



# 2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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## *Editorial*

### TOGETHERNESS

The last few months have stressed more than ever the wonderful value of our Association as a medium for meeting and having a great time with our mates.

Travellers both from within and without the State have come to Perth and as a result of the Address Book have been able to contact somebody and from there the game has been on. We have the classic example of Maurie Smith who came over from Victoria and was able to have a terrific week in Perth meeting countless numbers of the gang and renewing old acquaintances at least for the first time in 20 years. Another who came to the Western Capital recently and was able to make contact once again was Bernard Callinan who although only here 12 months ago was once again able to get into contact and have an enjoyable hour or so with many of the gang.

Gordon Holmes, from this State, travelled to Victoria and got around in a big way meeting a terrific group of members in Victoria, so much so that it is doubtful if any of the Victorian members have seen more of their State than Gordon did on a short trip.

Bill Drage made a visit to the city from a country area and in no time flat was the recipient of hospitality right, left and centre, to the extent that some of us wished he had stayed at home.

Don Young was another who hit the big smoke from back of the beyond and was able, to meet up with a big gang of his mates for the first time in many years.

The foregoing shows just how valuable an active Association such as ours is to people on the move. The wonderful spirit engendered in the army is fostered for evermore. It would be a tragedy if such an organisation was allowed to wither and die. This togetherness of our gang and the availability of hospitality irrespective of State is something to be prized above all else.

The production of the Address Book has probably been the most effective contribution to this togetherness of anything done by the various Branches since the Association was formed. It matters not one iota where you may be in Australia if you have your Address Book you will never be short of a mate and that is something that any Unit Association should be proud of.

The big thing now is to be certain that this wonderful means of contact is kept up to date, so ensure that if you change your address you notify such a change immediately and thus allow the book to be brought up to scratch through the columns of the "Courier".

May this glorious spirit of togetherness live for ever.

## West Australian Whisperings

### Association Activities

As there was no "Courier" issued for the month of February the activities of the Association have been many and varied since last we went to press.

#### FEBRUARY MEETING

A rifle shoot was held at Anzac House Basement on Feb. 4, and proved as usual to be very popular. The roll up was in excess of usual February meetings and the standard of shooting not to be sneezed at. The first time up to the target found most of the gang a little shaky but at a second attempt nerves seemed to be under control and scores improved remarkably. The eventual winner proved to be Joe Burridge who slapped all five of his final shots into the bull a feat not equalled by any other shooter. Congrats Joe, and keep up the good work.

#### MARCH MEETING

Once again this was held at Anzac House Basement on March 3. Nothing particular was scheduled for the evening but as it happened to coincide with Col Doig's birthday (his 52nd by the way) the opportunity was taken to wish him all the best. The meeting also saw the advent of Bill Drage to the city after his recent disposal of his property at Northampton, so this again was a matter for celebration. After disposing of a five the boys chickened out on the second five and adjourned to Anzac Club to see the evening to a close.

#### EVENING AT RON KIRKWOOD'S HOME

On March 6 quite a number of the gang and their wives met at Ron Kirkwood's home to say "Good evening" to Bill and Glad Drage, who were sojourning in the city. This was a tremendous party and all present voted it real great. Present were: Ron and Gwenda Kirkwood, Gerry and Marg Maley, Bob and Beth McDonald, Jack and Norma Hasson, Bill and Glad Drage, Arthur and Beryl Smith, Col Doig and Bob Smyth.

#### BARBECUE AT GERRY MALEY'S

This was in the nature of a follow up to the party at Kirkwood's as a challenge golf match at Lake Karringup was arranged for Sunday, March 8, which I understand was won by the Drage. Gerry and Marg Maley put on a barbecue at their Trigg Island home in the evening and this was a really terrific show. The weather could be said to be perfect for such a show as the day was as hot as hades and it was a pleasure to be out of doors in the evening. Among those present was the Drages, the Maleys, the Hassons, the Kirkwoods and Percy Hancock. It was reckoned there should be more of this type of entertainment.

#### CRICKET MATCH AT HARVEY

Organised at very brief notice, this function took place on Sunday March 15. Arthur and Audrey Marshall made all the arrangements and it proved to be a cracker-jack day and evening. Quite a reasonable gang made the trip from Perth and had a brief knock-up to get the stiffness out of the joints before noon when an adjournment to the sacred hour at the local hostelery was made. This was followed by lunch.

In the afternoon a "cricket" match between two scratch teams captained respectively by Arthur Marshall and Ken Hasson, played off. Teams comprised a few of the old hands and a big sprinkling of off-spring. Ken Hasson's side got away to a good start and put a hard earned 68 on the board thanks to the fact that "Marsh" did not deem the opposition worthy of taking the ball for a bit of bowling. "Marsh's" team started disastrously losing five wickets for seven runs but then the Marshall touch with the bat came into being and by the time he had compulsorily retired the game was in the see-saw position once again. Arthur Smith eventually won the game for the Marshall combination with the aid of sundry small boys who "Marsh" seemed to produce from out of the hat. The only talent revealed apart from Arthur Marshall was Roy Watson with bat and

ball, Keith Hayes and his two boys also with bat and ball, Ken Hasson and his mate, Joe Poynton as a bowler, Col Doig (one over only for two wickets, then a quick retirement before the average could be murdered by Marshall), Bill Epps behind the stumps, Jack Hasson as batsman, and Geo. Fletcher and Clarrie Turner in the field. The kids enjoyed the match more than their sires probably because they were much fitter.

After the game Arthur arranged a look over the local abattoir and then we met at the local Harvey Weir to have a barbecue tea and knock over some gorgeous fluid.

All in all a wonderful day and one to be repeated for sure in coming years. The major pity was that more were not able to take part in the function. "Marsh" circularised most of the country members but because of commitments, including fruit picking and fire hazards, Clarrie and Grace Turner and their family were the only ones able to be present. Those who journeyed from the city were: Arthur Smith, Jack Carey, Roy Watson, Col Doig, Bill and Jess Epps, Joe and Helen Poynton, Keith and Val Hayes and their two boys, Jack and Norma Hasson and their whole family plus a friend Geoff Rogerson (who incidently top scored for his side) and Geo Fletcher and a mate.

Many thanks are due to Arthur and Audrey Marshall who went to so much trouble to arrange the whole day out. We hope next year to improve in a big way on this roll up and so get the best possible value out of such a day.

#### APRIL MEETING

This meeting will take place as usual at Anzac House Basement on the 7th. A guest speaker has been arranged for the evening so please make every possible effort to attend and not disappoint the speaker. The gentleman in question has recently visited Timor and will be able to bring you up to date on the present position in that island.

#### ANZAC DAY

Although Anzac Day falls on a Saturday this year the Association has decided that arrangements will

be as for previous years. The venue will be the Drill Hall in Bazaar Terrace as usual after the march so make every effort to be there with your medals at the high port and a leave pass to have an enjoyable day.

## Committee Comment

Your Committee met on March 18 and there was a most representative attendance.

The financial statement issued by the Treasurer showed that finances continued to be healthy and with the profit from the sweep currently running should be able to see the Branch through the 12 months before another sweep can be run.

Much discussion took place on our area in Kings Park and it was finally decided that the Association would be prepared to finance the kerbing of our area in entirety subject to reimbursement by the Board when that body undertook the kerbing of the whole area sometime in the future. Mr. Smyth was empowered to deal with Kings Park Board on this basis.

The President gave a resume of the day at Harvey and spoke highly of the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Marshall in arranging the day.

Arrangements for the conducting of Anzac Day were put in train and it was decided that there be no change in our plans for this day despite the fact that football fixtures would be held.

Mr. Doig reported that the sweep was well under way and should with reasonable luck nett the Association the amount that was budgetted for.

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## Personalities

Gordon Holmes called in recently to report a very enjoyable trip to Victoria where he met many of the gang including Bernie Callinan, R. R. Baldwin, David Dexter, Harry Botterill, Johnny Roberts, Bruce Mc Laren, Tom Foster, Ken Monk, and Kev Curran. His journeying took him to Foster, Poowong West, Sale and also Bendigo to see Kev Curran. Gordon was high in his praise of the hospitality received on his trip.

Over in W.A. for another business trip was our old friend B. J. Callinan. I was able to meet and talk with him on a couple of occasions having a few beers with Ron Kirkwood one evening, and with Tom Nesbit, Arch Campbell, Don Murray, Jack Carey and Ron Sprigg on another occasion. It was most pleasant to get together like this once again. Bern told of his recent trip to Europe especially his visit to Portugal where he said he felt very much at home and was the guest of a brother of our old friend of Timor days, Sousa Santos. As Bern will be doing further work for the State Government we may see more of him in the near future at least we hope so.

Don Young down in the big smoke for a well earned break from Wooleen Station, 180 miles north of Mullewa where he is overseer. "Youngy" has changed very little and has not appeared to age at all. Must be the good open air life. Still riding horses and other things, and reckons station life will do him.

As mentioned earlier Bill and Glad Drage were in town and met a number of the gang. Bill has taken delivery of a new Dodge Phoenix car as long as a reasonable street. He has now delivered up his property to the buyer and is living at

Horrock's Beach, Northampton, while awaiting the completion of his home at Geraldton.

Saw Don and Vida Turton who were briefly in the city to have a two way radio repaired. This is used in the bush fire precautions and Don says it has had plenty of use this year as the fires have been particularly fierce in his area.

Geo Fletcher is the proud father of a daughter born some eight weeks ago, arriving some 12 years after the last effort. Geo. also advises that he lost his father about a month ago. Our sincere sympathy Geo.

Clarrie and Grace Turner both looked extra fit when seen at Harvey recently. Their oldest boy is now at Claremont Teachers College doing his first year's training while his oldest girl is training as a shorthand typist.

It was good to see Ron Sprigg once again and for him to be looking so well. Lucky for Ron he was in Perth at the same time as Bernie Callinan and they were able to pound one another's ears for a half an hour or so.

Jack Carey has been having a spot of leave and was able to use this to advantage to recover from a bad dose of flu.

Saw Col Criddle's photo in the paper the other day as leader of the Parachute Club. The club had a day at Rockingham and apparently Col was testing to see if the weather was O.K.

The No. 1 man at the Mandurah Bowling Club these days is Bill Howell. His official job is bar manager and a very popular one at that. In his off duty hours he is building a swimming pool in his back yard and is doing all his own brick laying—some 2,500 bricks by the time it is completed. Stay with it Bill, they say hard work keeps you young.

### APRIL MEETING

7th APRIL, 1964

### ANZAC HOUSE BASEMENT

GUEST SPEAKER

Make an All Out Effort to be Present

## Remember Yourself as Others Saw You

(This is what Bill Marien, an Official War Correspondent who visited Portuguese Timor, thought of the Timor Campaign, and is a reprint from the Army magazine "Salt" of January, 1943)

The story of the Australian Commandos in the mountainous wilderness of Portuguese Timor began on Dec. 17, 1941, when they landed at Dilli, the administrative capital, to assist in the island's defence. They had been trained as commandos in Australia.

For two months they garrisoned Dilli as the Japanese swept through the South-West Pacific. On Feb. 1 they learnt Malaya had fallen. On Feb. 16 they got news of Singapore's collapse. At midnight three days later the Japanese struck simultaneously at Koepang, in Dutch Timor, and at Dilli, and made their first raid on Darwin to blanket Allied air support and cut off reinforcements. The Australian mainland lost all contact with its troops in Portuguese Timor.

For three hours, Dutch troops and the A.I.F. Commandos opposed the Japanese who landed at Dilli from three transports covered by a cruiser and a destroyer. But by 3 a.m. the Japanese had broken through and moved to attack the aerodrome. For six hours, 20 Australians held off 500 Japanese there, blowing up the runways and buildings before withdrawing into the hills.

Then came the stocktaking. Heavy equipment and surplus clothing had been destroyed, but ammunition had been hidden in the hills—and plenty of it. There had been casualties, not many. They decided to fight on.

Speedily they settled down to their terrain. In the mountain hide-outs they lived like natives—eating meagre, raw and unappetising food, sleeping in native huts or in the open, attacked by fleas, lice, malaria and dysentery. By day they sweltered; at night they shivered.

Often within half an hour's march of the enemy, they were never beyond threat of attack, and were spied upon continually by natives who had accepted Japanese pay, promises and arms. Under these conditions the Commandos developed their own brand of kill-and-run fighting. For 59 days,

Australia thought they were either dead or prisoners; they themselves did not even know whether Australia was still in the war.

But the Commandos received unexpected reinforcements—A.I.F. men who had marched hundreds of miles from Koepang, Dutch Timor, when they heard from natives that their comrades were holding out in the mountains of Portuguese Timor.

All the newcomers were in low physical condition, but most had retained their arms. They had not been trained as Commandos. Some were specialists and had undergone only elementary training as combatant troops. But all wanted to be Commandos; they had to be to survive. So a training school was set up almost within range of Japanese machine gun fire.

It wasn't theoretical training. The Japanese would interrupt the course and recruits would apply the rifle and machine gun lessons they were learning. On graduation day the recruits were "marched out", bayonets slung at the belt of vine by native flax. Pistols were carried in holsters of uncured goat skin, knives tied to thighs with native flax, Tommygun magazines slung from the improvised belts.

### SURRENDER NOTES

Early in their mountain war, one of many inconveniences was lack of paper. Vital reconnaissance information was sent to H.Q. minutely written on cigarette papers, bamboo bark or broad banana tree leaf.

At the beginning of March, the Japanese themselves eased the shortage. They flooded the island with surrender notes, the first one reaching Australian H.Q. on March 12:

#### Advice

#### To the Australian and Dutch Soldier

The Japanese Army had already conquered the Netherlandish Indies falling Java into our hands. All Australian and Dutch troops except here had already surrendered to us and are living now peacefully under our protection of their

lives . . . . However you alone are wandering in the mountains and going on useless fighting still now. Your comrades surrendered to us are going on their happy lives. Don't you think how valuable human lives are? Don't you think of your homes in your countries? Stop your aimless fighting just now. We sincerely advise you to surrender to us at once holding white flags up and deliver your ammunition to us. We promise to protect your lives . . . . We Japanese Army do not wish you to surrender for our own sake. We advise it for your happiness . . . .

11th March, 1942,

**The Japanese Commander  
in Portuguese Timor.**

This screed was written on one side of the paper. The Australians used the reverse for writing operational orders.

The Japs' next surrender note arrived three days later. So definite was the Australian refusal that the Japanese commander with drew with his dictionary for five months to formulate a new note. In the meantime his force suffered heavy casualties—30 officers and at least 500 men against three Australian deaths.

During August, the Japanese made their biggest, most determined drive. When it failed the third surrender note was sent back by Cpl. E. Hodgson, of Melbourne, who had been captured during the drive. Questioned by the Japanese commander, he had refused to answer, and protested about his treatment.

"Why don't you shoot me now and get it over?" he asked.

"We do not shoot our prisoners," the Japanese replied, and, unaccountably freed Hodgson to take the note back to the Commandos.

The Australians added this letter to their stationery reserve—and came down—to trap the Japs in yet another ambush.

**RADIO EPIC**

The first official message received in Australia from the Commandos in Timor was: "Force intact. Still fighting. Badly need boots, money, quinine, Tommygun ammunition."

This signal came to Darwin on April 19, transmitted by "Winnie the War Winner", a crazy contraption built from scraps of wire and

tin and pieces of long-discarded radio sets.

The Commandos had heard nothing from the rest of the world for 59 days. There was little prospect of building a radio; no parts, no new batteries. Sets they had were too weak to raise Darwin. But among those who came from Koepang were two signalmen, Cpl. John Sargent and L/Cpl. John Donovan, N.S.W. Working together under Cpl. George Parker, N.S.W., with Sigs. Max (Joe) Loveless, Tas., and K. Richards, Vic., of the original Commando force, they agreed Darwin must be raised.

Three days after they started work a Dutch sergeant stumbled in carrying an ordinary medium wave receiving set—out of order.

The parts of three sets were unsoldered, and a bamboo used to catch all the melted solder for reuse. The parts were not marked with their resistance and capacity values and Loveless had to risk blowing the set.

Loveless had preserved two small batteries, but they needed recharging. A generator taken from an old car was rigged to a series of wooden wheels, with a master wheel four feet in diameter. The set, completed on March 26, would not work.

They were working with inadequate tools—tomahawk, pliers, screwdriver. They had no means of establishing a calibration. Coils were wound round bamboo.

Donovan, who had gone scrounging at Attambo returned on March 28 loaded with the power pack from a Dutch transmitter, two aerial tuning condensers, 60 feet of heavy aerial wire in short lengths, and a receiving set.

The next day the men had to move all their precious gear—the enemy had been moving round them in their first big drive. While Sargeant went to investigate a report that another set had been found, Loveless got to work on a second transmitter with a new circuit design. This transmitter, built into a four gallon kerosene tin, was twice as big as the first.

Next, a battery charger was recovered. To get it, 14 Commandos went through the Japanese lines to the old Australian H.O. at Villa Maria. Within 100 yards of Japanese sentries, protected only

by the dark, they dug up the charger which had been buried when H.Q. was evacuated.

On April 10, the signallers heard Darwin on the receiver. They knew then that Darwin was still in Australian hands. But the second transmitter failed, also because of calibration.

But Loveless had another idea—hooking up the powerful, uncalibrated transmitter to another weak set, with a range of only 30 mile. He needed more batteries; four were found. But petrol ran out—the charger could not be kept running. So they raided the Japanese lines for kerosene. Finally the charger was started on kerosene and run on diesel oil.

With batteries at full strength, they signalled Darwin on April 18 but got no reply. They did not know their message had been picked up on the mainland and passed on to Darwin, that all transmitting stations had been warned to keep off the air and to listen to Timor the following night.

On April 19 they got an answer from Darwin, but their batteries failed again. On April 20 they again got Darwin, but Darwin demanded proof of their identity. So questions and answers rushed across the Arafura Sea.

"Do you know Bill Jones?"

"Yes, he's with us."

"What rank, and answer immediately."

"Captain."

"What's your wife's name Bill?"

"Joan."

"What's the street number of your home?"

Back came the right answer. The mainland accepted the fact that the Commandos were still fighting.

### THE FIGHTING

When the Commandos landed west of Dilli on Dec. 17, 1941, a section mined the aerodrome and prepared it for demolition. The remainder of the force went into the hills behind Dilli and in the Comoro River area. It was "the wet"; they had to move stores and equipment across rivers flowing faster than a horse can gallop.

At 3 a.m. on Feb. 20, the Japanese, three hours after landing, struck at the aerodrome. The 20 Commandos guarding the field held their fire until the enemy were

within grenade range. They opened up with Brens, Tommies and rifles.

Jap casualties were heavy, but they quickly rallied and brought up mortars, field guns and machine-guns. For six hours Australians previously untried in battle withstood a concentrated barrage.

Almost surrounded, they decided to blow up the drome. Two sappers got to work. One saw a Japanese moving through the grass to cut one of the demolition wires. He shot him, then dashed from cover and raced for the main demolition switch. Japanese machine guns scythed the runway at his heels, but he was not hit. The drome went up in a cloud of dust and debris.

Under cover of the dust and smoke, the 17 Australian survivors withdrew, leaving 100 Japanese dead behind. Other reports put enemy fatalities higher, but the Commandos are always conservative in estimating their kills.

In their withdrawal, the 17 were constantly under fire. As they crept through a maize field, a machine gun burst splintered the stock of an Australian Tommygun and the butt of a rifle. But not a man was hit.

Higher up the road, the 17 crowded into a truck they found. Later, ambushed, they escaped without loss.

From that day, ammunition dumps were shifted further back in the mountains and the Commandos went out after the Japs who were out after them. Skirmishes and ambushes have gone on ever since.

### ATTACK—AND REPLY

On April 6, the first of a series of all-out efforts by the Japanese to annihilate the Australians was made. 600 of the enemy moved to Eremera. The Commandos, spreading out along the Dilli-Eremera road, shot up 60 Japs in two trucks, and pushed the trucks over the mountainside. Then they retaliated. A small party of Australians raided a native village and killed 30 Japanese who were resting in a native hut. In 10 days fighting there was only one A.I.F. casualty.

The Japanese retired from this area on April 26. On May 12 the Australians carried the fight to Dil-

li, where 3,000 Japanese were quartered.

Capt. (now Major) Geoff Laidlaw, of Newcastle, was chosen to lead a party of 30 into the town, while Lieut. J. Garnett, of Brisbane, lead a party on to Dilli beach to open fire simultaneously with the fire in the town to add to Japanese confusion. All wore dark rubber patrol boots and blackened their faces and hands.

Coming to Dilli's outer perimeter defences at 10 p.m. they began a hands-and-knees crawl through the barbed wire. Silence was imperative; the Japanese stationed fierce half-starved dogs with their sentries.

#### MAIN STREET

Undetected, the Commandos reached the main street. They knew from reconnaissance exactly what buildings the Japanese occupied. Silently they floated down the street, every finger crooked round the trigger of a Bren or a Tommy. No rifles were carried.

Laidlaw's bulk suddenly stopped. He sneaked to his right to investigate a machine gun post. When he was three feet away, a Jap sentry came out. Laidlaw shot him dead. At that signal, the entire party opened fire.

For five minutes no single shot could be distinguished. So surprised were the Japanese that in many cases they shot their own men. In the confusion, increased by the beach party's fire, the Australians withdrew the way they had come.

Next day the Japanese, in a desperate effort to regain face, burnt their own dead, scattered round articles of Australian clothing captured in the February landing, and invited natives and Portuguese to look at what happened to Japan's enemies.

Throughout June and July the Australians kept up their commando warfare. Then on August 9, the Japanese made their most determined attempt to crush all resistance. Attacking from five directions, a force of 2,500 drove against the Australians for 10 days. The Japs lost at least 200 dead; only five Australians were killed.

#### TYPICAL WEEK

In a typical week in the lives of one batch of Commandos I stayed with, a forward fighting patrol is

up on Sunday at 5 a.m. They sit down to a breakfast of rice or maize and native coffee brought to them by their ceados (young native servants) who give loyal service for a pataca (1/8) a week.

The Commandos' job for the next three days is to take a string of pack horses to Force H.Q. to get rice, coffee—a native brand, good and palatable—some precious salt and ammunition.

The men go down a mountain track so steep that even their tempered limbs cramp. They carry their Tommyguns, their Brens, and their sniper's rifles as though the weapons have grown on them like an extra arm. They look like pirates—or worse. Behind them, carrying their pack and blanket, swing the ceados, the effortless, tireless natives.

The party comes to a secluded spot where the native aussiliers (owners of hired horses) have gathered overnight. The tiny Timor ponies for all their smallness, can carry heavy loads for long stretches over tracks that would kill an Australian horse. The Commandos issue a stream of orders in the native tongue. The aussiliers fix hempen bridles and lead ropes to their horses. The caravan moves off.

The sun beats down cruelly. Horses and men drip sweat. There is no halt for lunch—there is no lunch. They make their way down a river bed which twists through rocky canyons rising sheer on each side. They trudge shind-deep along a quickly running, ice-cold stream.

In the afternoon it rains. They speed up to get to the mountain track again. It is death to be caught when the rains flood down the little river at breakneck speed in a dirty flood, six feet deep. But so steep is the river bed and so anxious are its daily flood waters to reach the sea that the stream is normal four or five hours after the rain has stopped.

The track leaves the river and goes like a ladder of dirt up an almost sheer mountain side. Coral rock, sharp and poisonous, is the basis of the track. The horses, even unloaded, have to grunt their way aloft. Breath is painful relief when the men get high and the air is thin and cold. Only the natives

don't seem to mind. But over a long trek lasting for days, the Australians' pace would kill a native.

After walking from 6 a.m. to midnight, the pack train stays the night in a native village. On Monday they reach H.Q. After eating goat or buffalo meat and rice, and drinking coffee made white with buffalo milk and sweetened with native honey, they stay overnight.

Late on Wednesday they regain their mountain hide-out after four days of continuous walking, of hiding from constant Japanese reconnaissance planes, particularly a persistent plane known as "Chaff Cutter" or "the peanut roaster".

On Thursday, patrol. They may have received advice that a Japanese column, 250 strong, is moving from one spot in such a direction. The Australians deduce that the column is going to occupy a certain village. They know the mountains as well as men can know anywhere that means safety and where they have found comparative security for 10 months. They decide to ambush.

Choosing a ridge below which the Japanese must pass, they cut straight across trackless mountain bush. They select their point of ambush according to cover and terrain—50 feet or 500 yards from the track. They must be more careful than in the early days. Learning from their many defeats, Japanese now move in two columns. The second might be behind the Australians who might themselves be ambushed while making their getaway.

The Japanese in their greenish uniforms, are in sight, jogging along in the manner of coolies—short, quick steps, their arms swinging jerkily across their bodies. There is no march discipline. Bringing up their rear, a number of Timor ponies carry parts of a mountain gun designed for extraordinarily rapid assembly. The troops themselves carry mortars, three inch and 20 m.m. pistol guns rifles and machine guns.

Into range. A fusillade of shots, and the front and rear of the enemy column collapse in a screaming mob of dead and dying. The Japanese who survive show amazing speed in getting to cover and returning fire. But their aim is usually inaccurate.

The Australians retire to a previously selected knoll on the other side of the ridge. In 10 minutes the Japs appear against the skyline of the ridge. An officer arranges the setting up of a machine gun, but the Australian captain picks him off.

Infuriated, the remaining Japanese charge down the hill with no thought of cover. The Australians putting up terrific fire, stop the rush. Then, bowing to numerical superiority and relying upon intimate knowledge of the mountains, they steal away. They have inflicted heavy losses.

That night, as every night, the Australians mount double guard—not only as protection against Japanese but against natives won to the enemy by a combination of fear, useless Jap money printed on the spot and promises of looting and rapine.

Friday they are out on patrol again or doing reconnaissance work Saturday is the same. That is a week with a forward fighting patrol—the more spectacular and dangerous job, though it would not exist without the L of C troops and signallers.

Not all of the raids are made by organised parties. One of the many examples of lone-wolf tactics was a raid by Lieut. John Rose N.S.W., on a Japanese occupied village. Dressed as a native, he walked into the village and tossed hand grenades into a hut in which 30 Japanese were sleeping. When the survivor's rushed out, he sprayed them with a Tommygun, then made a successful getaway.

Pte. Mervyn ("Doc") Wheatley, of Kalgoorlie, a kangaroo shooter by occupation, is No. 1 sniper of the Commandos. He refuses to use telescopic sights for any range below 300 yards. He is credited with 47 Japanese killed but himself claims only 25 certainties. "In my game," he explains, "you can't count a roo unless you see him drop and know exactly where to go and skin him."

At Villa Maria, outside Dilli, "Doc" got his record kill—12 shots for 12 Japs in 15 minutes.

#### "SINGAPORE TIGER"

After a few months of commando warfare the Japs brought in one of their most notorious trouble-shooters, a high ranking officer

known as the "Singapore Tiger". From native sources, the Commandos heard about their celebrated new enemy and his boasts to get them. The "Tiger" and a strong force, screened by natives, were coming their way, so Sgt. Ray Aitken, W.A., was put in charge of an ambushing party.

Behind the screen of natives the "Tiger" and three other Japanese officers walked abreast. Behind them were 40 to 50 Japanese soldiers, and a native rearguard. As the enemy rounded a bend 200 yards away, four snipers shot the four officers. Then Bren gunners blazed away as the Australians withdrew without a casualty.

From Dilli later came reports of a ceremonial funeral for the "Singapore Tiger". Not cremated as were other Japanese officers, his body was boiled down to bare bone in an oil drum. Then the skeleton was dismembered, placed in a box and carried in ceremony to a Japanese destroyer for return to Japan.

#### THE NATIVES

Without the goodwill of natives, the Commandos would not be able to hit so hard and so often. Although many natives have been bribed or terrorised into Japanese service, many others are loyal to our men, who rely upon them for much food and information and all heavy transport.

The Timor native is vastly different in physique from his New Guinea neighbour. He has amazing endurance and once a load is lifted to his head he can keep it there indefinitely. Rarely taller than five feet, he lives in small, closely settled villages—collections of bamboo and thatched huts.

The natives' traditional weapons are spears, bows and arrows, blow pipes, and swords, which, since Japanese will has been imposed on a section of them, have been discarded for rifles and Tommy guns.

War has sorely disrupted the Timor native. The country is threatened by a famine. But the Australians have made a point of treating well every native not hostile and who does not attempt to murder him. Australians have foster-

ed the planting of new crops. Magnificent friendships have sprung up between the Australians and their creolos, who, more than once have saved the life of a Commando.

The Commando force's hospital is hidden away in a mountain fastness under the jutting brow of a heavy rock outcrop. Since February 19 it has been shifted 15 times. No beds, no mattresses—patients sleep in native huts on a blanket thrown over a flooring of split bamboo, with fighting packs for pillows.

Despite enormous difficulties and lack of equipment and medicine, Capt. C. R. Dunkley, of Fremantle, the M.O., has registered many more admittances than there are troops on the island. The hospital has treated soldiers suffering from every form of tropical disease. All but 10 of the soldiers have had malaria; most have had recurrent attacks. Seriously wounded Australians have been sustained until returned to Australia for major operations.

The hospital, unique among all military hospitals in the comparison of work done to equipment available, receives from Australia steady supplies of drugs, bandages and other medical essentials.

Many times, Capt. Dunkley has made long journeys to visit men too sick to be moved to hospital. Once he climbed a 10,000 foot range and penetrated the Japanese lines.

The Australian Commandos are hedged on three sides by Japanese. Night and day they are patrolling. Any twist of the track may bring them smack into a superior Japanese force. Death may come from the spear of the native who pretends to be friendly. Malaria wracks many of them, and vile-tasting buffalo meat and monotonously sticky rice are no invalid diet.

The Commandos are young men. They have not drawn any pay—many have no pay books. Few of them are over 25. Few married. They are tough.

And the enemy has paid them their most graceful tribute: "You alone do not surrender to us."

#### ANZAC DAY — SATURDAY, APRIL 25

The MARCH then the GET TOGETHER at Bazaar Terrace Afterwards  
A Day to Remember — Wear Your Medals

## Random Harvest

**ARTHUR SMITH, of 17 Connon Rd., Applecross, W.A., writes:—**

Herewith a few notes on our recent trip to Sydney.

Beryl and I contacted Jack Hartley when we arrived in Sydney on Jan. 25. Jack took us out to meet his charming little wife and his three lovely boys. Then he spent the rest of the day and evening giving us a tour of Sydney and what a tour it was too.

On Sunday Beryl and I went to Canberra and we saw our "Winnie The War Winner" in the War Museum, also an oil painting of "Timor Guerrillas". We also managed to see Ron Dook for a few minutes before returning to Sydney. Ron looks the picture of health, still has that big cheery smile, and sends his regards to one and all. He hopes to come West again soon if only for a holiday.

On Saturday, Feb. 4 Jack Hartley took Beryl and me for a tour of Sydney's northern beaches. On the way we called on June and Bill Bennett at their home in Dee Why, and we had quite a chat to them over a cup of tea. Bill, as thin as ever, wishes to be remembered to all the boys.

After seeing many more of Sydney's beauty spots the four of us then went along to a dinner at the Cabramatta Ex-Servicemen's Club.

At this function we were the guests of Maria and Jack Hartley, Jean and Jim English, Dot and Snowy Went, Norma and Paddy Kenneally, Bonnie and Harold Newton, Billy Hoy, Bill Coker, and Ron Trengrove.

An excellent dinner was served in the Club dining room, along with the appropriate wines. After this we all adjourned to the lounge where we settled down to some steady drinking and of course talking. All these boys send their best regards and wish to be remembered to everyone in the West.

I found these chaps had all aged gracefully, some showing grey hair others a touch of middle age spread or as Dot Went said, showing the ravages of peace time living. Many questions were asked about the boys in the West, which I did my best to cope with, and I managed

to glean a little information on a couple of N.S.W. boys.

All too soon it was time to leave the Club and at 1 a.m. we were warmly farewelled by our hosts, and we left what was a very wonderful evening, bringing home with us, not only the good wishes of all these people, but also a feeling of being really wanted. To you all, our most sincere thanks.

Especially do we wish to thank Maria and Jack Hartley for ensuing that our stay in Sydney was not only the highlight of a wonderful trip but something which we could never forget.

**W. TAYLOR, of 1 Lilymead Ave., Bristol 4, England, writes:—**

Don't drop dead when you receive this, but I thought it was about time that I dropped you a line to let you know how things were with me.

First of all, I have given up my sports business after 16 years of it and have taken up a nine to five job, which gives me much more time to myself, to carry out my leisure activities. Please note change of address.

I am of course now on the five day week lark and have only just found out what I have been missing.

Am still in the best of health, but of course have given up the more active sports, football, tennis, cricket, etc., and am now occupying my spare time with a bit of fishing and shooting.

Had a bit of a fall while out shooting over Christmas. Tried to jump a ditch that should have been kids play, but caught my foot in a bramble bush and came a cropper on the other side of the ditch, damaging slightly my ribs and my shoulder. Has taken nearly three weeks to get right. Must be getting old.

The winter here has not been too bad this year, so far only one fall of snow in this part of the country, which only lasted a couple of days. Some difference to last year when Fred Napier was over, when we had three solid months of snow and continuous freezing. How he managed I don't know, but it nearly killed me.

Must say I look forward to delivery of the "Courier" which usually carries some items of interest of my own Section and of some of the others with whom I was closely tied up in the Timor days.

You must have had a wonderful time during the Empire Games at Perth. I must say I was a bit envious when I read some of the reports and some of the letters of appreciation from the visitors from other States.

Had rather an unfortunate experience last week. Went to a football match with a couple of friends to see Bristol City play. Turned round to speak to one of them just before the game started and found him collapsed over the back of the seat. Had a bit of a struggle getting a stretcher through the crowd, but it was to no avail as he was dead before we got him into the ambulance. Must say it shook me up a bit.

Well, this is about all at present except to give my regards to Col. Doig, all my old Section, especially Joe Burrige and Alf Walsh, Jerry Haire and all the others too numerous to mention by name. Hoping you all had a pleasant Christmas and wishing you all, and the Association, a prosperous New Year.

**TONY ADAMS, of A.N.Z. Bank, Southport, Q., writes to Col Doig:—**

Another year has flown past.

Paul and Judy will be 17 and 15 respectively next April. I had a letter from an old gunner mate of mine at Bindi Bindi and he says he is about to become a grandfather! That shows us how old we are becoming. No wonder I can't manage late nights now.

Life here is very pleasant. We are not madly committed to heavy social engagements so lead a pleasantly quiet life with not much rush. With the surf and the golf links about half a mile either side of us I find I am fully occupied.

From all accounts in the "Courier" you seem to have your time fully occupied. It is a time consuming job you have and you do it so well. I don't know what would happen if you decided you had had enough. We enjoy your efforts, fellow, the paper keeps the boys together.

**IAN D. RONALD, of 16A Sydenham Hill, London, SE26, U.K., (formerly Broken Hill) writes:**

Thank you for sending the "Courier" to me as it is a few years since I've been in touch. I am enclosing something [towards expenses.

It is of great interest to me to read of the news and progress of some of the boys.

We have been in London three years and I have a dental practice which keeps me flat out.

We now have three boys and two girls, the last being born here.

I guess we'll get back to Aussie some time but don't know when.

All the best for the Association.

**MAL HERBERT, of Box 41, Nun-Garin, W.A., writes:—**

As I have covered a good deal of territory in the last several months I thought a suitable report might be appropriate so here goes.

Last September, as a member of the State Rifle Team, I visited Sydney. In typical style I went without my Address Book but had no need to worry as soon after arrival one of the team engaged a taxi the driver of which proved to be none other than Jack Hartley. Jack quickly made contact with me and as a result I visited Jack at his home the following night, where I met Snow Wendt, Jim Hallinan and Jackie Keenahan. Jack has a very nice home and three lusty boys of whom he and his wife Maria are very justly proud.

Jack arranged a night out at the Cabra Vale Diggers Club for the following Saturday night. This proved to be a great success. Most of the team was present and the following 2/2nd members: Bill Hoy Jim English, Ron (Drip) Hilliard, Paddy Kenneally (more Irish than ever), Tom (Irish) O'Brien, Snow Wendt and of course Jack Hartley.

A notable absentee was Harold Newton who I was expecting, but did not show up. Apparently he had the best of intentions but was waylaid by Toohey's bull during the morning and did not make his escape until late in the afternoon. However Harold turned up the following evening looking a good deal better than the reports had led me to expect.

It was great meeting so many of the old mob and my thanks go to

Jack Hartley for his efforts in making it possible.

Some weeks later I visited Melbourne very briefly on shooting business. I managed to make contact with Charlie Brown who picked me up from my lodgings and together with Ron Eastick we enjoyed a number of convivial beers and a yarn at Charlie's home (very nice, too). Both look to be in the pink and are apparently doing well.

More recently together with my wife and family I have been on a holiday trip to Japan via Singapore and Hong Kong. We also spent a few days in Bangkok on the way home. The time spent in each place was of necessity limited but here are my impressions from what I was able to observe in the short time available.

Japan. The first thing that struck me was how true to type they are. Jet black hair (never otherwise), short stocky build and very few any different, an odd weedy one and that is all. The roads are choked with traffic mostly three and five ton trucks, not so many cars.

One gets the impression that they know where they are going. A modern highly industrialised nation of a hundred million people. Don't under estimate these boys.

Thailand. Seems to be a nation very proud of its democracy, its freedoms, and its kings though it's hard to imagine a country existing at all with so much of it under water. Canals are everywhere which serve as waterways, sewers, for bathing, washing clothes and buffaloes, teem with fish and shrimps as well as irrigating the rice. We found our stay in Thailand very interesting and enjoyable.

Hong Kong. With the influx of refugees from Red China what a mighty job the authorities are doing in providing housing. Enormous blocks of flats everywhere and more going up every week. Conventional homes are virtually non-existent. The continuous activity in the harbour is something really worth seeing.

Singapore. A cosmopolitan centre similar to Hong Kong. The begging got me down a bit, and prices were not as good as Hong Kong.

To anyone contemplating a similar trip let me recommend it as being very interesting but not cheap. Prices generally are high (blame the Yanks), night life was also disappointing and very expensive. We enjoyed ourselves most when away from the beaten tourist tracks among the ordinary people.

Well, that seems to have covered the subject as well as I am able. Wishing all the boys (particularly 6 Section) the very best.

**ROBBIE ROWAN-ROBINSON, of Woodbrough, Bridgetown, W.A., writes:—**

It was very nice seeing Col, "Curly" and Jack Haddon down this way and it would have been nicer if you could have stayed longer. You probably understand why I'm always in a hurry when in the city.

George Timms and family were over here just after Christmas and I see the Langridges quite often, not much news though, but I also saw Doug Fullarton at Donnelly River Mill. He is looking well and as ugly as ever and tells me he is heading back to Borneo in March. The life on an Aussie timber mill is too soft for him. He likes it the hard way. No bulldozers and trucks up there. Haul the logs out by hand and roll them into the river. No doubt we will hear from him later.

A little news of Timor. I was a little disappointed because Colin Bayly, well known in the shipping world and an officer of Westfarmers, went to Timor but spent his time in the (or what was) Dutch half. He went there to study such things as ports and possible ports. Travelled there from Indonesia on a cattle boat. He got there the same time as a ship from Australia loaded with Colombo Plan aid (it seems to me a waste of money), bridge building materials being the larger part. This equipment was brought ashore by the ship's engineers who quickly bolted together a type of landing barge which was specially built for the job in Fremantle. The bridges have evidently been allowed to rot away since the Dutch left. No one worries about maintenance. -It looks as if we (that is Australia) have to do what the Indonesians

can't be bothered to do. Colin travelled by four wheel drive vehicles, several in the convoy, right through the island and up to the Porto border. He was welcomed at every village, everyone was happy and nobody worried about such things as road repairs. If the bridge had collapsed one drove across the river bed. If you could not cross because of too much water you waited until it went down. It all sounded rather familiar to me.

He saw them loading cattle and buffalo at Koepang, one or two at a time, each beast being coaxed into a copra boat (probably the same one we used) and when they arrived at shipside they were hauled up on to deck with the aid of a large net.

There were many things, funny and otherwise, that Colin told me. He had several photos too, but it is rather difficult to put it into writing. He was there for several weeks and eventually left by air.

The best thing you could do would be to get him in one evening as a guest speaker. By the way Colin Bayly was C.O. of the 8th Coy. at one time. You might remember they went north as we headed south at Larramar (I bet I spelt that wrong).

Now just to finish off. I took time off to go up to Kings Park. You have done a good job and those country people who have not been up there would do well to go up there and see our little area.

Thanks for all you and the Committee have done.

**RON TREGROVE, of 46 Hillcrest Road, Mona Vale, N.S.W., writes**

If my tale of woe about the Service does nothing else but fill your mail box at least it will have achieved something of value. However I will have more to say when I have told of more interesting things.

August, 63. I took my holidays to coincide with the school holidays, and for a little over a fortnight we toured from Sydney to Brisbane and Surfers Paradise, taking three and a half days to get to Brisbane by the New England Highway and returning down the Pacific. We spent four days in a caravan park at the Oasis. Not far from Mt. Gravatt, whereupon I

wasted little time getting in touch with Fred Ottway who took me to see Eddie Timms and his wife, then leaving there about 11 o'clock we called in on Fred Bryant, but first let me talk of Fred O.

I don't think any one of us realise how serious Fred's accident on his motor bike was, but for some days he was very much on a static line that wasn't too securely attached to this terra firma, and even after the attachment became stronger it was feared that there was brain damage and for many a month after Fred was not seen to smile even after he had returned to the old routine and it was not until a short time before I saw him his wife told me that the doctors and family feared he would not be the same again. However he sure smiled enough when he saw me (no wise cracks from the gallery, thank you). He has a great scar on his cranium and (excuse me, Fred) not enough damn wool up there to cover very much of it. Fred is still painting Brisbane (with paint) and trying to build his Bee Fleet (nothing to do with any other B Fleet, military or otherwise) the kind that gives the nectar of the gods. If it would only grow hair by eating it Fred would be worth a million. So if you want to help Fred, for crying out loud eat honey. You know a roll in bed with honey is wonderful.

When we arrived at Eddie's he was hanging Venetian blinds at the front window and I could see him peering out into the dark and saying to himself: "I wonder what this B— (oops, I musn't say that) wants at this time of night?" However Ed and wife were only too pleased to knock off the decorating and we four knocked back a few beers. Ed drives for the P.M.G. and does a lot of country trips. We reluctantly left them about 11 as we had promised to call back at Fred Bryant's when he came home from work. We had no sooner pulled up at Fred's and I dragged myself from the Beetle, when I nearly lost my shootin' hand and half my shoulder with the welcome that Bryant man gave me. I could not remember him then and there but he said he would have known me anywhere (goes to show how good looks stick with one—take it easy girls). Mrs. B. had a

terrific supper ready and boy was there some rag chewed and the more Freddie B. talked the more he came back to me but he is so thin that if he didn't have a white shirt on you wouldn't know he was around.

Fred has lost so much of his innards that Greenslopes has more than Fred has at home, in fact if his boss knew how much of Fred was at work he would only give him half pay, but is he down hearted? Not on your Sweet Fanny Adams's life. His two boys are young giants, and if they bring any more trophies home they will all have to sleep out to make room for the sport winnings. Rugby League. And is Dad proud? And so it was reluctantly I said farewell to Fred Ot.

Back to Wreckers Rd. on the left with all the hives of darling little bees and then staggered back to my own oasis to my wife's surprise sober (?).

We made our next camp at Miami on the strip down at the Gold Coast going over the Tambourine Mountains down through Canungra Beautiful scenery you never had time to enjoy before. So much did I gaze that my youngest, Garth 7, suggested that I watch the road a bit more. I recognised the corner where Eric Herd had a black-out and crashed into the cliff left instead of right and going into space which would have given O'Neil another first instead of a split lip and a mouth full of blood. I couldn't recognise the spot going into Canungra where Bunny tipped the truck over and we in the truck in front watched them float freely through the air and not a soul was hurt.

When we were fixed for accommodation a day or so later I made a trip up to Southport to see Basher Adams and although I had never met him before we were soon on common ground and we had only limited time as he is a very busy man. His intake of the hard stuff he tells me is considerably reduced and he is a dressing gown and slipper man now.

I called in to see Allan Luby. Unfortunately Allan had a bad back (don't get ahead of me, boys, it wasn't that kind), and had had a rough time with it, so much so that he had been confined to bed

and was not liking it but had no choice. Allan says that tentative arrangements have been made for as many as they can contact and who can manage it to come down by charter bus for Anzac Day this year. So let's hope that a few more of you city slickers make it.

Quite a few made the meeting to meet Arthur Smith and his good lady at Cabramatta and it was thoroughly enjoyed by us all. I did not take notes but sufficient to say most of the Cabra mob were there except Jim Hallinan who couldn't be waked and James Keenahan with the same trouble. Brewers' sleeping sickness I believe. Very serious when you have it but a pleasant time getting the disease. Arthur looks a little on the portly side but still Arthur as I remember him most in Timor.

A cricket match has been played at Arncliffe on Feb. 9 and it appears that one or many portly characters were more outstanding for the dashingless figures they did not cut than their exploits with the bat and ball, although I could not stay I kept calling back at hourly intervals or so in time to watch from the grand stand which was the second floor of the Arncliffe R.S.L. where I was pressed to watch the players through a glass which I must say improved the game somewhat but they all had an amber colour about them. I guess it must have been the colour of the sliding glass windows.

J. Keenahan took a spectacular catch and it was said had he missed it with his hands he would have swallowed it anyway.

Anybody got a kettle that won't burn dry? If you have, any kind will do, send it to Coral Coker. Bill says she keeps forgetting that she puts it on the gas then blames it on other people. Wasn't near the place, Bill.

The Kameruka Ark was successfully launched before Christmas, and goes not like a sub but a real fair dinkum cruiser so I am told by the skipper, Capt. Coker. Some of his crew are a bit dicky about venturing too far past the Spit, but I guess when he gets his ticket everything will be all right. He might even anchor at my back door and call abuse in safety.

Well let's get at it, Bloss.

From your angle and from your

experience at a higher level it would look better and no doubt out of the morass and chaos we learned something certainly. Movement Control learned a lot.

Let me say that what the strolling Brig told us of the future has come to pass from June last year things brightened up and since Daly (who the Brig. mentioned) has taken over things are even brighter.

Unfortunately I won't be here in Sydney when Bloss gets here as I will be at sea for a fortnight with the Army, so I guess we won't be able to give each other our views as well as I would like to. I wrote what I did at the risk of being called a winger but it was not meant in that vein. I guess I expected too much change and it was not. But let me say that I intend to stay in and I only wish I had come in ten years ago or more.

Incidentally some of the boys would like to know if a certain Foxy gentleman has their share of a certain rat a tat tat supposed to be sold as a souvenir, or is it gracing the mantelpiece? If any one knows where this Foxy character lives see if he has anything like it around. Of course, no names, no pack drill.

Roy Harris (Blue to you) had a heart attack a few weeks before Christmas and spent almost two months in hospital. Bill Coker visited Jack Hartley, myself and Eric Herd. If others we know did I am sorry but I forgot to ask Blue. However he is back on his feet and expects to start work in a week or so.

The one bright spot in all this is that Roy Blue Harris was awarded the Bottom Pinching Oscar for 1963. Although the contest was close our boy won by three bottoms and seven pinches. The Sisters at the hospital where our boy was confined won it for him by their unanimous votes.

When I called to see him the contest was over and they had him in a straight jacket.

From the latter you can gather our boy has made a good recovery and if he takes care of himself and doesn't give too much encouragement to that Brewers Croup he has he should be entering many more contests.

By the time you read this a lot

of us will have seen a Documentary on Timor which was filmed recently. Well if it has some remarks the same as were in a recent issue of the T.V. Times I suggest that a few lines of protest might be in order. I won't be here to see it when it is being shown as I will be in camp.

The recent treatment of survivors of the Voyager I think explains all I tried to say but maybe didn't make myself clear. Their thinking hasn't changed. Their methods are the same. Bodies not men. Just bodies. For a demonstration of how to win friends and influence people one should read the Acting Minister of the Navy, Dr. Forbes statements. They are real winners. In fact I think he must have been understudy to our illustrious leader who is not swayed or touched by any of the riff raff voters' opinions or feelings. It is the same brand of apathy that killed a young boy who fell through an overhead bridge at Fairfield despite the fact that petitions and complaints as to how unsafe the bridge was had been conveyed to the top brass of the railways for the previous 12 months or more.

It seems to be the thing these days that if you speak your mind or make an opinion or try to get anyone interested in what you consider a genuine complaint or some thing similar or try to explain something as it appears to you, the general attitude is you are a nut, a winger, an agitator, last but not least a communist. When I was a young man they used to say a Bolshie. Some of our greatest Australians have had that epithet thrown at them. One of the only men in this country to be recommended for the Nobel Peace Prize had all the above slung at him and was finally taken ill and it seems will never recover. From all this I mean that it is much easier to say "Bugger you Jack I'm all right."

So once more I close.

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#### Write to Your Editor:

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