



2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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AUGUST 1964

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Editorial

ANNUAL RE-UNION



The big event of the W.A. calendar is hard upon us. This is where the boys can really get together under ideal circumstances and relive the great mateships of the past and present. I refer, of course, to the Annual Re-union Dinner.

As in every other year no effort or expense is spared to make the Re-union something to really remember. The venue at Anzac House Basement could not be more central. Parking space is adequate, the catering is bountiful and the grog will flow like honey on the Jordan Valley. What more can be done to loosen up tongues and put you in the mood to "lug bash" to your heart's content?

The big "if" at all times is the roll up. Why anyone who can possibly make it, does not get into the swim, remains a complete mystery. We always welcome the country members as this is their great opportunity each year to get with the "Neon signs" types in the Big Smoke. Try your best, you members of Jim Griffin's "Bushies League" to make up a party and be there on Sept. 5.

There appears to be no valid reason why the "Smog Eaters" from Midland to Fremantle, and from Armadale to City Beach can't

flush out their lungs at this great festive occasion.

Don't pull the old excuse of television as that is definitely "Old Hat" nowadays. Don't let the weather deter you, just remember what the folk of Harvey and Collicie have had to put up with lately and you will realise that a bit of rain or wind won't kill anybody.

Remember if you miss this time you have to wait a full 12 months before the opportunity arises again and that's a long time to flog the cat.

Make this Re-union the one that beats even the fantastic show that we put on during the Empire Games when we broke records right, left and centre.

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West Australian Whisperings

Association Activities

AUGUST MEETING

Quite a nice gathering of the clan occurred at Anzac House on August 4, for the first monthly get-together of the new year. The boys took part in a rifle shoot, thanks to the City of Perth Sub-Branch's good offices in supplying rifle and ammo. Can't say that the shooting was terrific but considering the age and disability of most of the participants Mr. Sukarno's troops could still be in a bit of trouble from the lads of the two bar two. Think Geo. Fletcher was about as good as any of those present but quite a few including Merv Cash, Jack Denman, Ray Aitken and Jack Poynton did more than averagely.

It was good to see Jack Poynton at a meeting once again. He has recently returned from Adelaide and is now 2i/c. of the E.S. & A. Branch in W.A. He expects to be here for probably three more years when he anticipates a return to the East.

A piece of good fun these rifle shoots as are all of the activities held on the first Tuesday in the month.

Committee Comment

The usual meeting of the Management Committee took place on August 18 when practically a complete roll up of members gathered to do business with Association matters.

The Treasurer in his statement showed that finances remain healthy.

The major business of the evening comprised the detailed planning of the Annual Re-union and Commemoration Service. These details should leave little to be desired as far as these two functions are concerned.

The sub-committee formed to deal with kerbing at Kings Park arranged to meet on Sunday 29th to lay an experimental section for viewing at the Commemoration Service by as many members as possible.

It was agreed this year that the Children's Party take the form of a picnic at Yanchep on Sunday, Dec. 6, 1964. This year it was also decided that presents be forwarded to children of country members only as generally speaking they cannot take part in the picnic.

After many years of using up other people it was decided that the Branch purchase a typewriter for the use of the Secretary and also the Editorial staff.

Personalities

It is with extreme regret that we have to advise of the death in tragic circumstances of Warwick A. Crossing. "Wack" was one of the youngest boys to join the Unit on formation, being only 16 years of age at the time. He served through out the three campaigns and was one of the best of the soldiers. He was of that nice cheery disposition that endeared him to all his mates. Unfortunately Warwick was one who found it difficult to settle back to civilian life and his career since the war was a series of ups and downs and the downs were inclined to exceed the ups by quite a bit. It is a singularity that young chaps like Warwick are flung into warfare with all its upsetting factors and psychological break downs. This is one of the great unfairnesses of the war business. It is left to us to say "Goodbye Warwick and hope that you have greater comfort in the great beyond."

Pleased to see Gordon Rowley during the month. Gordon and his good wife called in and gave a brief account of their wonderful trip to N.S.W. where he met many of the members. Ron Trengrove will be pleased to know that Gordon dropped in his first note book of his diary of Timor. This is most excellent reading and we'll try and use it in the "Courier" at a later date if you can find the other books, Ron.

Bert Burges was another caller during the month. Bert was able to supply details for the proposed Country Convention to be held

this year in the Katanning-Broomhill-Kojonup area. You will get further details of this at a later date. Bert said that in common with most farmers he had had too much rain but otherwise the season could be O.K.

Elsewhere in this issue are two further letters from John Burrige giving a running account of his overseas' trip from the various places as he has visited them. These are really wonderful and just the sort of copy an Editor dreams of. Keep having a great time John, and keep those screeds rolling in, they're terrific.

Due probably to the weather haven't seen many of the gang this month so your personalities column is a bit on the "clino" side so bear with me till next month.

TALK BY JIM SMAILES TO THE JUNE MEETING

Here are Jim Smalles' notes of his talk to our June meeting on his recent sojourn in Malaya. This was an excellent talk and the opportunity is now taken to put all members in the picture.

Malaya is a federation of 12 States, now within the Malaysia concept which includes, Singapore, Sarawak, and Saban (formerly Nth Borneo). It is a long narrow peninsular on the southern extremity of Asia, some 500 miles from north to south and up to 200 miles across in its greatest width from east to west. Compares to Victoria in size. Main physical features include a range of mountains running north and south which divide Malaya into two areas as regards weather control. On both sides of this and to the south the country is flat and undulating. The main rivers are extremely large for their relatively short distances, and run very strongly which limits them for navigation. The climate is tropical with very slight variations in temperature, no great change in seasons other than wet and dry twice per year in most localities. Temperature is 80 to 85 deg. day time and 70 to 75 at night. High humidity makes conditions trying when even small physical exertion is applied.

The 12 States are Johore in the south, Pahang, Trengganu and Kel-

antan occupying the east coast, with Malacca, Negri Sembilan, Selangor, Perak, Kedah and Perlis in that order from south to north complete the west coast facing the Straits of Malacca. Province Wellesley is a small enclave in the State of Kedah opposite Penang Island and is in itself a self contained State. Penang also is a State making 12 in all. Each has its own State Parliament, and Sultan. The Federation of all 12 States is controlled by a Federal Parliament, the capital city being Kuala Lumpur in the State of Selangor.

There is also a King of Malaya occupying a similar position and role as the British Monarch in constitutional affairs. The Government is very democratic and particularly strong and united, having a huge majority of seats. In the general election of last April 25, the ruling alliance party won 89 seats out of 104 and 11 out of 12 States are also governed by the same political party.

Malaya was granted independence on August 31, 1957, but remains within the Commonwealth. Her first and only Prime Minister is Tunku Abdul Rahman, a son of the royal house of the State of Kedah.

The Sultans are of course, Malays, and hold vast powers and wealth. They and their families dominate the parliaments, services local government, and civil services, even down to police officers, and similar officials. Thus most of the control and political power is vested in the Malay race as distinct from the Chinese and other nationals.

The population of some 10,000,000 is roughly 40 per cent Malay, 40 per cent Chinese, 10 per cent Indian with the remaining 10 per cent being Siamese, Japanese, Burmese, European, Indonesian and Arab. The tolerance of the races towards each other is remarkable, particularly when one considers their vast differences in colour, race, religion and political outlook.

One does not need to be a very astute observer to realise that Malaya's present political stability and solid financial position is a legacy handed to them from the British administration which has dominated the area over the past 140 years

up to the granting of Independence, Singapore, of course, being a British Colony up to September, 1963, prior to her joining the Malaysia concept. This strong British influence is even further emphasised when Malaya is compared with other recently independent countries throughout south east Asia, particularly Indonesia. The Dutch French and Portuguese did not leave their respective colonies so well equipped to prepare them for their independent status, nor tutor and guide them through the teething stages of their infant nationhood.

In Malaya at present all junior jobs are held by the local peoples, and many senior positions are ably controlled by Malays or Chinese who were trained under British officials over the past 10 to 20 years to prepare them for such responsibilities. There still remains a hard core of the old administration in many key positions within the present administration, who are gradually moving out as the policy of Malayanisation is expanded. This is not being done with any suggestion of urgency, but rather by way of regret, as their true worth is realised in terms of vast experience and education which is so lacking in the local counterpart.

The official language is now Malay, but strangely enough English still predominates throughout the civil service, the government, law courts, newspapers and radio. The opposition of the Chinese to learn Malay and generally accept it officially, makes English more acceptable than before. Another big reason is the with increased national status and contact with the outside world, English is essential and very necessary for trade and diplomatic negotiation, Malay being very local, very inexpressive, and not widely spoken by world standards. Many senior officials are English educated and have travelled widely as part of their preparation for leadership.

In terms of natural resources, Malaya is extremely rich, but as yet very undeveloped except in isolated areas. The soil generally is very fertile and prolific, requiring no fertilising or irrigation to produce two crops per year in many areas. In agriculture the chief crop of course is rubber, totalling

over 4,000,000 acres and employing quarter of the work force. Malaya at present grows almost one half of world consumption. In this industry again British long-sighted policy has paid off enormously. Research and hard work in improving the production qualities of the rubber trees has brought Malaya's average per acre of trees up to 600 lb. of raw rubber annually, as against Indonesia's 300 lbs. per acre. Latest varieties as yet in experimental plots have now exceeded 3,000 lbs. per acre. As these are propagated, and present areas replanted, the significance of this research is apparent, and will go a long way to offset rising costs of production and keep raw rubber in a price comparable to the synthetic material. The threat to the industry is so great that without this tremendous development, it could safely be stated that natural rubber would have been outrivalled and the industry would have died.

Next in agricultural importance comes rice which is all consumed within the nation and a small amount is still imported. The northern States of Perlis and Kedah being the main producers.

Coconuts are a big industry, followed by tea, pineapples, coffee, peanuts, bananas, pawpaws, sweet potatoes, and vegetables. Fruit growing and dairy farming as we know it are almost non-existent. Pig raising is a small industry, but limited to backyard activity more than commercial. Chicken and egg production are both fairly extensive, but here again it is done in numerous small family units rather than an organised industry.

Mining is the next biggest primary industry, and employs another quarter of the work force, most of whom are unskilled. Tin is by far the main mineral produced, being in the region of 60 million pounds sterling annually. Malaya is the biggest single producer of tin accounting for one third of world production. This position has been won from Indonesia in recent years, and it would appear that this position can be held for many years to come. Most of the tin occurs in the mineral cassiterite in the form of secondary enrichment in the main river valleys

of Malaya. It occurs on a limestone bed rock floor and is up to 100 feet deep in many places. The alluvium material is clay, mud and sand, and contains usually about one to two lb. per cubic yard. The lower portion is often the richest, and pockets in the limestone floor have been known to contain exceptionally rich concentrations.

The material is either worked with dredges floating in a pond, or by high pressure monitors washing the material to a central gravel pump which elevates it by large pipes to a riffled table or jig where the heavy cassiterite is held back, and the lighter clay, etc., is washed on and pumped again to a tailings area, usually a worked out hole or raised dump similar to our well known dumps in Kalgoorlie. With better recovery methods of recent years many of the older dumps have been retreated profitably. The tin producing areas are mainly confined to Perak and Selangor, with the famous Kinta Valley dominating the mining scene. Although there are some very large and well conducted European mines, the bulk of production comes from small outfits usually operated by Chinese family units and entirely owned and controlled within the family. The Chinese have been mining tin in Malaya for 200 to 300 years, and have the art down to a very high degree of efficiency.

In and about the larger towns like Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh there are numerous foundries which design and manufacture the necessary gravel and water pumps for this industry. It is a credit to their ingenuity and mechanical ability what has been achieved in this regard without the usual technical background for an engineering industry. These pumps being from 6in. to 12in. pipe diameter and capable of transporting hundreds of cubic yards per hour. Power is usually electricity, supplied very cheaply from hydro electric sources.

In the tin mining industry, as in rubber, the employees are housed and fed by the employer, and pay is calculated to cover this requirement.

Next in importance in mining is iron ore, with some millions of tons being exported annually to Japan. There is no steel industry

in Malaya at present, but a blast furnace and steel mill are now in course of construction on the island of Singapore. This iron occurs in small pockets and outcrops with no large deposits as yet discovered.

Other minerals are only in very small quantities and scarcely need a mention, gold, antimony, manganese and silver being very small. Coal is present in one commercial deposit and was mined up to six years ago prior to the conversion of the railways to diesel-electric power.

The railways are very well constructed under British engineers early in this century and even now still dominate the transport of people and produce between cities and ports. There are two main lines branching out like a fork from the south and dominating the west and east coasts respectively, and both continuing up into Thailand beyond the northern boundary of Malaya to Bangkok. Three classes of fares are available, and being cheap, are in great demand. Third class passengers are able to carry sundry produce with them, which often includes pigs, chickens, fruit, eggs and countless forms of baggage and gear. First class does include sleepers and dining cars of a very high standard. The track is metre width (3ft. 9in.), extremely well laid and maintained. A feature of both lines is the countless steel bridges and tunnels. Speed is very fast and is conducted with great safety and strict timetables. All crews are now local men mostly Indian. Station buildings are particularly impressive.

Returning to the more human interest, mention must be made of the government drive to educate the masses who up to now were 95 per cent illiterate. Schooling is now compulsory to 14 years and children are encouraged to continue on to Leaving standard.

There is a tremendous school building programme under way but the task is enormous and only just begun. Teachers are scarce and general equipment and facilities also lag behind the demand. In an endeavour to bridge this gap while buildings are short, a two shift timetable is worked in many districts. One batch of children commence school at 6.30 a.m. and con

tinue to 12 noon, being replaced with a second batch till 5.30 p.m. Sports are conducted before and after lessons as the case may be so as to use all facilities to fullest advantage.

Classes are usually of 50 children and teachers work eight to ten hours per day. Schools are conducted six days per week with Sun day off. Many English teachers remain in Malaya and many local born citizens are sent to England for training. Teachers appear to come from all races with Malay and Chinese dominating the scene.

The Chinese community in many

cities conduct their own schools with some government assistance, the main reason for this being the vast difference in the two main religions Moslem and Buddhist.

The central school is the predominant feature in most centres with school buses being used to bring the students in from outlying districts rather than have smaller isolated schools. This method gives not only broader education, but makes better use of available teachers and buildings. The children are particularly clean, well dressed and extremely keen.

Random Harvest

PETER BARDEN, of Box 310, Geraldton, W.A., writes:—

First of all allow me to thank you sincerely for my re-election to the Vice Presidency for the Northern area. I will do my utmost to make regular contributions to the "Courier", because the least country members can do is to provide material to help you with the excellent job you are doing as Editor of what surely must be one of the most interesting journals of its kind in Australia.

Hearty congratulations to you on your re-election as Editor, and to Arthur Smith and others who have accepted office. I was glad to see the name of B. ("You can call me 'Bloss' but not too much of the 'Blossom'.") Lawrence among the Committee members. I'm sure he will be a great asset.

I have some sad news on this occasion. My sister Betty and "Irish" Hopkins, of Morawa, have been bereaved by the sudden death of their 2½ weeks old son. My brother, Father John Barden (Administrator of St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral at Geraldton) visited Morawa to conduct the funeral. Keep up the old chin "Irish", our sympathies are with you and Bet.

Referring to the comments in the Presidential Report, about the Convention at Geraldton, I would like to reiterate that the major reason for the outstanding success of the function was the splendid manner in which the city-ites gath-

ered in strength for the occasion.

Hearty congratulations to Joe and Helen Poynton on the arrival of a baby girl. Who said we are getting old?

August seems to have been a bad month as far as sadness is concerned. I noticed in the paper the death in Perth of Arthur Burns father as a result of an accident. There were many glowing tributes to this 32nd Battalion veteran of World War 1 and here again our deepest sympathies are with the bereaved. You may have noticed the news item about Mr. Burns being the most noted anchor-man of the 1st A.I.F. tug-o-war team. He was in the 32nd Battalion's team which was never beaten in its many appearances in France against teams from other Australian Battalions and the British Army. Vale! Sidney Robert Burns, a digger and a gentleman who passed on to higher service at the age of 81.

The "man from the bush", one Don Young, recently dropped in at Geraldton and appeared to be in the "pink" of condition. Don, who is overseer at "Woolleen" Station in the Murchison to the north of Mullewa, also called on Eric Smyth, and was hoping to have a "session" with "Nip" Cunningham at the Mercantile Club.

Eric Smyth, still a keen yachtsman, is back on the committee of the Geraldton Yacht Club, which now boasts a licensed club built at

a cost of about £24,000. Eric's daughter, 14 year old Jan, is making a name for herself in the hockey world; she was one of High School's best players in the grand final of the senior competition, and although the school team lost by one goal, Jan's efforts as goalkeeper are still being talked about. This week she is going to Perth for the High School carnival.

Jan Cunningham, "Nip's" daughter, has also been in the news. She won a personal portable T.V. set in an Australia-wide colouring contest held by a breakfast food company.

We are flat-out at present, making arrangements for the Sunshine Festival to be held from August 22 to 30. It will be the best ever, and includes an air rally, cycle tour and car race, all from Perth, a huge rodeo; and a parade of floats for which "Yours Truly" and his wife will again be adjudicators. If any of you are able to work in your holidays with the Festival, you will be in for a treat.

Must be away now, as duty calls. Kind regards to all the boys.

JOHN BURRIDGE, from 'Overseas' writes:—

Since leaving Athens we have had several glorious days in Vienna and now we are in Berlin. Today we leave for Hamburg.

Vienna is as beautiful as I had imagined, the Danube just ain't blue but it is a lovely river: the Vienna woods are more beautiful than one could imagine—spruce, poplar, linden, oak, etc. Viennese people call Vienna—Wien and Danube—Donau. We Europeans have our own names handed down from Roman times. When the romans occupied Vienna they used the words Vienni and Danubus.

I wish Mrs. Rischbaith could see the new W.I.G. Park in Vienna. All man-made and just about the most beautiful place of relaxation for city people you could imagine. We travelled in a sort of flying fox (seating two per seat) right around the gardens. The trip cost 5/- and took over half an hour. We were about 30 feet up.

What we could do for Kings Park is nobody's business and I suppose one day it will be realised that bush lovers can go to the hills and park lovers will be given Kings Park.

We ate at the WIG restaurant. A 400 foot tour with the restaurant slowly revolving clockwise.

West Berlin is the show place of Western Democracy (apart from Hamburg). Things are very cheap and the stores bulging with merchandise. Berlin is lousy with Yanks as indeed is all Europe. The sound of those horrible accents of those "Septic Tanks" is slowly driving me up the wall. Those who have read "The Ugly American" will appreciate the horror of a beautiful and classical city like Vienna overrun with fat American females in thongs, all speaking stridently with those awful American's arrogant accents!

Yesterday we drove through Checkpoint Charlie and drove around East Berlin. The Russians have made a good show of one main thoroughfare but most of East Berlin is still in ruins and what devastation! Those Germans certainly copped it towards the end. West Berlin will take ten more years to rebuild—a total of 30 years. By the look of present progress East Berlin would take 300.

Berliners call the four sectors: "The Vodka Sector," "The Whiskey Sector," "The Champagne Sector" and "The Coca Cola Sector". The Wall is incredible—30 miles long. Houses and shops right on the wall have all windows and doors bricked up on the Russian side.

One of the most pathetic things I saw was an elderly man and his wife waving to a girl in a window in the Russian sector. They called out in German: "We will come here again tomorrow at noon."

We leave for Hamburg today. It is called "The Miracle of Modern Europe".

Since my last letter we have seen Hamburg, Copenhagen, Mahno, Gothenburg and now we rae in Stockholm.

Hamburg is certainly a modern miracle and it is difficult to find any bomb damage. A combination of American credit and German thoroughness and guts has rebuilt Western Germany. The German people, perhaps with the motive of self-chastisement for losing the war bogged into it—women included—and tackled the gigantic task of rebuilding. Hamburg 60 per cent

destroyed, Cologne 80 per cent.

The economy of Western Germany is one of the greatest booms of modern times. Over a million foreign workers have streamed into Western Germany in recent years and still there is a labour shortage.

We had a wow of a time in Ham burg. We visited the naughty reperi-bahn district with one of my apple buyers. Poor Joan's eyes nearly popped out of her head at what she saw, but when the conductor of a brass band put his hat on her head and gave her the baton to conduct she performed magnificently. During this time, I was standing on the table drinking schnapps and singing "Waltzing Matilda".

We crawled onto the train the next morning and sped through lovely countryside to Copenhagen. All crops—wheat, barley, oats and rye are noticeably much more heavily yielding than at home. Didn't notice much stock but there must be plenty.

You know the strange habit of Germans and Austrians of joining three and four words together resulting in one whopper?—well here is a hypothetical though perfectly legal example of the lengths to which they can go. The title for a Runover of the Block from the Keyhole of the House of the Director of a Railway Signpost Factory would be: "EISENBAHNSIGNALMASTFABRICDIREKTORSHAUSTURCHSCHLUSSELOCHVERSTOPFUNGSENTFERNER"!

There are 20 million people in Scandinavia which comprises Finns, Danes, Norwegians and Swedes, plus the peoples of Iceland, Greenland and Faroes. They work together very happily and each has a strong socialist economy. There is a sort of Melbourne-Sydney competition between them all with the Swedes clearly on top. In the Swedes' eyes Denmark is "small stuff", Norway is "the poor relation" and Finland "rather routh and uncouth". The Danes are happy and reputedly a bit lazy, the Swedes conservative and a bit stiff, the Norwegians rustic and strong, and the Finns dour introverts.

I read a story in "Time" recent-

ly which told of two Danes, two Norwegians and two Swedes being shipwrecked together. After two weeks the Danes had formed a co-operative, the Norwegians were fighting and the Swedes were waiting to be introduced!

Another story says that if a Norwegian invents something, a Swede will patent it and a Dane will be in charge of sales promotion! I cannot vouch for these national characteristics except for the Danes who say: "Have fun in Denmark and sleep in the next country."

A tourist's impression of Denmark and Sweden must surely be of canals and flats. Such gigantic blocks of flats I never have seen. They are built by private enterprise and rents are pegged.

Inflation is making things a bit difficult for the Swedes. Tourists don't do much buying in either Denmark or Sweden as prices are far too high. I think that Norway will be cheaper.

Scandinavia is a mass of islands, waterways and canals. Stockholm itself is built on 17 islands, all interlocked.

Yesterday I saw men working on "European Highway No. 3". This will be a main highway linking Portugal with Finland! These autobahns, as the Germans call them, are all over Europe.

Tourism is an enormous business in Europe. If a Dane visits England I suppose there's nothing much in it because an Englishman will visit Denmark and one will balance out the other. But where the dough is, is the visiting Yank and all the European countries vie for his patronage.

The weather continues to be warm. Summer in Scandinavia is really beautiful particularly when I read of the Harvey flooding at home!

Yesterday evening we did a canal trip on a launch. We left at 6 p.m. and returned at 8.30 when it was still daylight.

Scandinavian people are curious about Australians but the average person knows very little about us. One very nice incident occurred at a Rotary luncheon in Gothenburg when the President introduced

John as me as friends from Perth—the City of Light—which lighted the way for Colonel Glenn.

If Bernie Langridge or Harold Rowan-Robinson chance to read this letter they will be happy to know that W.A. apples this year out-turned well everywhere I have been.

A very sad incident happened in Malmo. I noticed some beautiful granny smiths in a shop window which looked West Australian to me. I toddled in and with great difficulty got the message across that we wanted to see the box or carton they came in. Standing back, I waited confidently for him to produce a carton with my KOALA brand on it. To my dismay he staggered out carrying a box with the BLACK SWAN—Westralian Farmers.

I hope my letters are of interest as sometimes the ramblings of travellers become boring, however I'm doing my best. We have two more days in Stockholm then off to Helsinki—not too far from Lapland, the land of the midnight sun. Actually Lapland is not a land at all: it is the vague area comprising the northern tips of Norway, Sweden and Finland and is inhabited by an Esquimic type—the Lapps.

JIM WALL, of 18 Shaw Street, Niddrie, Victoria, writes:—

Enclosed is a letter which I recently received from Wilf Roberts, an ex-member of the 2/4 Company who appears to be acting on behalf of Legacy. The letter is self explanatory.

I have made a few enquiries around Melbourne, but cannot locate anyone who knows Allen Bert Field. Perhaps a more effective way of obtaining information about him would be by way of the "Courier", so would you be kind enough to arrange to have the letter published in the August "Courier" requesting anyone who has information which may be of some assistance, to please contact Wilf Roberts, of 81 Pennant Hills Road, Wahroonga, N.S.W.

Also enclosed is a cheque for £24 in payment of Victoria's share of the "Courier", and it would be appreciated if you would pass it on to the Treasurer.

W. L. (Wilf) Roberts' writes:

I am taking the liberty of writing in connection with Legacy work for the widow and family of ex NX103834, Allen Bert Field, whose service record shows some time spent with 2 Coy.

You may already be aware that Allen (or "Duke" as I believe he was better known) died from stomach cancer fairly recently, and strenuous efforts are being made by Legacy to have his case accepted by the Repat. Dept.

Unfortunately, the widow is not able to tell me very much about his service history—having married him quite some time after the scrap—and military records do not disclose anything really helpful, other than he was in Port Moresby during 1943.

Being myself an original Independent Coy. man (ex 2/4) I know darn well that military records are by no means infallible when it comes to recording field movements in our kind of show, but I'm right up against it so far as the Repat. Dept. is concerned unless I can put together an accurate story about his service.

His rather high NX number makes it pretty obvious that he would probably have been a reinforcement during the New Guinea show, but what I'm trying to establish is whether or not he took part in 2 Coy's rigorous capers up the back of Bena Bena. If this is so I can probably get his case through on Repat's preparedness to accept dietary deficiencies and lack of ready medical attention, but to achieve this I have to dig up a first hand account from some one who was close to him, preferably in the same Section.

Was he personally known to you? If not, would you please do me the favour of putting out a line of inquiry amongst your troops?

Incidentally, this case has already been "knocked back" by the Repat. Dept. for want of medical history, but we all know that many of our chaps suffered from a lot of illness and/or injury on active service which never found its way to a Casualty Return.

I do hope you can get hold of something which would enable me to "bat on" for the widow.

Historically Yours!

CHAPTER II.

(Continued)

ON THE ROAD TO BIBICUCU

April 3—

From behind our rest-house, I got a good view of the river below us, where its tributary, the Tahalolat, descending a long steep gradient, and looking from my elevated station like a narrow line of black fluid winding through the centre of its wide, flat and stony channel, dashes down a noisy cataract into but does not commingle for a long way after its union with the paler water of the Wai Matang-Kaimauk, whose bed, judging from the dwarfed appearance of the tall casuarinas growing against the high shingle banks in the fork of their confluence, must be quite 50 feet lower. So broad is the channel of this river that even the conjoint flood—on the way to the sea at Mantutu—meanders like a narrow riband through it. The grandeur of these streams, if ever their vast beds are filled from bank to bank with a roaring torrent, must be left to the imagination.

Guided by the Dato, down the steep and broken slopes to the river margin, 2,000 feet above the sea, I had a full view of the giant trihedral blocks down to their bases in a side tributary of the Wai Matang-Kaimauk, and estimated them at not less than 1,000 feet in height.

The river itself, which looked so small from above, was found to be wide, deep, and rapid, demanding our utmost caution in fording on account of the number of large boulders which were being constantly rolled down by it. I am told that in the rainy season, travellers have often to camp on the bank for weeks waiting for an opportunity to cross in safety; and that many a time horses and men, who in their impatience attempt to force their way, are carried down and crushed by the rolling blocks.

From the river it was a long, weary climb of 1,500 feet to the summit of the opposite ridge, over a rough shingly ground, from which the soil has been nearly all

washed away, so that to raise his little crop of maize the native here has had to build up terraces of low walls in the more sheltered nooks to hold the precious hoard of earth he has laborously collected behind them.

On reaching the summit we were overtaken by a dense drizzling mist, in which amid the innumerable ravinelets of the descent, each of which looked like the usual ditch like track of a road, we lost our way. Stumbling up against a native of the district, whom luckily we caught unawares before he could make off, we persuaded him with the offer of a gaudy kerchief to guide us to the Rajah of Turskain's.

In his rear we slid and stumbled down on the slippery clay for 1,000 feet to the Maukuda, a noisy sparkling stream in a narrow ravine which finds its way to the south coast (showing that we had crossed the water-shed of the country), up which we clambered over boulders and through deep pools for nearly an hour. The sides of the ravine, however, were densely covered with vegetation, and bright with hedychium, balasm and the French marigold (*Tagetes patula*) so common in our gardens at home, but which was here growing wild far from coast influence or the highways of the world, and was seen by me nowhere else along my route. It is a widespread plant hailing from Mexico originally, but also found in Africa; but how did it reach the interior of Timor?

Turning to the right out of the stream our horses had to be urged up one of the steepest inclines we had yet encountered, in trenches as deep as their own height, and along more precipitous and dangerous ravines than those we had passed. In compensation for these difficulties the scenery was charmingly picturesque, in the glimpses we got of it through the rolling mist-clouds, and above all, we had entered a more fertile grass-clad

region though without much arb- and rushed through below the
oreal vegetation beyond acacias and casuarinas. house as a considerable stream.

Every foot of the way was dotted with bright herbs in full flower with violets, white flowered geraniums like our Herb-Robert in habit, Galium very like our common Bedstraw, pink Labiatae resembling the penny-royal of our English roadsides, Oxalis, and Polygonum while among the grass and in rocky nooks grew small terrestrial orchids and the most lovely silver and other graceful ferns; and where the soil was broken by land-slips and in the ravines, flowering shrubs abounded, so that I mourned that I had not arms enough to embrace specimens of all I might have gathered.

Though we had been climbing up and clambering down—first down 500 feet then up 1,700, down 1,000 only to rise again the same number of feet—since early morning till past five o'clock in the evening, I quite forgot the steepness of this last ascent (leading up to our destination the residence of the Rajah of Turskain), and my weariness of limb in the happiness of gathering these familiar forms of flowers, as well as the event of the day to which I had been looking forward, the seeing of the state and bearing of a native potentate.

At last at an elevation of 4,500 feet we found in a pretty circular grassy plateau in the hollow of the mountain tops the royal enclosure. The house of the Leorei, a small edifice standing alone, had little to distinguish it from the commonest Timorese dwelling except perhaps the presence of an armed guard housed near it in a little shed, near which stood the "guarada", erected for the accommodation of high personages passing through the kingdom, and therefore assigned to us. This was a miserable edifice raised on poles but not floored except where a rough bamboo platform was erected for baggage and another for sleeping on. It could not have been less comfortable or much more filthy. dogs and pigs had evidently made it their lair, and during our stay they strayed through it at all hours of the day and night while the rain penetrated the roof everywhere,

Soon after our arrival I sent my corporal to inform the Rajah of my presence in his "guarda," "on the service of the Government," and to request him to come to me and hear the reason of my visit to his kingdom.

He sent back his salutation, with the reply that as it was late he would visit me on the morrow and arrange for the necessary supplies of our table and for horses for our further progress; meantime, he begged to send us six eggs and two wax tapers hoping we should make an endeavour to do with these till the morning, and to say that he had ordered a Cabo of the Reno to take over at once and be responsible for the safety of our baggage that the Rajah of Motael's men had brought.

This official having received over not only every article of our baggage down to the most insignificant strap but ourselves also, placed a guarda to attend on us and protect us. It was very amusing to listen to the acceptance on the one side and discharge of obligation on the other—three bundles of paper, two straps, two teapots, three guns four boxes, two soldiers of Dilly, one Englishman, who has two eyes, a nose, hair on his face, two arms, all safe and complete! Had I come by any accident, or lost any prominent feature of my face, or if any of my baggage had disappeared, the kingdom would have been bound to replace it in kind, or in value! In this way I never had any anxiety about the safety of my property.

The six eggs (the two tapers included) provided for our bodily sustenance by the Rajah, being any thing but sufficient for three men who had travelled through sun and rain for 11 hours, I sent a sharp message that something more substantial must be forthcoming, and at once. From a series of terrible howlings that reached our ears from the royal guardroom, it was evident that my message had been passed on to some unfortunate menial accompanied by an application to quicken his search, which resulted in a fowl and some other comestibles finally being brought.

On the 4th April I was roused early by a vigorous tattoo from the

Rajah's guard-house. The katjeru, or royal drummer, is a hereditary official of high and coveted rank in the kingdom, for they hold that when Maromak made Timor he gave the people a standard-bearer to lead them to war, and a katjeru to walk beside him—"like man and wife".

As the Rajah, notwithstanding the noisy tatoo at his door, seemed to be a very late riser, I set out for the crest of the hill above our camp to take a round of observations. To reach the most convenient place for my purpose I had to pass through a strong barricaded enclosure in which were several apparently closed up and uninhabited houses. It was some minutes before it struck me that I was in the presence of, to me, the most interesting of their buildings and their most sacred institution—which I had seen but without learning anything about, at Sauo—the Uma-Luli, a designation which I scarcely know how to translate other than by Pomali House.

I am extremely doubtful whether it is to be reckoned among their really religious institutions or not. It has connection with the practice of the Taboo, but whether it has been introduced into this island along with a race that migrated from the Pacific, or has arisen de novo among themselves I am unable to conjecture. It is just possible that on their own customs they may have grafted an imitation of some of the rites of the Romish ritual, which has now more or less been known to them for 300 years. If a family cluster consists of several houses, there is invariably one among them called the Uma-Luli; and near the residence of the rajah there is always one large one, which is the Uma-Luli of the kingdom. As a rule, however, the tribute Uma-Luli is flanked by two others, or occasionally by more, if the kingdom is large.

These edifices almost invariably stand in a cleared space, surrounded by a thick fence, as here within a grove of trees or some elevated spot. Within this fence no twig or branch may be broken or cut, no blade of grass plucked, and no stone overturned under the fear of the vengeance of the luli; no tobacco is permitted to be taken within

the sacred boundaries and no horse or buffalo may stray within it. The buildings themselves are large, care fully built and tended structures of bamboo, raised above the ground on pillars, and possessing two doors, one at the side and one at the end. The Luli house can be at once recognised, were it by nothing else than by the buffalo crania with which it is decorated on the outside.

An officer who holds one of the highest, and certainly the most influential positions in the kingdom, has charge of the buildings, and presides over the sacred rites which are conducted in them. He is known as the Dato-Luli, or Rai-Luli. In times of peace, and on all ordinary occasions, an old man or woman lives in the building, as a sort of caretaker. such a person is named the Luliata. Sometimes an old man and his wife reside all day in it, but they may not both—being of opposite sexes—remain all night.

It is not very easy to obtain a good idea of the interior arrangements of the Uma-Luli, as it is impossible for heretics to get within it, or often very near it. Even natives of Timor who have become nominally Sirani (Christian) are prohibited from entering it; but by sedulously questioning those who know, I was able to gather that of the two doors (whose direction does not seem to be a matter of importance), one is reserved for the Dato-Luli, or chief priest, and the other for the persons consulting the fates to enter. By the Dato's door no one but himself may enter; it opens into a portion railed off by ornamented wooden pillars from the larger portion of the building, into which the people have entrance. In the smaller part are preserved different articles of veneration—the cranium of a buffalo, a spear, a shield, a chopper, a gun (almost falling to pieces, and of an old, old pattern, my guild told me, "yet it is more powerful than any other gun however new") besides these there is a bag containing the vestments of the priest which are a broad band of scarlet cloth for his head, a circular breast plate of gold, worn suspended on the neck; two gold discs, about 15 centimetres in diameter, to cover the ears; a broad crown of gold,

with two long buffalo-like horns of the same material projecting from it, and gold armlets and earrings.

Within this enclosure there is, besides, the most sacred object of all—the Vali-Luli, or stone on which the offerings are laid to the invisible deity. Each of these stones they believe to have been given to the people of Timor for this purpose when the universe was made. In the larger portion of the building there is a fireplace, and vessels and cooking utensils sacred to the use of the Uma-Luli.

The different buildings are fitted up in the same way, but only on high occasions is the central one opened. It is kept open during the whole time of war, and in it quarrels arising between the different districts of the kingdom are arranged. In times of flood or of drought or of famine an offering is made to ward off this disaster. If a man has an ordinary sickness in his house, he does not consult either of the larger Luli houses, but offers a fowl or a pig to the Luli—at a little railed-off portion—in his own house. If he should lose several members of his family, or he be oppressed by any other great distress, he then applies to the priest for permission to speak with the Luli.

Then, bringing rice with a pig or a fowl, he enters the Uma-Luli with the Dato, each going in by his own door. When the Dato has put on his proper vestments, he kills the fowl or other animal, and having placed a piece of flesh from its heart and the side of its head on the Vatu-Luli, or altar-stone, he cooks the rest along with the rice on the fire in the Luli house. After both have partaken of this food the Dato converses with the Luli, and thereafter turning to the applicant he gives him siri and pinang-nut, with the assurance that the sickness will depart or his difficulty disappear.

Before planting their Indian corn or paddy crop, they kill a pig or fowl, and both on their own Luli stone and on that in the sacred house common to the district, they lay a piece of flesh.

Their greatest ceremonial, however, takes place on the eve of a war. I shall never forget the graphic description given me by the guide who was accompanying me,

and who himself in a late war had been an actor in the scene, of the selecting by Heaven of those who were to sustain the honour of their country in the field.

On the eve of a war, he told me, messengers are sent to every corner of the kingdom and country to summon from wherever he is, and from whatever he is employed, every man who owes allegiance to their Rajah.

From the Uma-Luli near which we stood, the hill sloped up in a vast shallow, natural amphitheatre, bounded on all sides by precipitous and inaccessible valleys. "Here," he said, "every man of the kingdom assembled, each with a fowl in his hand on which to read his fate, until the whole of this hill was full, sitting close together in silence, each man dressed in his war attire, with his gun on his shoulder, his sword by his side and his spear in his hand; they sat row upon row from the bottom all the way up to the top there, round and round."

As he spoke his eyes flashed up, and I could picture to myself the wild and expectant mien of the half-savage crowd.

"The Dato-Luli," he continued, "then appeared at the door of the great Luli house in all the awesome vestments of his office, with the sacred spear and the gun and the shield beside him, and before them all he sacrificed a buffalo. After placing a piece of its flesh, along with siri and panang on the Vatu-Luli, or altar-stone, he invoked the spirits of our dead forefathers, then on Maromak of the heavens (in other districts the deity is known by the name Urubatu and Laraula, signifying sun and moon) and on Him of the earth. Then in turn he called out every man present singly, who, advancing to the high priest each with his fowl in his hand, gave it to the Dato-Luli, who slayed it in presence of the assembled company. According as the animal dies with its right foot or its left foot elevated, and according as the colour of the siri juice which the Dato expectorates on the brow and breast of the man before him is bright scarlet or dark, does the Maromak indicate whether the man is chosen to fight for his kingdom or destined to stay at home and guard the women. If

the fowl die with its right leg elevated, and the siri spittle be bright scarlet, the omens are in favour of the consultor, who then, turning from the Dato-Luli, draws his sword, and, brandishing it wildly in the air exclaims—'I'm a Man; I'm a Brave,' and takes his place on the hillside apart along with the chosen. If the left limb of the fowl remain elevated, or the siri spittle on the brow and breast of the applicant appear of a dark colour he stands rejected, and retires crest-fallen to a place in another group on the left. Those rejected on the first occasion may re-consult the omens a second time; and if the fates permit them to go to the war, it is probable that they may be wounded, and not impossible that they may be killed. If any man who has been rejected, however, dares to venture into the fight, he will certainly, they implicitly believe, be killed, whereas in the case of those whom the Luli has chosen, no bullet or weapon can hurt them. When the number of those who are to fight is complete, their leader is called out before them by the Dato-Luli, who, after giving him siri and pinang out of his own mouth to eat, instructs him how to treat the wounded, and to give the dying their last siri and pinang, a supply of which he gives him from that preserved in the Uma-Luli."

During war the Dato never quits the Uma-Luli; his food is brought to him or cooked inside. Day and night he must keep the fire burning, for should he permit it to die, disaster will happen to those in the field which will continue as long as the hearth is cold. He must besides drink only hot water during the time the army is absent, for every draught of cold water would damp the spirits of the people, so that they could not prevail. On their return from the war the Dato-Luli goes out to welcome them at the head of all those who remained behind—the women beat ing musical instruments, and shout ing "Oswai! Oswai!" to the men who are returning laden with heads

Their belief in the presence of a supernatural Presence resident in the Luli-house is absolute. I was told, with the most perfect belief of my informant in his own statements, that one of the Catholic

priests from Dilly, while on a proselytizing mission, having demanded that the Luli house should be dismantled and its profane ornaments cleared out, was instantly on his setting foot within the door to commit the sacrilegious act which no one else would dare to do, threatened by the sacred spear, sword and gun in invisible hands, while the altar-stone bounded about through the building so menacingly that he was glad to beat a retreat!

When it is necessary to erect a new Luli house, every male in the kingdom must contribute a share of the labour and cost. When it is finished a buffalo is killed to consecrate the building. When this has been properly done, the vestments, the sacred stone and utensils are then carried in, and a second buffalo is sacrificed and portions of its flesh laid on the Luli stone. A great feast follows with music and dancing, in which the Dato-Luli in his sacred attire, and the rest of the people in their gayest dresses and ornaments take part.

I took advantage of my enforced stay here to increase my herbarium with many of the interesting plants I had seen on our way up from the Maukuda river, obtaining some very rare species, such as *Hypoxis hygrometrica*, *Wollastonia asperima*, and an *Ophioglossum* fern.

In the evening the Leorei at last arrived to pay his official visit. I had hoped to find the Rajahs of the interior hedged round with some dignity of bearing, there was little to distinguish him from those about him except that he wore a Malayan sarong, and that his Tais, or native-made toga-like robe, was ornamenteed and fringed with silk, an insignia of royalty. He was not yet de facto ruler, for his father was "sleeping" (the long sleep) "in his house", and not yet buried, as there were not yet amassed sufficient cattle and pigs for a royal sepulture.

He spoke and read Portuguese with some fluency, and by the questions he asked about the objects of my journey, and in the quickness with which he comprehended my description of the working of an aneroid, a thermometer and a prismatic compass that I

showed him, he exhibited an amount of intelligence that rather surprised me. Why the magnetic needle turned always to the same point puzzled him beyond measure and I could see that my reply, that Maromak made it so, was not altogether satisfactory to him.

Like most of the Rajahs, who in their periodical visits to Dilly have been brought into contact with, and influenced by the Catholic priests, my royal friend was a professor of their faith, as well as a follower of the pagan rites of his own people and to see over against the Luli temple, a lone and uncomprehended symbol of the Christian faith in front of a small, neglected bamboo edifice representing a chapel of its worship, could not but raise strange reflections in the breast of a European traveller.

As still another day of waiting for the horses for the continuance of our journey—to the kingdom of Bibicucu—had to be passed here, I was not disappointed at the opportunity thus afforded of increasing my herbarium along the slopes of Rusonna, whose summit commanded a view of both seas—the Tassi-feto or female sea on the north, and the Tassi-manni or male sea (as the natives have named them), to the south—and of the peak of Kabalaki, the highest mountain of all Eastern Timor. The mountains of Turskain were everywhere covered with a rich carpet of green grass, which gave them a most pleasant and fertile appearance, and on which thousands of sheep might be pastured with great profit.

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