



2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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Address all Association Correspondence to: Box T1646, G.P.O. Perth 6001

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Price 1c

COMING EVENTS

MID-YEAR SOCIAL

Friday, 6th July

At Anzac Club at 11am

Please wear your Name Tags

FREMANTLE CONVENTION

Following a suggestion by Bill Rowan-Robinson, the Committee has decided to hold the above from Tuesday 18th to Thursday 20th September inclusive, at The Trade Winds Hotel, 59 Canning Highway, East Fremantle. Phone (09) 339 8188. Ask for Louise and mention the 2/2nd.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS:

Single rooms \$70 per night

Double rooms \$75 per night — for two

Double rooms \$90 per night — for three

Family units \$100 per night — for four

The rooms are very nice and each room has a toaster, griller and hot plate. Double rooms contain a queen size and a single bed and family units a queen size and two single beds in separate rooms. At this stage there is ample accommodation but it is recommended bookings be made early. Members requiring accommodation on a share basis should advise the hotel of this when booking. Credit cards are acceptable.

The Trade Winds is about five minutes by car or bus from Fremantle, a city which has much to offer visitors.

The organising committee of Don Turton, John Poynton and Jack Carey, is working on the itinerary and an interesting and entertaining programme is assured. We would like to see a good response from country members in particular.

Members wishing to attend are asked to book in on Monday 17th and out on Friday 21st. A deposit of \$50 is required.

If anyone has any queries or requires more information, please contact one of the organisers.

Full details of the itinerary will appear in the August Courier.

BAROSSA VALLEY SAFARI

Friday, 16th March.

SAFARI! This magnetic call to the 2/2nd Commando Association saw 150 happy members converge on Nuriootpa for ten days of fun and camaraderie.

Keith and Betty Dignum and their helpers had arranged a Welcome Barbecue in a picturesque setting by the lake at Coulthard Reserve, next to the Barossa Caravan Park which was to be home for many members for the duration of the Safari.

The evening was warm, the drinks, to suit all tastes, were cold and it was not long before everyone was mingling in true 2/2 style. It was an emotional time — a few tears shed by the ladies and strong handshakes by the men as old friendships were renewed. A fine job of catering was done by Keith Dignum's relatives, Annie and Wally Dignum, Vera and Jack Scharnberg, and Keith's good friend Keith Blomeley.

When it became obvious that we were going to be there until well after dark, Peter Campbell thoughtfully produced his portable lighting plant to illuminate the area.

The 2/2nd, the greatest ex-servicemen's group in Australia, accompanied by their ladies, were together again, and this was a grand finale to a busy, exciting first day.

Saturday, 17th March.

A free day to settle in before the Official Welcome in the evening in the rooms of the local Football Club who had so willingly co-operated with our South Australian Committee.

After an enjoyable German type buffet dinner, President Archie Campbell welcomed everyone and stressed that the friendship generated by the years of war had seen the 2/2 Commando Association develop into a wonderful medium of friendship. He said the men of the Unit had developed an affinity that was enhanced by the ladies, resulting in a group of fun loving people with a great depth of feeling for each other. He mentioned those who, through illness or for personal reasons were unable to be present but had sent their love and best wishes. They were 'Shorty' Stevens, Gerald and Nancy Slade, Arch and Dawn Claney, Theo Adams and his two daughters, 'Bluey' and Aynsley Sargent, Charlie Pierce, 'Bulla' and Jean Tait, Danny and Sunny Daniels, Ralph and Eve Finklestein, 'Spud' and Doris Murphy, Harry and Amyce Handicott and Betty Craig.

During the evening Keith Dignum presented a

Unit plaque to the caterer Heinz Baumert in recognition of his services and co-operation with the Safari Committee.

A highlight of this function was Tom Nisbet leading the men in a stirring rendition of a Unit song.

Sunday, 18th March.

A fishing competition was held at the lake this morning amid much hilarity. Equipment produced by the keen anglers ranged from hand lines to the most sophisticated rods and reels, and the worms were supplied by the organisers.

The rule was that all fish caught were to be measured and returned to the lake and when the action began Keith Dignum was kept so busy that he had to co-opt Betty as his assistant measurer. There was some consternation when Lois Litchfield hooked a duck. She expertly removed the hook from his feathers and returned him to his watery home unscathed.

Denny Dennis won a bottle of wine for hooking the largest fish, Fred Broadhurst also won a bottle of wine for hooking the most fish. Lyle protested that Lois was the winner by 'two feet' but his protest was not upheld and Lois was presented with the booby prize — a tin of bully beef!

A good time was had by all who made the effort and at noon they happily adjourned to the nearby Football Club to swap stories of the ones that got away, over a few well earned cold beers.

Monday, 19th March.

A coach tour of the spectacular Barossa Valley took us to Penfolds, the largest winery complex in the Valley, with Kaiser Stuhl and Tollana now under its banner. We saw part of the operation and were able to sample and purchase wines.

A drive through Grennoch brought us to Seppeltsfield, home of the award winning Seppelts wines, established in 1851 in its extensive grounds and buildings with 130 years of history behind them. The family mausoleum, built on top of a hill, overlooks the Seppeltsfield estates. The famous Chateau Tanunda which was built in 1889 is one of the noteworthy buildings of the area. It is also one of the Seppelt Company wineries.

Marananga, originally named Gnadenfrei, which means 'Freed by the Grace of God' (as early pioneers had gained freedom from religious persecution in Silesia) was settled in the mid 1840s. The name was changed to Marananga (aboriginal for 'my hands') in 1918 when German names were changed in South Australia. The village is unusual, with its rustic cottages and many old buildings of interest.

The delightful village of Bethany was the first German settlement in the Barossa. In 1842 a group of Silesian families settled near the Tanunda Creek and named their village after the biblical Bethany, which means 'a fertile place.' There are many lovely old stone houses, farms and cottage gardens which give the village a unique charm.

The view of the Barossa Valley from Mengler's Hill is magnificent — the ocean can be seen 45 kms away. The Valley is a massive tract of land carrying sheep and agriculture of all kinds, with the accent on the wine producing industry.

After a picnic lunch in the grounds of the Angaston Football Club we went through the pretty town named after George Fife Angas who took up land in the Barossa in the 1830s and settled at Lindsay Park, now owned by the famous horse breeder and trainer, Colin Hayes. We visited 'Collingrove,' built in 1853-54, which became the Angas family homestead and headquarters for their considerable pastoral interests. To experience the charm of this historic property is indeed a treat, with the beautiful antique furniture, glorious paintings, the unusual 'Family Tree' (where a wayward female member was excluded!) the Hunting Room with a great array of sporting guns and trophies from all over the world. We enjoyed a delicious Devonshire Tea before returning, through more fascinating country, to Nuriootpa which was settled in 1854 and is an aboriginal name for 'a meeting place.'

Tuesday, 20th March.

We were taken by coaches to Roseworthy for a Conducted Tour of the Agricultural College.

On arrival we were welcomed with morning tea and an interesting talk on this 100 year old College which is to become a University in 1991. Then we were off on our guided tour, firstly the poultry section where students explained the experimentation which enables them to study the subject, from the egg production through the growing stage to the final demise of the bird.

Wine making is part of the curriculum and is a profitable one which helps to support the College. We enjoyed a wine tasting before sitting down to a delicious luncheon which was followed by a tour of the various subject areas available to the students.

All forms of agriculture are covered, including horse preparation, from breeding to racing. The College has produced some outstanding race horses and pacers.

Living quarters and study areas are first class, there are facilities for most sports and a chapel outstanding in its architecture, and the College has outstanding agricultural experts

to give men and women the opportunity to be tops in their chosen vocations.

Wednesday, 21st March.

Memorial Service Keswick Barracks Adelaide.

This was an important day when we paid homage to our Fallen Comrades in both war and peace time.

We were greeted by the RMS, WO1 Bob George who detailed us into three ranks with Ron Mackey as marker. We marched off, with Archie Campbell leading, and it was 'eyes right' to Brigadier Peter Bray and on to the Memorial.

After a welcome by the Brigadier and an able response by Tom Nisbet, the service commenced and included an Address by the Padre, Reflections by Archie Campbell, The Ode by Jack Carey and wreath laying by Brigadier Bray and Keith Dignum. Our men marched with pride and stood rock firm in the hot sun during the service.

Afterwards we were guests at the Sergeants Mess where we quenched our thirsts at prices unherd of these days and were then treated to a superb smorgasbord lunch.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed this important day and we thank Brigadier Bray and his men for sharing our Memorial Service and WO1 Bob George and his men for their hospitality. To show our appreciation, a 2/2nd commemorative plaque was presented by Keith Dignum to Bob George who accepted it on behalf of the Sergeants Mess, with a few well chosen words of thanks.

Thursday, 22nd March.

Reunion Dinner.

After drinks under the trees in the grounds of the Vine Hotel, we adjourned to the spacious dining room for a first class meal.

Formality was observed with a Toast List: Remembrance — Archie Campbell, Grace — Jack Carey, Loyal Toast — Jack Fox. Tom Nisbet welcomed members and guests in his inimitable style, with humour and sincerity. The Unit — Don Turton, who proved himself to be a fluent speaker. Thanks Don, we would like to hear more of you in the future. Don's remarks were supported by Len Bagley in his response on behalf of the Unit. Alan Luby proposed the toast to Absent Friends in his own sincere manner.

Archie Campbell praised the organisation of the Safari by the South Australian members, so small in numbers they call themselves a Twig, not a Branch, and presented Life Membership badges to Kel Carthew and Mark Jordan and thanked them for their input which had resulted in such a successful Safari. He then called on Keith Blomeley who, although

not a member of the Association, had given the Committee valuable assistance in many ways, and presented him with an Associate Life Membership badge.

Colin Doig welcomed and introduced our guest speaker, Dr. Les Poidevin and his charming wife Rosemary. Les was a young Sydney graduate when he was assigned to the 2/12 Field Ambulance but he has a close affinity with our Unit as he was later attached to Sparrow Force and served on Timor and Java where he was later attached to Sparrow Force and served on Timor and Java where he was taken POW and gave tremendous service to his fellow prisoners of war. Post war, he became a distinguished obstetrician and gynaecologist in Adelaide. His book 'Samurais and Circumcisions' tells of his experiences as a POW. His address was full of reminiscences and descriptions of his period under the Japanese, and a deep look into the Japanese character and their subsequent explosion into the industrial field and annexation of parts of Australia by peaceful and subtle means. He has some very forthright ideas on many subjects and certainly gave us food for thought.

Les Poidevin, you were a fine choice as Guest Speaker and we thank you and Rosemary for attending our Reunion Dinner.

Our thanks also to The Vine Hotel management, Andrew and Chris and their efficient staff.

Friday, 23rd March.

The Old Time Dance was a relaxed, happy event with good company and good music provided by 'Fusion Band,' a combination that kept the dance floor at the Football Club crowded all evening. We enjoyed some unexpected entertainment by the Vice President of the Nuriootpa RSL, Phil Lamb (who sounds very much like Tom Jones) and the manager of the Barossa Caravan Park, Reg Martin, both of whom have fine voices. We were treated to yet another surprise when Reg who is Welsh, was joined by our own Irish vocalist Paddy Kenneally, in an unusual rendition of Danny Boy (although some of us had heard them rehearsing over a few beers earlier in the week).

We were intrigued to see the President of the RSL, Peter Schiltz, dancing with a mystery lady wearing a garter adorned with a Double Red Diamond, but all was well when we discovered the lady was our own Joyce Martin in disguise!

As usual we were well looked after by Bar Manager Marcus Hearle and his happy staff.

GENERAL MEETING

**Chairman: Keith Dignum
The Ode: Archie Campbell**

AGENDA

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Submitted by John Poynton in his usual meticulous manner. He answered questions to the satisfaction of all present. His move to divide the accumulated interest between all states on a pro-rata basis last year was greatly appreciated.

John was given a great ovation for his excellent work as our Treasurer.

COURIER REPORT:

Handled by the Editor, Archie Campbell, who said the Courier virtually looks after itself through the generosity of members. He urged everyone who wished to convey a message to his mate or mates, to make the Courier the vehicle for such messages.

The Courier had undergone a change in its operation with the advent of a computer programme instituted by Len Bagley's son Gavin, who had done a first class job.

Gerry and Mary McKenzie have been relieved of their load on the Courier team because of Gerry's health not being 100%. Both have been real stalwarts and their contribution to the Association has been a long and valuable one and is recorded as such. The team now is Len Bagley, Betty Illsley, Archie Campbell and Gavin Bagley. Betty was soundly applauded when mention was made of her strong input over a long time.

The Courier is the Association lifeline and will continue to be published six times a year for the benefit of us all.

Len Bagley supported Archie and presented an interesting picture of the new Address Book production. Len also thanked Peter Epps for organising the prompt delivery of the new Address Books throughout Australia at no cost to the Association. Peter picked them up from Len in Perth one Sunday and on the following Tuesday Alan Luby phoned to say he had received the books for New South Wales.

Archie urged members to send changes of address, additions or deletions promptly to ensure continued receipt of the Courier.

FUTURE SAFARIS

This subject was discussed at length with a unanimous decision for:

NSW 1992, venue to be notified
WA 1994

JUBILEE YEAR 1991

This provoked considerable discussion and finished on the basis of: A Queensland/NSW

amalgamation at Port Macquarie. Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia going it alone.

Where possible the date of 11th July would be adhered to but if this did not suit, it would be the prerogative of each state to set a convenient date.

JIM SMAILES POEMS

Colin Doig had a proof copy for all to peruse. It is a very interesting production and Col mentioned that the sketches were originals by no less than world renowned cartoonist, Paul Rigby. It is a novel way of putting together a unit history and Jim has done an excellent job. It will be available soon at \$5 a copy and the Association coffers will benefit. Colin urged us all to make the production a huge success.

TIMOR MEMORIAL

Ray Aitken spoke on the present situation. The Resting House and adjacent Pool are in a state of severe disrepair. The excellent Plaque showing how much the Australian people appreciated the grand support of the East Timorese, is no more.

Ray is head of a committee moving to sustain pressure in the right directions to rectify the situation. You will be kept informed. Thanks Ray.

GENERAL BUSINESS

There were no profound issues put forward for discussion and so wound up an excellent meeting.

Saturday, 24th March.

Free Day.

Sunday, 25th March.

A free day which got off to a good start for many members with a Champagne and Barbecue Breakfast in the Park, starting at 7am.

Farewell Dinner

In the evening we once again met at the Football Club and enjoyed an excellent buffet meal, with ample refreshments.

The Raffle was drawn, with the following results:

1st: Keg of Port — No. 393, Fred Broadhurst, Victoria.

2nd: 12 Bottles Wine — 1248, Lyle Litchfield, South Australia.

3rd: Decanter and Goblets — 473, Jack Fox, Victoria.

4th: Wine Rack — 512, Henry McIntyre, Victoria.

Tom Nisbet presented a Life Membership badge to Leith Cooper for his service to the Association, particularly his organisation of the Phillip Island Safari. Then it was Tom's turn and Archie Campbell presented him with a Life Membership Badge, with a run down on Tom's contribution to the Association over the years.

Presentations were then made to the South Australian Committee and helpers in recognition of their hard work which had resulted in such a successful Safari.

Presentation to Keith Dignum by Angus MacLachlan; Kel Carthew by Alan Luby; Mark Jordan by Len Bagley; Keith Blomeley by Jim Fenwick; Betty Dignum and Marilyn Dignum by Dot Harrington; Ruby Carthew by Joan Fenwick.

Keith Dignum thanked Norm Tillet for the outstanding job he had done as Master of Ceremonies at all our functions.

In his farewell speech President Archie Campbell mentioned the first Safari held in Melbourne during the Olympic Games in 1956 and so well organised by Bert Tobin and his crew and how pleased we were to have Wilma with us on this Safari.

The next Safari will be held in New South Wales in 1992, followed by Perth in 1994.

Archie wished everyone a safe return home and our adopted Unit song, 'Maori's Farewell' signalled the end of another wonderful Safari.

REFLECTIONS

Looking back and in reflection I see the men of the First World War in 1914-18 who fought so valiantly and so well and in the process won for Australia its heritage as a Nation.

The enemy, on reflection, did not learn a lesson, for again in 1939-45 we went to war against Germany who, spurred on by a radical dictator, had European and World domination in their sights. Ultimately they were gobbled up by the "Russian Bear" and became captives in their own land.

An ugly reflection looms as we see Japan callously attack Pearl Harbour and spread their vicious tentacles right across the Pacific into the Asian countries.

They subjected men and women to brutal torture, took away their dignity and pride, but could not suppress the guts and determination to survive, shown by the prisoners of war.

They too reaped the horrific harvest they had sewn when the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Then a reflection of the young men of the 2nd Independent Company, later the 2/2nd

Commando Squadron, who came to life as class soldiers in the rigors of Wilsons Promontory and went on to create their own history by outstanding service in Timor, New Guinea and New Britain, to become the longest serving Unit in the AIF in terms of days at the front.

I see the fine youth of Australia embroiled in war, the loss of many of our great mates who paid the supreme sacrifice and whom we have come to honour this day at Keswick Barracks. Here we see Brigadier Peter Bray and his young soldiers who continue to serve to keep Australia free.

We pay homage at this Memorial to remember, and thank God for many things. Here is a Unit, the 2/2nd Commando Squadron, meeting in peace time with their wives, family members and our widows, a Unit that has carried its tightly bound friendship into the medium of peace.

Men of the 2/2nd, you can hold your heads high, for your service to Australia was out of the top drawer. You fought to keep Australia free, you succeeded so as our young people could be "Born Free" which is every person's right in this world.

Archie Campbell.

SPECIAL MENTION

On behalf of the Sandgropers who travelled on the coach, President Archie Campbell would like to make special mention of the following:

John Poynton for his planning of the travel and accommodation arrangements and also for the many jobs he attended to so expertly during the Safari.

Jack Carey (Mr Indispensable) who was always available with sound advice and assistance for everyone, particularly the President, and for his competent handling of the presentations.

Laurie Harrington and Jim Austin, our coach captains, for their help in so many ways, not only on the coach, but throughout the Safari. Their spontaneous help to all and sundry was a joy to behold — such a happy, energetic team.

Thank you all for a job well done.

***Should auld acquaintance be forgot
Each reunion answers never
For friends always will unite
However distance sever.
And now we think of friends away
And wish them joy forever.***

ARCHIE CAMPBELL.

THE COACH TRIP FROM PERTH TO NURIOOTPA

Twenty five of us set off from the parking area near the Burswood Casino at about 6.45am and en route we picked up Fred Sparkman, Jess Epps, Charles and Mavis Sadler, Stan and Barbara Payne.

Not knowing what was ahead of us, the first few kilometres were given over to settling in, not much talking, somewhat unusual for the 2/2 people.

One important aspect of the trip was that refreshments were readily available and our thanks for this task must go to Fred Sparkman. Once the job was delegated to him he took control like a bull terrier and, despite the pain he was suffering from his hurt wrist, he took regular stocktaking to ensure that all thirsts were adequately sated. Fred's bookkeeping was above reproach but he was a little puzzled when counting the takings to find that some person had inadvertently slipped in a couple of 2 cent coins in place of \$2 coins. Perhaps the blinds were drawn or the eyes a little foggy.

After making regular stops for you know what, we reached Balladonia where we were to spend the night. The accommodation was good and the food satisfying.

To make the longest part of the journey across the Nullarbor it meant an early start and, one way or another, we all managed to board the coach, some eating toast on the way.

We calculated our time to reach Ceduna at between 6-7pm. As you all well know, mathematics are not always reliable, as proved to be the case for us. While bowling along in a happy and joyful mood, without a care in the world, a sudden noise developed in the back wheel assembly. Fortunately the driver was able to turn the coach into a flat area off the road. Upon inspection by 31 passengers and two drivers it was found that the locking ring and rim to keep the tyre on had disappeared; so had the tyre. Immediately the search was on for the parts, some getting out calculators to work out which side of the road the rims would be and how far into the bush they would travel. About half the passengers divided into three groups, one walking along the centre of the road and the others on each side in the grass and bushes. After some time 'Eagle Eye' Turton found the rim but no luck with the locking ring.

In the meantime the male farming members who, no doubt, had considerable experience in replacing wheels under difficult conditions, got to work on jacking up the coach to enable the new wheel to be put in place. Someone

with his head buried under the coach said he needed some flat timber upon which to mount the jack to stop it digging into the sand. Naturally there is always sawn timber about in these remote areas for such an occasion. However, all was not lost. Ernie Bingham was quick off the mark as he had noticed the road marker posts with reflectors and considered these ideal for the job in hand. Repairs completed, posts replaced, off we went again, but somehow we had lost considerable time.

Any despondency caused by our late arrival at East/West Motel in Ceduna very quickly evaporated with the warm and enthusiastic welcome we received from the staff. A special souvenir menu had been prepared for the 2/2 Commando Association, the facilities and food were superb. Breakfast next morning was equally good and the charge very reasonable.

Off to Nuriootpa to meet with all our friends. We arrived to a glorious welcome at a barbecue which was a very fitting end to our journey across the Nullarbor.

SAFARI SNIPPETS

WHEN PETER PULLED THE PLUG

A group of lads, including Tony Bowers, Ray Aitken, Fred Sparkman, Peter Krause and a couple of others, were having a quiet drink in the lounge bar of the Vine Hotel. A young yahoo moved in and set the juke box going and gradually increased the volume. When our mob yelled at him to tone it down a bit, he increased the volume even more and Peter said 'Turn it down.' The yahoo increased it further whereupon Peter moved over and jerked out the electric plug. Tony and Ray kept their noses down and were silently laughing their heads off at little Peter's audacity. The yahoo said 'you just robbed me of a dollar' so Peter quietly reached into the fob pocket and flicked the lad a dollar and said 'you're now all square.' The merriment of Bowers and Co. reached terrific bounds at Peter's management of what looked like being a nasty situation.

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After the Welcome Barbecue there was an impromptu gathering in Len Bagley's cabin for a night cap. It was heard on the grape vine next day that a certain popular Perth couple never want to even hear the word claret again! Len had some explaining to do to a charming lady from NSW who was trying to get some sleep in her nearby cabin on that night. However, the story has a happy ending because on the final day the said charming lady presented him with a 'Good Neighbour'

award and they shared a bottle of champagne. The award is proudly displayed in the bar room at home, Joan.

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We were sorry that David and Thais Brown had to leave early to attend to some unexpected business matters at home. We all enjoyed their company for the first few days.

* * * * *

An unexpected and most welcome visitor was Michael Kenneally who was able to spend a little time with us all, much to Nora and Paddy's delight.

IN MEMORY OF PHIL BRYANT

Fred told me that his wife never approved of his gambling and therefore he gave up the demon's temptations.

Unfortunately, Fred is now alone in the world.

Whilst at the South Australian Safari he had the opportunity to visit the Casino. Wending his way around the black jack and baccarat tables he came to the two-up ring and here temptation was too much for him. Come in spinner — this is exactly what he did. Heads kept coming up until he was going for \$400. At this point luck deserted him but he walked away with \$200.

In the coach on the return journey to base, Fred's thoughts turned to his Phil and he wondered what she would be thinking about his lapse in being tempted to the ring. He decided it would be best to share his winnings with her and very generously gave \$100 to the "Courier" in memory of his beloved Phil.

John Poynton.

VALE CLARRIE VARIAN

We have to record the passing of one of nature's gentle gentlemen, Clarrie Varian, who passed away on 19th March 1990.

Clarrie was an original member of No. 9 Section, 'C' Platoon, and served on Timor until he had to be evacuated with Amoebic Dysentery in May 1942, along with Brigadier Veale and his party in a P.B.Y. He had a pretty rough time for quite a while and on recovery was posted to 2/16th Battalion and served in New Guinea in the Shaggy Ridge show.

After demobilisation he was employed with the W.A. Tramways, firstly as a driver and later on Trolley Buses and later again as a mechanic, until his retirement some twelve years ago.

Clarrie was very early co-opted onto the Committee and helped more than considerably in the early days when we took *Legacy* children and later, Sister Kate's children on visits to Don Turton's property and then to Reg Harrington's. He arranged the buses and drove them on each occasion and his services were donated. On some occasions such as interstate safaris held in W.A., Clarrie always did the transport arrangements.

Clarrie was a tower of strength in the working bees at Kings Park and was a most regular attendant. He served with distinction on the Committee from 1959 to 1984 and was elected a Life Member of the Association in 1971, an honour richly deserved.

Clarrie was a great family man and dearly loved by all his children and his wife. Unfortunately, his wife pre-deceased him by about four years and he also lost his youngest boy tragically only a couple of years ago.

Clarrie suffered from heart trouble for many years and was the subject of much research by the Heart Unit at Royal Perth Hospital where he was subjected to numerous experiments, some of which made for a good deal of publicity in the Press and Television. He was a truly silent sufferer and nobody ever heard him complain of his lot in life.

Unfortunately, his funeral took place while there was a large contingent of W.A. boys on Safari at the Barossa Valley. However, due to a herculean effort by George Fletcher, Keith Hayes and Harry Sproxtton, 25 members attended his last ceremony, which was a wonderful tribute to Clarrie.

Writing on a personal note, Clarrie Varian was one of my very real mates. Somehow we had a lot in common and so once again a very nice chap and good friend has gone to his eternal rest.

Vale: *Clarrie Varian, Good Soldier, Good Father and family man and Good Citizen and true friend of 2/2nd Commando Association.*

Col Doig.

Those in attendance were: Jerry Haire (Vice President), Keith Hayes, Doug Fullarton, Jack Wicks, Percy Hancock, Jim Smailes, Mick Holland, Terry Paull, Gordon Rowley, Gordon Barnes, Sid McKinley, Gerry Maley, Jack Hasson, Gerry Green, 'Doc' Wheatley, Bob Smyth, Henry Sproxtton, Bob McDonald, Tom Bateman, Ralph Finklestein, Ron Dook, Mick Morgan, Colin Criddle, Bernie and Babs Langridge, George and Joan Fletcher.

VALE RONALD DENVA HOST

Ron Host died suddenly at his home in Cooloom, Queensland, on 5 May after suffering for some time from severe asthma and emphysema. These conditions severely handicapped his activities over the last years of his life and resulted in him being classified TPI.

Ron joined the AIF in May 1940, so he heard the bugle early and, after serving with 2/1 Medium Regiment in the Middle East, joined us at Canungra and served in New Guinea and New Britain as a reliable and valued member of 7 Section 'C' Troop — a jolly good soldier.

After demobilisation Ron worked in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, and was instrumental in starting the first land development at Noosa, which has now grown beyond his wildest dreams. Before retiring to Cooloom he lived in Brisbane and we were very happy to link up with him again.

Nine members and spouses attended the service at the Buderim Crematorium on 9 May to pay our last respects to Ron. The Chapel was packed with close friends, members of Ron's bowling club and the RSL, indicating his popularity and the respect he commanded.

To Betty, his daughters Sue, Kay and Val and all members of his family we offer our sincere and deepest sympathy and we say farewell Ron from all your mates in the 2/2 Commando Squadron.

VICTORIAN NEWS

What a wonderful Safari — a tribute to the South Australians, few in numbers, who were responsible for the organisation. The weather was perfect and we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

It was very pleasing to see Tom Nisbet and Leith Cooper receive their Life Membership badges as they have both done sterling work over the years for the Victorian Branch and we congratulate them.

We are now looking forward to 1992 at Port Macquarie, NSW.

The Anzac Day march and reunion was a great success — the weather was showery and cool but there was a good turn out of all Commandos — Tom Nisbet, Norm Tillet, Bill Tucker, Baldy Baldwin, Bernie Callinan, Leith Cooper, Jack Fox, John Roberts, Ken Monk, Bruce McLaren, Alex Boast, Fred Broadhurst, Harry Botterill, George Veitch, Jack Renehan, B.T.C. Smith.

It was good to see B.T.C. who is now living in Wodonga, and Bruce McLaren now living back in Melbourne, both looking fit. Norm Tillett came down from Corowa for the day and is settling in very well up there.

We will be having a meeting shortly to work out our agenda for the 50th birthday of the Unit next year. We hope all Victorians will make every effort to make this an event to remember.

Regards to all.
Harry Botterill.

N.S.W. NEWS

It is with great regret that I have to report the most untimely death of Debbie Hoy, daughter of Bill and Betty Hoy of Cabramatta.

Debbie was only 26 years old when she passed away after a long battle against diabetes. She was a very lovable young lady and was on the threshold of a brilliant career as a playwright, producer and director in the world of theatre and stage. At the time of her death on the 4th December, 1989, Debbie was studying at Latrobe University in Melbourne and was so highly regarded by the teaching staff there that all of her writings have been placed in the University's archives.

Debbie's remains were cremated in Melbourne and the ashes brought back to Sydney and a service was held at the Lippington Lawn Cemetery on the 22nd December. The service was attended by Alan Luby, Ron Goodacre, Ron Trengove, Snowy Went, Jack and Maria Hartley.

Bill has been in very poor health himself for some months now and has been in and out of hospital several times. He still has to go back for more surgery of a serious nature, but despite his many problems and sad loss, he and Betty are maintaining their fighting spirit and bearing up well.

We all join in sending them our love and best wishes for a better 1990.

Jack Hartley.

EDITOR: *Even though this news missed our February Courier, our heartfelt sympathy goes out to Bill and Betty Hoy in their sad loss.*

* * * * *

It is with much sadness we record the death of Elva Mannix, wife of Mick, after a long illness. Mick had forewarned us at our March meeting that Elva was failing in health and that the prognosis was not good.

There was a good roll up of members amongst the large crowd of relatives, family and friends

who attended a service at the Woronora Cemeterium on Tuesday, 24th April.

Alan Luby.

ANZAC DAY was a glorious day and everything went well. The Commemoration Service in Commando Square, Martin Place, was well attended and a memorable occasion.

Our only hitch was that Ossie Ostari, 2/6 Sqn and AATY member, who is usually our Parade RSM, collapsed after the Dawn Service. Others stepped into the breach and I was privileged to do the recitation of 'Valiant Hearts' and the 'Ode.'

We marched in sunshine for a welcome change, and then most of us enjoyed the reunion, cruising on the harbour. Plenty of food, grog and FRIENDSHIP.

On parade we had Jack Hartley, Bill Coker, Tom Field, Allan Addison, Bill Hoy, Mick Mannix, Curly O'Neill, Sam Fullbrook, Ron Goodacre, Jack 'Icky' Iles, Pat de Luz, Reg Griffiths and son-in-law Gary Cullen, Ron Trengove, Snow Went, Ray Whitely, Ken Glover and my friend Alan Gray.

Taken all round, a terrific day.

Alan Luby.

ANZAC DAY 1990

A beautiful rosy dawn heralded the start of a superb day on which to celebrate Australia's most famous day.

While thoughts were to turn to those dear old gentlemen celebrating Anzac Day at Anzac Cove on this 75th Anniversary of the land at Gallipoli, our minds also were to focus on our Unit Association's celebration of this most memorable day.

The Dawn Service. Many of our members and their families attended this service which had a record overall attendance. Once again beautiful wreaths in our Unit's colours and shape were provided by George Fletcher. These floral tributes are a work of art and give true prominence to our Unit's feelings. Dick Darrington laid our wreath at Kings Park while Bob Smyth and John Burrridge laid a similar one at the Dawn Service at the S.A.S. Regiment's Campbell Barracks, Swanbourne, and stayed to enjoy a well catered Gun Fire Breakfast.

The March. Some forty of our boys took part in our annual gallop down the Terrace and later to file past the Saluting Base manned by His Excellency Sir Francis Burt, Governor of W.A.

That grand person Jerry Haire led the march along the Terrace and through the saluting area. Allow me to elaborate on this perform-

ance. Jerry is well into his eighties and not in the most robust health and he managed the Terrace section of this fairly lengthy march to perfection. The long wait on the Esplanade had a most wearing effect on his feeble constitution and it seemed that he would not be able to continue as he was in a state of partial collapse and an ambulance was called. Jerry was adamant he was going to lead this parade the full journey. With willpower and sheer guts he took the Unit to the finishing point. Never has greater courage been evidenced by any human being. Jerry deserves the salutations of all who took part in what was to prove an epic march. It is so typical of this perfect gentleman.

Don Hudson carried our banner and, as was to be expected, performed in true Hudson manner.

Among the marchers was 'Happy' Greenhalgh from N.S.W. and once again Rosemary Pace (Bill Drage's daughter). The only hat wearer was our old mate 'Doc' Wheatley. We'll have to consider having 'Doc' lead the parade one day so as to be able to 'doff the caddy' when passing the saluting base. The march really went off in a top manner with no change of step and the music provided by the Ladies' Band most adequate, especially on the march off.

The Function. Once again we were able to have a place of our own at the Airways Hotel in Adelaide Terrace, thanks to John Poynton. Some fifty assembled, including some from the 2/3rd, 2/5th and 2/8th Squadrons. The catering was outstanding and the liquid supply probably more than adequate, and as the afternoon wore on the conviviality moved into overdrive and some old fashioned singing was the order of the day.

Some personalities present not seen for some time were 'Happy' Greenhalgh from N.S.W., Ted Monk now living in Perth, having leased his farm at Latham, Vince Swann from Esperance, 'Dusty' Studly looking as fit as a Mallee bull, Ralph Finklestein, somewhat less pugnacious looking than old. George Strickland swapping yarns with Bill Howell of the Mandurah Mob which also included 'Dutchy' Holland, Terry Paull, Bernie Langridge, Tony Bowers, Gordon Rowley, Len Bagley and many others. Also, the late Doctor Dunkley's two sons 'Pip' and Ross.

Len Bagley most suitably thanked John Poynton for arranging the venue and the caterers for their truly excellent effort. A real slap up function, the equal of any we have ever had, and so ends another memorable Anzac Day and may we be spared to have many more.

Col Doig.

W.W.C.P.

CHARLIE PIERCE has spent some time in hospital recently. He has had problems with one stump and had to have another leg made up.

KEITH DIGNUM has not been well and had a stint in hospital. You must have overdone it organising the Safari, Keith.

BLUEY MILLER from Tasmania is recovering from a by-pass operation performed in Adelaide after attending the Safari.

THEO ADAMS, who also had a big heart operation in Brisbane, and missed the Safari, is making good progress.

ARCHIE CAMPBELL has not been in the best of health lately and decided to fly home from Adelaide instead of extending his holiday. Happily, his health is improving and he is feeling better each day.

DULCIE RYAN also flew home after a short stay in hospital in Angaston.

DANNY DANIELS is recovering slowly from a serious operation which prevented him from attending the Safari. Dan is pretty tough and we hope he makes a good recovery.

MICK MORGAN is well on the way to complete recovery after a recent operation on his leg.

Our best wishes to you all.

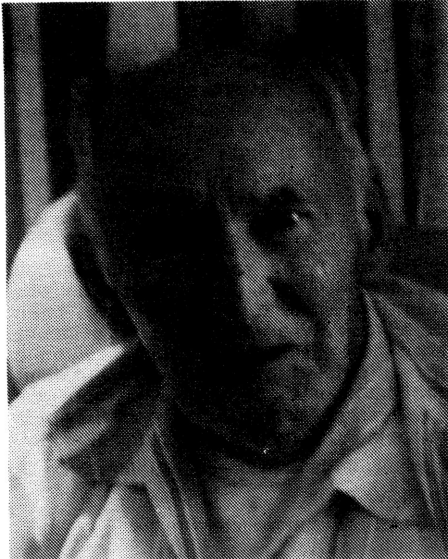
THANKS FROM THE EDITOR

My health is on the improve after a really hard Safari. May I say 'thank you' to all present for being so kind and thoughtful in helping me to see it through to the end.

The ultimate diagnosis was a stroke which took part of the field of vision from my eyes. The villain of the piece however, was after a blood test, an Easter present of sugar diabetes.

Knowing the problems helped considerably and I am determined to beat the whole issue. Am feeling a great deal better and ready for the challenge.

When in this position you really know how caring and thoughtful the members of the 2/2nd are, not only those at Safari but old mates right across Australia. I love you all for that, it boosts my confidence no end. There is no other Association quite like the 2/2nd. For them one can easily wear his heart on his sleeve. God bless you all.



This photo of Keith Craig was taken by George Coulson on his way home from the Barossa Safari.

CORRESPONDENCE CORNER

Mrs S. Parker
63 Tyndale St
Mittagong 2575

Thank you for continuing to send me the Courier. It's now two years since Norm died but I do like to hear news of his Unit.

We, Norm's family, were comforted by, and proud of the obituary published in the Courier Vol 70, Feb. 88. Norm's courage, consideration and devotion to his family is always an example to us. I should have expressed our appreciation to you long ago but it really has taken a long while for me to adjust to changes.

I have changed my address to the above and am now happily much closer to our elder son and their three little girls, Ingrid (3 years), Madeline (6) and Lucy (8). Rob and Ann live at Berrima.

I would always be pleased to welcome any of Norm's friends so do call in.

Enclosed is a donation for the magazine.

Yours faithfully,

Sheila Parker

T. E. Cholerton
14 Newport St
East Ballina 2478

A few lines to let you know our new address above. We are renting this house until the edifice is erected on our block in nearby Evans Head. We moved here from Carcoar between Christmas and New Year and it was quite an ordeal after being in the one spot for 38 years.

Great part of the world around here with magnificent climate and we all appreciate the lack of dust and flies.

Very sorry we cannot be at the Barossa Safari and with best wishes for its success and cheers to all who make it.

A few bucks herewith for the Courier.

All the best.

Ted

K. Sargeant
25 Thomas Street
Gympie 4570

As I write, all you lucky people who have been able to go will be enjoying the Safari.

We in Gympie have experienced one of the hottest summers I can remember, and will be pleased to see the end of it.

I'm sorry I missed out on my usual Christmas letter but, with sickness and one thing and another I did not get around to it. I did write to Angus MacLachlan for some information which he kindly sent me.

Most of my year has been given supplying information to an author who is writing a story of my late husband. In 1931 Jack, then aged 21, rowed a dinghy down the Dumaresque, MacIntyre, Barwon, Darling and Murray Rivers to Murray Bridge in South Australia. He wrote a story and took photos of his journey, which I still have. Being the depression years the story was never published, but in 1988, our Bicentennial Year, the Historical Records Research were very interested in it. So much so, it has made the Historical Records Register. Included in it is reference to Timor, with mention of "Winnie." Mentioned also are Capt. Geo. Parker, John Donovan, Max Loveless, Keith Richards and Jack and Commando operations. It is sad to know so many have passed on.

I was pleased that Angus could tell me the G. Parker in the new address book was Capt Geo. Parker who was with you "boys" in Timor. I have since been in touch with him and he kindly wrote to me. I tried to phone you Angus, but realised you would no doubt be in the Barossa Valley enjoying your get together with your mates. I appreciated your letter to me.

It will soon be Anzac Day. I always place a floral tribute to Jack and the "Brave Men of Timor" on our Memorial Gates on that day.

Enclosed is a donation for the Courier.

Good health and kind regards to all.

Kathleen B. Sargeant.

F. Broadhurst
140 Christmas Street
Fairfield 3078

We had a great trip home, followed the coast all the way, beautiful scenery. Frank and Phyllis took some good photos.

Frank stayed with us until the 5th April. He was sick the last two days so I took him to the doctor who told him he had the flu virus that was going around. I know for a fact that it was tea towel poisoning. I had it when I was five years old and vowed never again. I warned Frank about the danger but he wouldn't listen. Am pleased to say he was responding to the tablets when he went home.

Well, another successful Safari, something different, but enjoyable, as they all are.

I have tapped the keg and it surely is the nectar of the Gods. They tell me it is four bottles of port and one of brandy and it is beautiful, as half of Northcote will tell you. I was very pleased that someone in the Unit won the keg and was delighted when I found it was me and I can assure you it will be given the love and respect it deserves. Am enclosing a photo of the christening — as you can see, we are drinking to the health of the 2/2nd Family.

On the way home we called in to see Bay Webber at Mt. Gambier. His feet are a hell of a mess. The soles of both feet have been operated on and are bandaged up six inches above the ankles. He wears slippers with the tops cut out. Arthritis is very bad, but apart from that he is still the same Bay Webber we knew years ago and he is in a wonderful home environment. Betty is really looking after him.

Hope this finds you all well, as it leaves us.

Yours sincerely,

Fred and Mavis and Sister Phyllis.



*Fred Broadhurst and Frank Sharp sampling the content of the keg of port
Fred won in the Safari Raffle.*

A Mitchell
5 Sutherland Street
Caloundra 4551

A few lines to say hello and to forward a small donation for the Courier, for which I'm so thankful to receive.

The old eyes are not too bad at present and I have a good hobby in showing Hibiscus. Members of the Society drive me to the shows.

I do hope everything went well at the Safari.

My regards to all members of the old Unit.

Yours sincerely,

Allan

P. Barden
2 Dampier Street
Geraldton 6530

Tom Towers and his wife Mavis have moved to Geraldton and they love Sun City and are greatly impressed by the friendliness of its residents. Joan and I were pleased to take them to the Dawn Parade on Anzac Day. Tom and I marched in the main parade, after which we had a good yarn with Nip Cunningham. Double Red Diamond insignia was prominent — Tom wore a huge colour patch on his pullover that resulted in enquiries from some of the younger ex-servicemen. Nip wore his Unit tie and I proudly displayed my Life Membership tie clip. As PRO for Geraldton City RSL Sub-Branch, I arranged several interviews for the news media, including one with Tom Towers, with a view to giving added publicity to our wonderful Unit.

I also provided the material for a special Anzac section in the 'Geraldton Guardian' on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing. This enabled me to include information gained during my 30 years as ABC Regional Journalist, including the fact that the first public Anzac Day service at Geraldton took place in 1918 when the Diggers used to hold up the milk cart to get their supplies to go with the rum!

Having been represented by two Gallipoli veterans, the late Artie Milford and Peter Snodgrass at the 50th Anniversary Pilgrimage, we had virtual representation at the 75th Anniversary Pilgrimage per medium of former Geraldton Senior High School student, Army Private Aaron Cox who was based on HMAS Tobruk during the Pilgrimage.

Regards to all.

Peter

A. Bowers
9 Talbot Close
Halls Head 6201

Enclosed is a cheque for the Courier.

Enjoyed the trip to South Australia — a job well done by them.

To me, the friendliness, kindness and the smiles people gave us in Nuriootpa were outstanding, the Vines Hotel staff especially.

The coach trip was O.K., even the coach behaved well, breaking down outside a hotel, and even the abstainers joined in the fun.

My thanks to the two Jacks who did all the work.

It was good to see all the old friends again and exchange new and old stories.

Yours sincerely,

Tony

N. Mullins
15 Fitzgerald Road
Morley 6062

Congratulations to the organisers of the Safari for a job well done. It was nice to see everyone again and I hope everyone had a safe trip home.

Thanks to John Poynton and his helpers and the coach drivers for a lovely trip. Well done Sparkie.

Donation for the Courier is enclosed.

Regards to all.

Nellie

R. Morris
53 Hilder St
Weston 2611

Hazel and I thank you most sincerely for the welcome we received at the Barossa Reunion — we were quite overwhelmed. It was great seeing all the lads and lasses again.

Keith and his Committee are to be congratulated on their organisation. Someone must have a close liaison with Heaven as the weather could not have been better.

Hope to see you all for longer in 1992.

Yours sincerely,

Ron and Hazel

COL. DOIG'S UNIT HISTORY

There are only 57 books left at \$20 each plus postage.

D. Ryan
30 Wrexham St
Bicton 6157

I would like to thank you one and all for kicking in and paying my fare home from South Australia. I have done nothing to deserve it and was really embarrassed when John Poynton brought me the cheque covering my air fare. My thanks are from my heart.

Some of us are widows and widowers but I think yesterday's beautiful days are tomorrow's beautiful memories.

In South Australia a gentleman carried my Ricoh camera to the bus for me as I was loaded up. It was in a black leather case with a broken catch on the zip and my name was not on it. I guess the man didn't know who I was. I would love to get it back as Merv gave it to me.

Am fairly fit although my first few weeks at home were spent going to hospital for treatment and I am now swimming three mornings a week, supervised by a physio-therapist. Am still suffering from shingles but otherwise feeling fit.

Warmest regards to all.

Dulcie

B.T.C. Smith
Unit 2
239 Beechworth Rd
Wodonga 3690

Dear Jack

Just a note to advise of my new address and enclose a donation.

Long may your chimney smoke.

Bruce

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESS DUNKLEY

Jess, the wife of our late loved M.O., Roger Dunkley, turned 90 in February. Though belated, all members send their love and wish you a grand 91st year.

Nice to have your family around you at this time and we are sure you had a wonderfully happy day.

God bless, take care and may the years ahead be kind to you with good health and happiness.

DONATIONS TO COURIER

Elsie Wares, Clarrie Varian, Ron Archer, Alf Hodge, George Smith, Dave Dexter, Col Doig, John Fowler, Ron Dook, Jess Epps, Wilf March, Gwenda Kirkwood, Durn Anning, Percy Hancock, Sheila King, the Dunkley Family, Reg Griffiths, Dick Dorham, Dulcie Gay, Alex Thomson, Lew Thompson, Eric Smyth, Alma Moore, George Shields, Bruce McLaren, Snow Elmoe, Ron Morris, Frank Sharp, Arthur Littler, George Timms, Sheila Parker, Ted Cholerton, Bob Smyth, Ted Monk, Kath Press, Lyle Litchfield, D. J. Bennett, Ivy Beavis, Fred Bryant, Alistair MacLachlan, Angus MacLachlan, Stan Payne, Joy Smith, Neil Hooper, Blue Bone, Ralph Conley, A. Coles, Allan Mitchell, Bruce Smith, Tony Bowers, Kath Sargeant, John Burridge, Bernie Landgridge, Colin Criddle, Ray Aitken, George Greenhalgh, John Lillie, Vince Swann, Roslyn Drage, Tom Foster, George Fletcher, Merv Wheatley, Dusty Sutddy, Gordon Rowley, Terry Paull, Roy Watson, Les Halse, Jim McLaughlin, Len Bagley, Don Hudson, John Chalwell, Dick Fitzgerald.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

BOWE, Mr W. J.

Jim and Kath
35 Benjamin St
Manningham 5086

CHOLERTON, Mr T. E.

Ted and Dianne
14 Newport St
East Ballina 2478

GREBERT, Mr H. C.

Col
War Veterans Homes
2603 Moggiill Rd
Pinjarra Hills 4069

MONK, Mr W.

Ted and Peg
173 The Strand
Bedford 6052
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PARKER, Mrs S.

Sheila
63 Tyndale St
Mittagong 2575

SMITH, Mr B. T. C.

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2/239 Beechworth Rd
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SMITH, Mr R.

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13 Bright St
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TEAPE-DAVIS, Mr R.

Rowland and Maxine
7 Temple St
Victoria Park 6100
(09) 361 4728

TOWERS, Mr T.

Tom and Mavis
41 Maley Way
Geraldton 6530

WHITFORD, Mr S.

Stan
Unit 8 Cooina
Retirement Village
Benalla 3672

WICKS, Mr J.

Jack and Hazel
21/80 Henley St
COMO 6152
(09) 450 5846

**ALTERATIONS and
ADDITIONS**

HOOPER, Mr N.

Neil and Margaret
3 Yiada St
Kedron 4031
(07) 359 0616

HOWELL, Mr W.

Bill and **Elvie**
68 Randell St
Mandurah 6210
(09) 535 1923

HOST, **Mrs B.**

Betty
88 Banksia St
Coolum Beach 4573
(071) 46 2020

WHEATLEY, Mr M. L.

Merv and Olive
266 Fulham St
Cloverdale 6105
(09) 277 4071

JONES, Mr K.

Bluey
Snows Rd
Dorrigo 2453

MARTIN, Mr A. J.

Albert
232 Ninth Ave
Inglewood 6052
(09) 271 4326

SERGEANT, Mrs K.

Kath
25 Thomas St
Gympie 4570
(071) 82 3794

SNOWDON, Mrs B.

Bonnie
112 Matina St
Narrabundah 2604
(062) 95 6817

Have you experienced a double water bed?

Well I have and this is how it came about.

On the return trip to W.A. our first stop for the night was Ceduna and after distributing to members the keys of their suites in the new section of the motel I found I did not have a key for myself.

On confronting the office I was given a key to a suite in the old section of the motel. After moving in and switching on the air cooler which made such an unbearable noise we sought another suite. This was not much better as it had five beds in it, including a double, leaving little space to move around and made it doubly difficult to decide in which bed to sleep.

On the third try we were given a suite with a double water bed. When offering us the key the manageress had quite a twinkle in her eye, supporting it with a sly wink. Not having slept on a water bed before I said to my wife this will be a new experience for us. So off we went light of heart to explore the unknown.

I put the overnight bag on the foot of the bed and to my utter amazement waves ran up the bed to finish at the pillows, which wobbled about like a drunken sailor. I wondered if it would be necessary to take sea sick tablets. It took me a little while to convince my wife that there were no other suites available, apart from those we had already looked at.

To remove my shoes I sat on the side of the bed but found the wooden edging so high that my feet barely touched the floor. Whilst my wife was attending to her affairs she noticed two beady black eyes looking at her from between the cups and saucers on top of the refrigerator. She exclaimed in a startled voice, "There's a mouse." By the time I struggled from the sitting position it had dropped to the floor and darted under the fridge. "Probably a field mouse, nothing to worry about," I said and continued to get ready for bed.

My wife got into bed first and nestled down between the waves. As it was a hot night I pulled the doona off the bed and put it on the floor under the curtained window. At last the thought of experiencing a water bed made me quite excited and glad I was not a cowboy getting into bed with spurs on, otherwise I might drown.

As I lay down on the bed I noticed my wife started to rise on her side of the bed until she was a few inches higher than me. I put this down to the difference in weight. Lying on my back and feeling the water bed contours pressing into my corresponding contours, gave me a very comforting sensation. Now to turn off the light, it required me to roll on my side causing lateral waves, the momentum of which nearly ran me over the edge. However, I was facing the window and observed a mouse climbing up the edge of the curtain until it reach the top. Mentally jumping out of bed to get my slipper to attack the pest, whereas in reality I struggled over the wooden edge and by the time I had slipper in hand it had gone.

Returning to the "on back" position and assuring my wife that mice would not attack us whilst in bed, I suddenly thought that they may get into the overnight bag in which we had half a fruit cake. I didn't like the idea of having to declare an illegal passenger at the quarantine station on the border of W.A., so out of bed again to zip up the bags.

By this time I was starting to get rather tired and went back to bed as quick as I could climb over the bed edge. I had light switch in hand to douse the light when I noticed the mouse abseiling down the edge of the curtain to disappear under the doona. I thought at last I had the little begger.

A solo attempt to catch him or her the first time was not successful, so this time I decided to bring up reinforcements. Being the senior I told my wife to stand on the doona near the wall to keep the mouse from getting out. With slipper raised to strike I carefully lifted the other end of the doona to expose the mouse to the weapon in hand. I bet you know what happened — the mouse ran between my legs to escape under the fridge. I guess my wife should have been in charge.

By this time we were really tired and didn't much care whether an army of mice joined us on the water bed so long as we got some sleep.

In the morning we awoke bright and chirpy and amazingly not the slightest sign of our usual aching backs.

It seems therefore that water beds are good for back complaints.

A couple of weary passengers.