Medals to be Worn

Don't Forget to Save a Quid a Week Towards that
EMPIRE GAMES RE-UNION IN NOVEMBER 1962

Historically Yours!

CHAPTER 7. STARK TRAGEDY

The Company's first brush with the redoubtable enemy had shown to the full the excellence of the training received but it also showed something more sinister—a rawness of command at all levels. Sheer lack of previous combat experience was the missing factor. All other A.I.F. shows had a steady levelling of seasoned officers with World War 1 experience which gave these battalions and companies a ripeness of experience, that sixth sense which seems to smell oncoming disaster and allows for the unseen at all times. As campaigns wore on we were to develop this type of experience to the utmost degree but in our hour of need this highly essential commod-

ity was missing. Youthful dash is all very fine in its way but the steady influence of previous combat experience is essential.

Number 2 Section showed the mettle of which the Company was made and although understandable mistakes were made they acquitted themselves with the utmost glory. They came out of this critical engagement with flying colours, but unfortunately did lose contact with one another and split into small parties.

Unfortunately this early success was soon to be stalked by a tragedy which aroused the ire of the whole Company.

"C" Platoon under Capt. Boyland was still at Three Spurs camp with

detachments of Signalls and Sappers. This was the Company's main base for supplies including ammunition, explosives, clothing, and what food that was available. These were housed in native huts in the area. The ration truck with Driver Bob Chambers and C.Q.M.S. Johnny Walker, drew daily supplies from Dutch H.Q. in Dilli.

At this point allow just a little digression to set the scene. The future of Company operations was at this time in severe doubt. The Portugese had protested most vehemently at the continued occupation by our troops of what was supposed to be neutral territory and it was understood that they still intended to bring a force from their African territories to take over the policing of the area. The latest reports placed this force on the water in the near vicinity of Timor.

When these troops arrived it was assumed that both ourselves and the Dutch would return to Dutch territory and reconnaissance had been made by our patrols to the border of Dutch Timor in preparation for the move. Although islands all around were falling rapidly to the Nipponese there was still a dearth of intelligence as to their intention in regard to Timor which was erroneously thought to be too close to Australia for the Jap to have a go at just yet.

It had been the practice for Sections to have a day's leave in Dilli to blow the cob-webs out of their systems and generally let down momentarily. On Feb. 19, 1942, No. 9 Section, under Lt. Ray Cole, had been to Dilli and had their day out, returning to Three Spurs reasonably late and a little the worse for wear. They had left Dilli prior to any of the events in which No. 2 Section were involved, occurred and were thus quite ignorant of the true menace they had so narrowly escaped.

As previously explained owing to deep fog the signal station in Dilli which up to that time had managed to keep contact with Three Spurs, had failed to get through, despite the efforts of Sigs. Hancock and Gannon. The station established at Bohak, just over Three Spurs thus could not report anything to Boyland. This was to prove the

most terrible misfortune to strike our small Company.

At dawn on Feb. 20, sentries sighted warships close inshore beyond Tibar. So the Porto had arrived! How terribly wrong can you be! It seemed to those at Three Spurs that it was impossible for the Japs to have bombarded Dilli and surroundings, fight a minor battle in the night without the noise reaching half way across the island.

Capt. Boyland allowed No. 7 Section under Lt. Arch Campbell, to take their rostered day's leave in Dilli after warning them not to get into trouble with the Portugese soldiery. With the typical sagacity of Aussie soldiers, this Section smartly acquired a lift with the ration truck with Dvr. Chambers and C.Q.M.S. Walker. The party who were to board the ill-fated vehicle were Sgt. Gordon Chiswell, Cpl. Jack Simson, Ptes. Reg Murray, Ken Hogg, Don Airy, Dick Crowder, Harvey Marriott, Frank Alford, Tony Lane, Jim Pollard, Peter Alexander, Keith Hayes, Charlie Stanton and Harry Cottsworth. Remaining behind for a variety of reasons were Lt. Campbell who had been in Dilli to deliver a despatch the previous day and returned with Lt. Turton on the previous night, and these two had walked back and had assisted in the carrying of packs of chaps less fit and still feeling the effects of recent malaria. Pt. Ron Dook and Mick Calcutt stayed behind for a vastly different reason. "Dookie" was broke and independently refused to borrow to go on this daily jaunt, Mick who was Ron's great mate, decided he would stay also. Pte. Ken Monk just plain didn't want to go. So it came about the four were to remain. Fate works in mysterious ways but it was certainly on the side of these four in a miraculous escape. There nearly was five as Reg (Boong) Murray was reclining on his home-made bed with no intention of going, oblivious to the cajolings of his mates, but as the truck started up he made the most fateful decision of his life and grabbed his tin hat and ran yelling for the truck to wait.

So the unluckiest Section of the Company set off with cheers and

yodels and high hopes of a well-earned day in town. The hell of it! The utter tragedy of it! If only that sixth sense which seems to come with experience could have warned Boyland or Campbell this would have been averted. It was not to be. The rest is a garbled story and will be told in due sequence.

Lts. Campbell and Burrige were despatched on a patrol soon after the party departed to ascertain the cause of firing in the distance. Not long afterward Pte. Alexander (Pinocchio), the Company Despatch Rider, went through Three Spurs on his way to Dilli. Campbell heard this motor bike and tried to scramble back to hail the rider to get a pillion ride to Dilli, but he was not seen and apparently his hails went unheeded. Poor old, brave Pinocchio was to be shot off his motor cycle not five minutes later! Lady Luck once again smiled benignly on Arch Campbell. Campbell and Burrige continued their patrol out and beyond Tibar and when they saw the warships in the bay and the red discs on the planes their worst suspicions were confirmed. This was it! Christ, what about my poor bloody Section? Did they wake up in time?

Burrige returned rapidly to warn Boyland and the rest of the Company. Campbell ran in with Pte. Cyril (Slim) Holly, one of No. 2 Section, who had been cut off from the main body and was making for Three Spurs. He confirmed Campbell's most terrible surmise. "Yes, it was the Nip."

"Have you seen 7 Section?"

"No."

Campbell was distraught and pushed on in the slim hope that he could contact his merry gang, but had to give it away. He returned to Tibar and contacted Burrige's Section and sent a further runner with the evil tidings to Boyland. He continued to O.P. the road until joined by Capt. Laidlaw and men of "B" Platoon.

During this time camp life at Three Spurs continued normally until Lt. Burrige arrived flogging a diminutive Timor pony with the unexpected news that the force in Dilli harbour was Japs.

Boyland's first thoughts were like those of Campbell: "God, what has

happened to 7 Section, and the Section on the drome?"

It was anybody's guess at this stage. It is amazing at times such as these how rapidly gloom spreads. But war is war and the show must go on.

News was immediately sent to Company H.Q. and to Capt. Laidlaw of "B" Platoon and orders awaited. Just what was to happen? If the Nip followed his usual pattern as shown in Malaya there would be a rapid consolidation of his gains and a swift probe into the hinterland to achieve the next objective. What was this to be? There was no reason to believe that Jap intelligence in Porto Timor was any less than it had been in other areas. If this was to be a fact then "C" Platoon and Company stores were in a vulnerable position and little respite could be expected.

The movement of Company stores would present a major problem as the complete fleet of vehicles numbered two trucks. One was in Railaco in pieces, the other God alone knew its fate. What was happening to the big body of Aussie troops in Koepang was also anybody's guess, no wireless contact had been made.

Cpts. Laidlaw and Boyland met early on the afternoon of Feb. 20 at Tibar and decided to make a hurried trip to Railaco to discuss with Major Spence future moves. Transport was "acquired" in the shape of a truck of ancient vintage driven by a Chinese who was even older than the truck, metaphorically speaking. How that truck ran nobody will ever know but it did the job and got the two skippers to Railaco and return and later did sterling work in transporting stores.

Capt. Callinan arrived at Railaco in time for this conference and was able to give a first hand account of the events of the previous evening.

Callinan had escaped from Dilli and rejoined via Ailiu. No definite decisions were reached but Platoon Commanders were advised to act as they thought fit.

Boyland was ordered to move as many stores as possible and to prevent the balance from falling to the enemy in a usable condition.

Troops performed Herculean tasks to get these stores moved and

the vintage truck proved a terrific boon until its very age caught up and it could chug no more and gave up the ghost.

Rumours of Jap movements spread like wildfire, most persistent of which was that they had already fanned out in their usual manner and had reached Alliu. The natives appeared to be friendly but also looked more than somewhat bewildered. Could they be trusted? Remember all our prior orders on them were to keep them at bay, don't fraternise, they were head hunters, and all such twaddle.

To return to Campbell at Tibar awaiting orders for offensive action which never came. He retraced his steps to Three Spurs to rejoin his other boys. A pitiful small section now. The fate of the others still unknown.

The remainder of 7 Section was part of the gang removing stores from Three Spurs towards Railaco. This was an all night job with a stand-to at 4.30 a.m. in case of a surprise assault. Then to carry out orders to destroy and burn everything of value to the enemy.

On Feb. 22 at Campbell's request his minute section went on a fighting patrol deep toward Tibar and beyond to scour the hills for Jap movement and act as flank protection for the move to Railaco. The section was re-inforced by seven Dutch troops escaping from Dilli. These nearly proved to be casualties also as their uniforms were not unlike the Nip and Campbell and Co. very nearly gave them the "herbs". This patrol starting at 3 a.m. and went till 10 p.m. that night, arriving at "A" Platoon H.Q. at Railaco and then with only two hours' sleep headed for their destination at Hatalia. They passed the Glano River and here slept for an hour. It was cold and misty as only Timor can be cold and misty and added to the gloom in the minds of the small body. Here they assisted Lt. Don Turton to blow the Glano Bridge and then continued on patrol picking up further footsore Javanese heading away from Dilli tired and dispirited and leaderless. The usual afternoon thunderstorms which rained in bucketsful did not stop the progress as they passed through Villa Maria on thence to Hatalia which was to be called base.

The main body of "C" Platoon was on the move to join "A" Platoon and H.Q. near Railaco. The pity of it all was that if we could have only foreseen a little of the future it would have been possible to stay anything up to a week longer at Three Spurs and so salvage considerably more of the stores. Still without that vintage truck it would have been a manpower job and at that time we had not acquired the art of arranging pony trains and native bearers as we were to do in the months that followed. As the bridge over the Glano was to be blown it was imperative that the main body cross before this happened. The boys were all laden like pack horses but a few natives did help to lighten the load.

When "A" Platoon was reached it was learned that Coy. H.Q. had moved to Villa Maria and "C" Platoon was to follow. The march to Railaco had taken its toll of chaps only recently recovered from terrible bouts of malaria and it was hard to keep the stragglers up with the main body. They crossed the Glano and when the bridge was blown they stopped in their tracks and lay down and slept the sleep of the weary.

The following morning spirits were at low ebb. The physical effort of the previous day had taken its toll and the gloom over the lack of news of 7 Section added deeply to the sense of foreboding and drove morale to an all time low. The trip to Villa Marie was night marish as the morning was hot and airless and the usual wisecracks and sallies one to the other was strangely missing. For such a relatively small island the track seemed endless and distant features seemed to get no closer and in fact seemed to get further away as tired men trudged head down, not daring to look at the climb ahead for fear it would deaden their spirits completely.

Luckily this day the Jap Air Force seemed to have a day off as not one was sighted as we trudged through comparatively open country. The little town of Erimera was reached in the early afternoon in a tropical downpour. Dry tracks became streams in the matter of minutes and streams became raging rivers. A friendly inhabitant gave

troops welcome shelter and a chance to dry sodden clothing, but much more welcome was a feast that appeared as if by magic. As this was the first decent meal the boys had eaten for days it was appreciated to the full and is no doubt one of the vivid memories still with those who partook of it.

The final stage of this epic march was our first real introduction to the naive idea of a short cut. It was found that a well made track connected Erimera to Villa Marie and Hatalia. But this was not for the natives! Oh, no, they urged the troops to take the "Keek Dalian". The short way straight up the mountain and down again. This was the quick way to the destination! How bloody silly can you get? We set off and slipped back two paces for every three forward. The only one who found the going relatively easy was Pte. Fred Napier who strode along without a pack all his impedimenta being carried by a native who barely came up to his knees. And believe it or not Fred probably started a fashion that managed to keep our force on Timor for the next 10 months. Without using these natives in such a way it would not have been possible to have carried on. The climb, had as it appeared to be was matched only by the atrocious descent. Slippery and greasy a foothold was impossible and one will always remember Pte. Andy Smeaton completing the descent on the seat of his strides.

And so to Villa Marie! With the approach of dark the rain became icy cold, the welcome, if anything was even colder and food almost non-existent. Our normally genial R.M.O. Capt. Dunkley, appeared to be as pleased to see us as we were to see him and his ministrations to blistered feet were more than welcome. The C.O. seemed disconsolate and sat huddled under a ground sheet and spoke in miserable tones to the gang as they shuffled by. Blame it on the weather if you like but it made a deep and lasting impression not easily erased.

It was on Feb. 25 that Arch Campbell and his remaining men heard the first news or should we say rumours of the fate of his gallant boys. What a hell of a shock they got in its telling! Pte. Keith

Hayes only escaped and God what an escape! The rest were shot down in cold blood. But it was not until Feb. 27 that a reasonably full story was obtained from Keith Hayes himself, swathed in bandages and lucky to be alive. Keith, a lad of 19 at the time was one of the very few people ever to face a firing squad and be alive to tell the pitiful tale. What utter guts he displayed!

Keith's story of the tragedy of 7 Section was as follows. The truck on which the section was travelling to Dilli was ambushed by the Japs who took it over. The back was filled with our boys and Jap guards and as there was not room for all, four were left off—Sgt. Gordon Chiswell, Pts. Harvey Marriott, Frank Alford and Keith Hayes. These were ordered to a ditch. There their hands were bound, then they were marched off. Some Dutch troops opened fire and they jumped into the ditch till the firing was over. The Japs then turned these boys around, walked back a few yards, an officer gave an order and these gallant boys were shot down in cold blood! Keith, his jugular missed by the merest fraction of an inch, raised his head only to be bayoneted by a Jap and to see his mates also being bayoneted. Keith was bayoneted through the throat. Again luck interposed to make the wound non-fatal. His hands were untied, his watch removed and he was left for dead. Keith regained consciousness, crawled over his dead mates, remembering Harvey Marriott's last words: "Oh, my God." He crawled for what seemed an eternity, and then exhausted through lack of blood and shock he collapsed. Then fate having dealt enough crook cards decided to deal the Joker in the shape of a party of Timor natives, who found Keith and took him to one of their "Oomahs," or houses, there to be tendered by a Timorese woman who bound up his throat and washed and tendered him, then the party placed him on a Timor pony and guarding him with bows and arrows delivered him to "B" Platoon.

This was to be our first real taste of the genuine quality of these Timor natives who we later would have proudly called "Brother".

This is a story of fortitude, unique possibly in the annals of war. The sheer terror of facing a firing squad was enough in itself to make a lesser character want to lie down and die but Keith saw it through. God alone knows how and lived to fight another day. The shock of it all unminded him for a while and it was many a day before he was ready to do battle again, but he saw action once again later in the war as a member of the 2/11th Bn. in New Guinea. That's guts for you! He vowed he would get square with the Jap if he could and as a member of a fighting show like the 2/11th he had his go once again.

Keith of course, could not tell what happened to the rest of the boys on the truck but native stories are that the Dutch who fired on Keith and his Jap guards also fired on the truck and these lads, with the exception of Pte. Peter Alexander, who for some unaccountable reason was marched into Dilli as a prisoner, met a similar tragic fate as the three other lads with Keith Hayes. A Dutchman said their end was not without a fight as they resorted even to bare fists.

Later Arch Campbell and Ron Dook swam the Comoro to investigate a spot indicated by this Dutchman and found a helmet and a scorched sock which might have indicated that it belonged to Jimmy Pollard who had fitted his tin hat with a sock liner to make it fit after shaving his head.

So this was the reputed fate of a gallant section along with S/Sgt. Walker and Dvr. Bob Chambers and Pinnochio Alexander. A sad, sad toll so early in the piece! These graves were never truly noted or vouched for but their spirit forever lives in the minds of all that knew them. The first of many to offer the supreme sacrifice, but again the victims of unpreparedness in the ways of war.

Vale brave 7 Section. You can rest assured that full vengeance was extricated by your mates if that be any satisfaction to your souls.

After a night at Villa Marie without shelter, the Platoon received orders to move to Hatolia, a small Portuguese Posto a few miles

further on. This was a bit better! At least there were a few buildings in which the troops could rest awhile although the food position was still plenty grim.

Here the Company was to come into contact with Portuguese officialdom for the first time. The Chef de Post was not very co-operative. He objected strongly to our taking over his posto and his telephone line. However his protestations were unavailing as luckily we could not speak his language and thereby thought he was agreeing to our highway robbery. Here luck turned our way slightly as it was found that the Dutch had cached some tin food in the area which was attacked with great gusto. The arrival of some Dutch soldiery under Lt. Max Horstink placed the rations on a fair basis between Aussie and Dutchie. Horstink was an excellent type of Dutch officer and made a great impression on those that met him at this stage and this impression lasted throughout the campaign. He was a great boon at the moment as he had a terrific grasp of the languages of the island and for the first time we were able through him to converse with the natives and get their point of view and know where they stood with relation to the Jap. They seemed to be all our way thank heaven! Once again through Horstink we were able to assist our larder as natives started to bring in eggs, fowls, bananas and even a buffalo. These natives at that time were firmly convinced that the Aussie soldiers were primarily there to assist them to rid themselves of the Portuguese yoke! This was the early beginnings of our real association with the Timorese native. What a profitable investment it was to be!

Fate had not finished with the Unit yet. There was just around the corner another cruel blow to fall, more losses without commensurate gains. A bad period indeed for those of the Double Cherry Patch.

(The Editor is deeply indebted to Arch Campbell and Geo. Boyland for providing the main basis of the above instalment.)

(To be continued)