

2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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COMING EVENTS

ANZAC DAY, THURSDAY 25th APRIL

9.30am Assemble at usual place in the Terrace

9.45am Fall in

10.00am March off

12.30pm Get-together, Airways Hotel, 195 Adelaide Terrace

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY, 14th MAY AT ANZAC CLUB AT 11am

This is an important meeting and we want a good roll call.
Refreshments and snacks to follow.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

NSW, QUEENSLAND, CAPITAL TERRITORY

Thursday, 11th July at 7.00pm

Port Macquarie RSL Club — Nissen Hut Functions Room

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

WESTERN AUSTRALIA — MID-YEAR SOCIAL

THURSDAY, 11th JULY AT ANZAC CLUB AT 11.00am

JUBILEE LUNCHEON

THURSDAY, 10th OCTOBER

JOAN WATTERS COMMUNITY CENTRE

JERSEY STREET, WEMBLEY

Pre-luncheon drinks from 11.00am

VALE FRANCIS PATRICK (‘Nip’ Cunningham)

Once again it is my sad duty to have to report the death of one of our long serving members in the person of Frank (‘Nip’) Cunningham at Northampton on 10th February, 1991 after a short illness.

‘Nip’ was a character in his own right in his lifetime. A most athletic type, he was an excellent boxer and a top cyclist in his early life, and maintained a high degree of fitness right up to the end with daily skipping sessions.

‘Nip’ was born in Geraldton and, apart from war service, lived there all his life and was most highly regarded as a citizen of that City. For most of his early life he was employed at the Geraldton Globe Brewery until it closed in the late 50s. Then ‘Nip’ took up employment at the Mercantile Club as cleaner-barman and eventually retired from that employment at age 65.

He was an original member of the 2nd Independent Coy and was in 6 Section the whole of his army career. ‘Nip’ was regarded as a good steady soldier who could be relied upon in a crisis. He was immensely strong as is evidenced by his ability to juggle cases of 5 dozen bottles of beer with consummate ease. He used to be a ringside judge at our boxing contests because of his intimate knowledge of the pugilistic game.

Because of the remoteness of his residence at Geraldton ‘Nip’ was not able to take a very deep interest in our Association but involved himself to the extent available to him.

‘Nip’ was married after his army service and was the father of two daughters, Jan and Francene. His wife pre-deceased him by a number of years.

The funeral was held at Geraldton on Thursday, 14th February and at the R.C. Cathedral Service Arch Campbell gave a brief but brilliantly moving oration on behalf of the Unit Association.

The following members attended the funeral: Peter Barden, Eric and Margaret Weller, Tom Foster, Don Turton, Arch Campbell, Jack Carey, Les and Edna Haise, Jack Fowler and Col Doig.

A good soldier, citizen, husband and father has gone to his rest. Our sympathy to his family.

Col Doig.

GERALDTON NEWS

Many thanks to the members from Perth for the special effort they made to attend the funeral of Nip Cunningham

Bruss Fagg of Northampton was unable to attend because he has to rest his leg as much as possible and Bluey Prendergast had a medical appointment in Perth.

Nip thought so much of the great Unit it was his privilege to serve that I'm sure the gesture of having his coffin draped with the Double Red Diamond flag would have been greatly appreciated.

Those who missed the Requiem Mass conducted in St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral by Monsignor John Barden missed something special — the eulogies. A long time neighbour, Bren Prunster, outlined Nip's community interests including his successful participation as a boxer and footballer, and Archie Campbell made a wonderful speech about Nip's army days.

The mourners included local RSL stalwart Nancy Peacock whose late brother Bert Burgess joined up from Geraldton and, like Nip, served in the three campaigns in Timor, New Guinea and New Britain.

Nip's brother Bill recited the Ode at the graveside before RSL and 2/2nd Commando personnel threw remembrance poppies into the grave.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Nip's daughters, Jan Johnson of Ogilvie and Fran Keyte of Port Hedland and families. Jan's son Murray of the RAAF Academy at Canberra recently returned from an extensive training course in Africa where he climbed that country's highest mountain, Mount Kilimanjaro (19,565 ft) and Mount Kenya (17,040 ft).

On behalf of the 2/2nd folk I would like to say a big thank you for the wonderful hospitality extended at the home of Jan's in-laws, Harold and Margaret Johnson, after the funeral.

Peter Barden.

EDITOR: *Tom and Mary Foster played host to Colin Doig and John Fowler on the Wednesday night and Don Turton, Jack Carey and Archie Campbell on the Thursday night. Their kindness knew no bounds and we thank them both very much indeed for making our visit so very much easier.*

Archie Campbell.

VALE CHARLES HERBERT (Charlie) DODGE

It is with much regret we have to record the passing of one of our valued members in the person of Charlie Dodge. After a brief but terrible illness Charlie passed away on Friday, 22nd February, another victim of the dreaded cancer which has taken so many of our beloved people. He leaves a widow Doris, a daughter Glenice and son Gary to mourn his passing.

Charlie joined the Unit as an original and served with 1 Section, 'A' Platoon in Timor. He was in the Dutch end of Timor with Ted Potts and Col Doig when the Japs landed and later made his way with Doig and Potts to Atamboa where those assembled were dispersed by Brigadier Veale with the words "everybody for yourselves." Charlie, Ted Potts and a couple of others took off for the north coast, acquired a boat and put to sea. Unfortunately, they did not reach land but were captured by a Jap submarine and taken to a port they were unable to identify and transferred to a hospital ship and taken to the port of Macassar in the Celebes. There they were among 2,500 prisoners of war. They were the only Australians there and were treated as British P.O.W's. This was a real nightmare P.O.W. camp and suffered all the horrors that the Japs could inflict. It had been Charlie's intention to write of his experiences in this camp but unfortunately illness caught up with him and he did not write what would have been a great epic and probably will never be recounted.

When Charlie returned to civilian life after the war he was first employed by E.M.I. in Perth and then became a representative for Holman & Co. who supplied farmers with tanks and pumping equipment for petrol and oil on the farms. He went to Victoria where he had his own business at Frankston for ten years in the same line of business. When he sold out and returned to W.A. he took an interest in Association affairs for the first time in about 1988.

We extend our sincere sympathy to Doris and family.

Col Doig.

Charlie's funeral was well attended. Present were President, Don Turton, George Bayliss, Archie Campbell, Jack Carey, Colin Criddle, Colin Doig, Ron Dok, George Fletcher, John Fowler, Keith Hayes, Wilf and Lorraine March, Bob Smyth, Fred Sparkman, Doc Wheatley.

FATHER OF THE DAWN SERVICE

As dawn breaks on April 25, Anzac Day services all over Australia perpetuate the memory of Australia's finest sons who paid the supreme sacrifice in the Gallipoli campaign.

And in the far north of Queensland at the tiny cemetery in Herberton, there is the grave of the man who started the great tradition of the Dawn Service.

Rev Arthur Ernest White, affectionately known as Padre White, was buried in Herberton in 1954, his grave bearing only the words "A. E. White — a Priest."

In recent years this simple, austere grave has received a facelift and a marble plaque has been placed alongside the grave acknowledging Father White's initiative in commencing the Dawn Service.

Rev White came to Australia in 1919 after serving with the English Army in World War I. He settled in Albany, where the idea of the dawn service was conceived.

It was from Albany that the convoys left between 1914 and 1918 and this part of the West Australian coast was the last sight the Diggers had of their homeland.

This must have been uppermost in the mind of the padre, when with a group of friends he climbed the rugged track to the top of Mount Clarence on the Anzac morning of 1923. As the sun rose, a wreath was cast on the waters of King George Sound and the Dawn Service was thus established.

Rev White spent many years as Archdeacon of Broken Hill and Rector of St. John's Church in Forbes, where he is still remembered with high esteem. A church at the small community of Werrinya, some 30km from Forbes, commemorates the Dawn Service on a set of stained glass windows, known as the Dawn Service Windows.

From 1938 to his death in 1954 he was chaplain of a girls' school in Herberton.

CORRESPONDENCE CORNER

D. C. Young
72 Graylands Road
Claremont

Dear Jack,

Enclosed is a donation for the Courier.

I hope all the men and families are OK, including yourself.

This bloody war is not the best.

Barbara and I are feeling well. Hope to see you all soon.

Happy New Year to everyone and cheerio for now.

Don.

Mrs D. Laing
29 Harris Street
Hackett ACT 2062

Enclosed is a cheque towards future publication of the Courier which I very much enjoy receiving.

Yours faithfully,
Dawn.

J. Hanson
P.O. Box 279
Pialba
Hervey Bay 4655

We are glad to be back in the Bay. We have been living way out on a pineapple plantation where there were no shops, no doctor, but we had a lovely rented house with every convenience, ceiling fans, strip heaters on walls, an open fireplace and plenty of tank water. Our cup of tea tastes awful now we are in town but its beautiful to be opposite the sea and to be able to go for a swim.

Regards to all my mates.

Jack.

R. E. L. Archer
36 Soudan St
Toowong 4066

Thanks Jack and Delys for your Christmas card and the good wishes from Don Turton and Arch Campbell.

Glad you are all happy with the donation. By all means put it to the best use that the Committee feels is appropriate. This includes of course our 2/2 Commando Courier — it is a great little publication and is our Family

Communication Link.

Do hope Colin Doig and company will be able to come to 'the Port' this year. Tony Adams is very keen to come too but won't know for sure until fairly close to 'D' Day.

The undermentioned may be of interest to members:

In January 1944 the Companies having been redesignated 'Squadrons' were realigned into 2/2, 2/7 and 2/9 Cavalry Commando Regiments:

2/6 Regiment comprised of 2/7, 2/9 and 2/10 Squadrons, 2/7 Regiment comprised of 2/3, 2/5 and 2/6 Squadrons, and 2/9 Regiment comprised of 2/4, 2/11 and 2/12 Squadrons. 2/2 and 2/8 Squadrons remained unaligned while No. 1 Company had never been reformed.

Looking forward to hearing from you again next month Jack — cheers and beers.

Ron.

A. Friend
29 Rushton Street
Carnarvon 6701

A few lines to thank the members of our great Association for the best wishes and words of encouragement during my off period. I can now let you know that all is well with me, it's been four months since my heart attack and in that time I have gone from being allowed to wash up the dinner dishes to mowing the lawns again, and a prediction that I will see the year 2001. I've had to fly to Perth for all the specialist treatment (lost count of the flights). They found a few clogged arteries which they cleared or forced open with balloons — what next?

I am very happy to receive our life line (Courier) and to read of all the successful functions that have been organised for the gang. Great to read the old names that are so familiar, it seems only yesterday that we were all together.

Enclosed is a photo which may fit into Bob Smyth's Rogues Gallery (I would know my old boss Tom Nisbet anywhere from his photo).

Also enclosed is a donation — keep up the good work and best wishes to you all.

Albie.

P. Mantle
19 Arnold St
Allora 4362

Enclosed is something to help keep the wheels so splendidly turning.

These last 16 years I have lived in this quiet little town on the Darling Downs between Warwick and Toowoomba, alone, vegetating quietly.

I'm well back from New England Highway, there's no stream of traffic, and the noisiest things are the birds. No pollution, the air is so clear that it's like looking through a newly cleaned windscreen. From my front verandah I see thriving paddocks, and hills on the horizon. Some lovely cloud formations and glorious sunsets. I find it delightful.

Mind you, we have no footpaths except past the shops. We're not blessed with Woolworths, a Chinese take-away, not even a Lieut-Colonel Sanders, but we get along quite nicely and pay low rates.

The Council-run Library can tap into Brisbane resources, so I read widely.

Another main interest is cooking. Over the years I've acquired books on the foods and cooking of many many countries, and try them all out. Often do myself three course lunches and dinners, and I keep records of each new dish to see if it's worth repeating before the 21st century.

My day-to-day health is excellent. I'm 74 but don't feel a day over 73.

Abraham Lincoln said 'Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be' and I've decided to get a lot of fun out of my declining years.

Peter.

EDITOR: *Great to hear from you Peter and to know you are fit and well. Your home sounds like a little paradise.*

Mrs N. Hiatt
20 Highfield Ave
St Georges 5064

Enclosed is a donation to the Courier which I enjoy reading very much and I sincerely thank you for same.

Kind regards to all, and keep up the good work.

Nancy Hiatt.

T. G. Nisbet
54 Tuxen St
North Balwyn 3104

**HONORARY MEMBERSHIP —
MRS P. L. THATCHER**

At our Committee meeting of 4 February 1991 the above was elected an Honorary Member of our Association in recognition of her interest in our Unit's activities and also the good work she has done in the East Timorese

Community in all States. In addition, since her return from East Timor last year she has organised and sent trade manuals to East Timor technical schools to help with the training of East Timorese prospective tradesmen. I would appreciate if you would include her in our list of members.

Things are coming together in the organisation of our 50th Anniversary of the raising of the Unit. We look like having about 70 attending so it should be a reasonable function.

All the locals appear to be in good shape. Regards to all in the West.

Enclosed is a donation.

Tom.

R. Morris
53 Hilder St
Weston 2611

Herewith donation for Courier. I always first turn to the Rogues Gallery, it is good to read of old friends. May I wish all members health, wealth and prosperity in 1991.

The comradeship in the 2/2nd can only be equalled by that of my Unit, the Royal Marines. It has to be the best in Australia and I am proud to be a member.

Glad to note that Nancy Slade is on the mend. I try to pop in and see Jim and Joan Fenwick as often as possible. My time is very caught up with all my community work. My wife says she has to make an appointment to speak to me.

Hope to see you all in Port Macquarie in July.

Sincerely,
Ron.

M. R. Coles
26 Hereford St
Stockton 2295

A few lines to let you all know that all is well after my Barossa fight with the plonk bottle —and lost!

Enclosing a cheque for Courier. Thanks.

Cisco.

77 Cutler Village
Colooli Rd
Narrabeen N.S.W. 2101

Best wishes to all. I'll meet up with you at the N.S.W. reunion. I'll wear my name tag.

Cheers,

Allan Dixon.

Use the enclosed to defray some of my debt.

49 Cary St
Toronto
N.S.W. 2283

Cheerio for now. Regards,
Reg.

Dear Arch,

Enclosed is a donation for the Courier which I find is most enjoyable.

Yours faithfully,
Andy Beveridge.

R. Harrington
Box 35
Bolgart 6568

We once again welcome the Courier. It is always good to get news of old mates — some names come up that one has forgotten. One big hope is that all members of the Unit, be they active members or people who have drifted away, or some who possibly have never taken part, will see fit to join us in the anniversary reunion. It behoves us all, should we know of anyone who fits any of these categories, to contact them and encourage them to attend.

It is sad that our dear old Section mate Nip should pass on. We hope he didn't have to suffer too much. I have very vivid memories of Nip at Betano. When the malaria was rampant at about 2.30, Nip would have the skipping rope out and skip away until 3 o'clock and then down he would go and shiver and shake for the next hour or so, and I can vouch for the fact that he was a very difficult patient. It seemed to fall to my lot, not only to cook and provide for these guys, but to try and doctor them as well. The main pain seemed to revolve around a severe back ache and remembering that my sister used to get similar problems in civvie days and drank a lot of hot water, and that being the only experience I had to fall back on, and that being the only thing available, it seemed to be the logical treatment. Of course, it never did occur to me that sister always had this problem at about the same time each month and it had no relationship whatever with malaria. Still, I tried. Tom Martin probably remembers that hot water too.

I must apologise for not getting to the memorial service. Dot had gone with her two sisters to Hong Kong and the morning of the service I woke up with the flu and felt so weak that I wasn't game to do the trip on my own. One doesn't like conceding to age too much but has to be sensible as well.

Had a ring from an old Bolgart friend suggesting a game of bowls in an open day at Goomalling shortly with Ralph Finklestein. That should be a great pleasure, but I will need to perform a lot better than the last time I played there. The green was running at about 17 seconds and my bowls kept going into the ditch.

SEND OFF FOR VERNA and ERNIE BINGHAM

Recently Vida and I travelled down to Wandering, our old home town, to spend a most pleasant evening at a district send off to Verna and Ernie and family. To non-locals, it is where Geoff Marsh comes from!

The hall is one of the best and most modern I have seen and from the amount of food and farewell gifts weighing down the tables, it was not difficult to gauge the esteem local members hold them in. There must have been nigh on two hundred adults and children present and office bearers from five local groups — Lions, C.W.A., the Shire, etc. extended farewells and good wishes for their future. It certainly made us feel proud that we and our family have been associated with them for so long.

Verna and Bing have a delightful new home in a lovely area close to the ocean at Safety Bay.

AN APPEAL FROM PETER EPPS

Mr Peter Epps
P.O. Box 39
Hillarys W.A. 6025

Dear Members,

In reference to Mr King's letter in the February 1991 Courier in which he states that the nominal roll in Col Doig's book was incorrect in some places, I would like to state that this is the very reason why I have continuously requested members to forward their service details to me so that I can make sure that the information is correct. Whilst some people have responded to my request, I have had to obtain my information through hours of research (which is not always successful), and Col's book which gave me quite a few names that I did not have.

I am in the process of compiling a full nominal roll book which will consist of a photograph of each member, with service details (if known) underneath. For this I need an **ORIGINAL** photograph (please not a photocopy), preferably in uniform, of all A.I.F. members who served with the unit at anytime. All original photographs will be returned. I am also having some difficulty in obtaining photographs of members who died during service, and I would appreciate any help that can be given to me.

ALL DETAILS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE 30th JUNE, 1991. Please understand that if I do not receive the photographs and details by then I will have to go to print with what details I have, which could mean that some members' details may be omitted.

Hoping to hear from you soon.

Regards,

Peter Epps.

March 1, 1991.

CHANCE FOR YOU TO HELP

THE SIR EDWARD DUNLOP MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Committee has decided that donations to this Organisation should be left on a personal basis.

Sir Edward, affectionately known as 'Weary' Dunlop, gives his opinion of this worthy cause

"The impact of the stress and strain of war upon the physical and mental health of veterans and upon the ageing processes, is a vital area of research with ultimately immense application to the community as a whole. I have agreed to act as Patron to this Foundation because I support totally its aims and objectives. Medical research is an area of great need."

E. E. Dunlop

Sir Bernard Callinan is Chairman of the Foundation.

Donations can be forwarded and information obtained from The Secretary, Box 87A GPO, Melbourne, Vic. 3001. Donations \$2 and over qualify as taxation deductions.

'HMAS ARMIDALE, THE SHIP THAT HAD TO DIE'

A complete book has been written on this piece of history by Frank Walker. His leader says 'Armidale was sunk off Timor in December 1942 due to a tragic error of judgement back in Darwin. It cost two lives but it produced an act of sublime heroism and one of the great sea survival stories of the war.'

Quite a few of our members could be interested in this story which surrounds the Timor campaign.

The book can be ordered from Kingfisher Press, P.O. Box 71, Budgewoi, NSW 2262, enclosing a cheque or money order for \$25, \$20 for the book and \$5 for postage and packaging.

DES LILYA'S STORY

Via Dave Dexter

On January 16th, 1941, I sailed from Darwin as a reinforcement to the 2/2 Independent Company which was stationed somewhere in the N.E.I. After three days at sea, we arrived at Koepang, the capital of Dutch Timor. Our party for the 2/2 A.I.C. consisted of 50 ORs and 3 officers. We were immediately transferred to a Dutch gunboat, and after half a day wandering through the dusty, yet somehow picturesque street of the small capital, we sailed for Dili the capital of Portuguese Timor.

On arriving the following day, we moved straight out to the Dili drome and I was taken on by truck to Three Spur camp. There we were made into "D" platoon, and after about a week we moved on to occupy Railco. Here we stayed about 3 weeks digging A/A defences and building Water Pipe Camp. Then a sub-section of us with Mr Laffy in charge, moved on to make the first staging camp at Villa Marie.

Here, our fine leader became deeply infatuated with a Portuguese by the name of Brendalina de Silva. But on the night of February 19-20th, news came through that the Japs had landed at Dili in force, and our movements were much faster from then on. Major Spence came through and detailed us all our jobs and patrols.

Once again with Laffy in command we set out but this time we kept to the hills and after two days hard going we came to Atsabe. Here we procured horses and moved to Bonbonaro and were given excellent treatment by the Controller, Sousa Santos and his pretty wife. Here Mr Laffy told us of his plan of going to Suai and procuring a boat and heading for Australia. But he changed his mind and we left for Memo and on arriving at Memo he said that he was not going on with it.

It was then that Sgt. Freeman, Pte. J. Keenahan, Pte. Coles and myself decided that we would go to Atapopo and take a native prahu to Koepang in the hope that we could tell the whole location of our present area, as we had no communications at that time. From Memo we travelled a day and came to Rusa. It was about 3 hours out of there when we met a Javanese, Sgt. van Ligton, who informed us that Atamboea had been taken by the Nips, and we returned, accompanied by him, to Memo.

BOB SMYTH'S ROGUES GALLERY — SEQUENCE 16



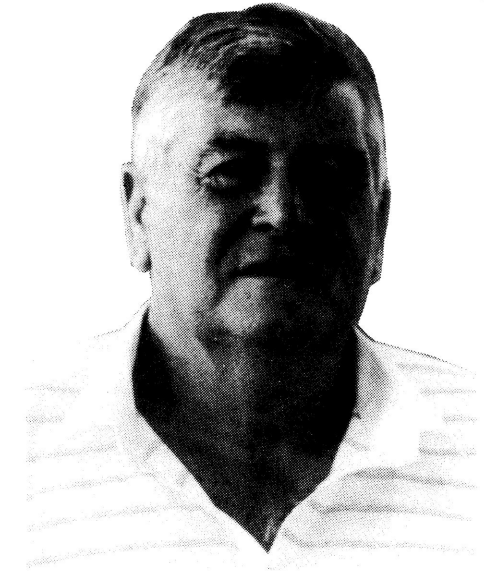
Bluey Bone



Fred Broadhurst



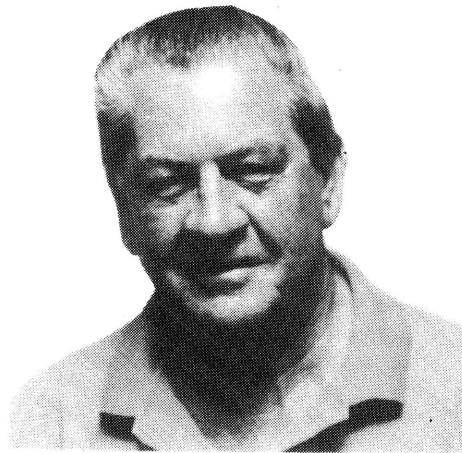
Jack Peattie



Tony Bowers



Jack Hartley



Frank Sharp



M.A.M. Smith



Angus MacLachlan

All who walk these fields and halls of
Valour, in Reverence
tread softly, lest
Hallowed
these Men have
you disturb the
resting place
so Heroically earned

~ and remember

Profoundly
price They have

Let us never
"Lest We
without a sincere

meaning of Their only Spiritual
contact with those who Deeply mourn
Their Passing

the Ultimate
paid for our
Freedom ~
quote the phrase
"Forget"

and Dutiful

R. N. Splatt VX 90589
2/2 Ind Co.

7 Pocombe 4722090
103. Fd Bty

R. N. Splatt
C/- 235 Grenfell St
Adelaide 5000

wrote the foregoing, designed the
presentation of it and had my friend Nick
Pincome (Vietnam Veteran) execute the
calligraphy.

All the best to all members.

Ray.

I have been concerned on several occasions
when the phrase 'Lest We Forget' has been
quoted, that it has not been said with the
fullest meaning so, with this thought in mind, I

From then on, I will more or less skip through my journey on Timor. We went to Tidlemar, then to Mocuttera, Bobonaro and at Bobonaro there were only two of us left, Sgt. Freeman and myself. Our next stop was Mape and then to Alas. On that trip we met Pte. Larney and Pte. Webb at Alas. Sgt. van Ligton joined our band again and we then proceeded through Fato, Berlu, Beeke, Vikeke, Vatahudo, Borgia to Laga. Here we stayed a few days and learnt that a prahu from Kisar was at Kon, a small bay at the end of Timor. We obtained a car and boarded the prahu at night, and at dawn we landed on Kisar. Sgt. van Ligton stayed behind on Kisar when we left.

Kisar was a small but pretty island and the people treated us very well. After three weeks there we were able to obtain a boat of about 25ft to take us to Saumlakki. Our first attempt to leave the island failed, as we were driven back by a storm.

When we first landed at Kisar we immediately sent a message to Australia to Melbourne, in fact it was worded as follows:

"2/40 BTN SURRENDERED (.) 2/2 AIC STILL FIGHTING ON (.) MEDICAL SUPPLIES FINISHED (.) FOOD FINISHED (.) NEED HELP NOW (.) URGENTLY (.)"

Sgt. FREEMAN."

And we were rewarded on the second night following the message by hearing over the radio that news was received through a small radio station in the N.E.I. that the Australian troops in Timor were still fighting on.

Our object achieved, we decided on reaching Australia and bringing help back as soon as possible.

We made another attempt on the following day, and more by the cleverness of our crew, which consisted of four natives, than by good luck, in three days we landed on Leti. This island was even smaller than Kisar and had a small population whose main occupation was fishing and roaming from one island to another. If you look on the map you will find it is one of a small group of three islands, separated from one another by about a mile of water. We stayed on Leti a day and then with the tide we lifted anchor and were on our way again.

It took us half a day to get on to the shallow reef surrounding Moe and here we had our first shot of bad luck. On striking a hidden rock below the surface, we saw our rudder torn away, and we were forced to aid our crew by diving down and trying to tie our rudder back on with strips of bamboo. We succeeded just before sunset and so we downed sail and propelled the boat along the reef with the aid of long bamboos. It was a fairly hard job and I was relieved when we came to a house on a

small beach. So we dropped anchor and slept in a soft bed given to us by the Island Headman.

On the following morning we shoved off again, but we did not make much headway as owing to squally rain our backsail became too heavy and ripped down the centre. We then pulled into shore and repaired it. Next day the weather was again favourable and we cleared the island and made a short run into the island of Lakor. This island was a coral island and also very small. We were able to procure some good meat and we shot a few sea birds which helped us greatly on our next jump, as we had been living on corn and coconuts. Here also we were forced to beach our boat and scrape all the barnacles and seaweed, etc. off the keel and rudder.

Our first attempt to leave the island was a failure and our backsail was torn completely in half about 6 miles offshore. So by coming back with the aid of the jib and the strong waves and current, we hit a reef and were forced to wade ashore, getting natives in their canoes to tow our boat back to the bay.

We again patched up both boat and sail and using the bamboo poles we were able to get clear of Lakor.

The wind was favourable and after 4 days we were sailing over the huge reef that surrounded Luang. We awaited the incoming tide and landed that night.

Luang was formed in the shape of a large mountain with hardly any flat ground on it whatsoever. The population was small and their main occupation was fishing and pearl shell diving, but the latter had ceased since the Japanese schooners had left the area. They are a tall race and excellent seamen.

The Controller was a native from Amboina and he treated us with the utmost courtesy and was very sorry to see us leave. He gave us a guide to sail us through the reef and with a strong wind our small craft travelled at a fair pace. We had no intentions of putting in at Sermata, a long narrow high strip of land which at the time was very badly off for food, but on having sailed half the length of it, bad weather once again drove us into the shore.

As soon as the weather cleared up we made another start for Babar, a long heart shaped island. After sailing for approximately four days we struck an early morning calm, and while idling lazily in the deep water a school of sharks started to play around the boat. We had an old chicken leg and fixing it on to a bamboo our crew caught two of them, and although the situation seemed far from pleasant, it provided us with some fresh meat.

In the afternoon of that same day on nearing Babar I noticed a rather large sailing boat leaving the island and approaching us. It was using motors and a jib. Previous to this, we had heard that there were some Fifth Columnists running away on the best boat from Saumlakki. So we decided to board their boat on the high seas. When it was fairly close to us, I gave the order to turn about and we raced after it. It was a boat of 60ft. so our small boat gained swiftly, and when only 100ft. from it, a man sitting on a chair on the deck with a tommy gun levelled at us, commanded us to come aboard one at a time. So the position was reversed and on boarding we found that he was a Dutch Intelligence Officer who had come straight from Darwin on board the Somoa, which was the name of the boat. He gave us 50 guilders and a packet of Australian tobacco and told us that if we stayed on Babar at the village of Tapa which was the capital of the Island, he would send the Somoa back to pick us up.

That same night we pulled in to Tapa and woke the police up who looked after our needs and brought the Controller before us. Larney and Webb ran amok on some wine and so we sent them on to Saumlakki with the agreement that if they were able to obtain a boat there they were to come back for us and if we got one, we were to take it on to them.

After they left, Freeman and myself made a tour of the island and at Tutuwawang, a village at the back of the island, we found that the Controller had been robbing the churches and taxing the people for his own foolish ideas, whenever he felt fit. So on our return to Tapa we had it out with him and he offered to put us in jail. He sent four policemen to get us but we turned tables on him and nearly put him and his harmless police in jail.

The Arab boat that had taken Larney and Webb to Saumlakki had returned and the skipper told us that they had both gone to Darwin by an Australian lugger that came in the day they arrived.

Then we left everything and ordered him to take us straight back. He at first declined but we had a way of persuading him. So we said goodbye to the isle of Babar and its notorious controller and sailed for Marsela where we took on water and headed for the open seas again. Once again we struck heavy seas but the Arab boat was strong, although small. We had a native woman and child on board and the woman with the crew, asked me to lodge a complaint to the Controller about their overlord.

In about four days we stood off Selaru. The natives of this island were hostile and we were forced to put a few holes in their canoes before we headed for Tanimbar of which

Saumlakki was the capital. We were now sailing down between small coral and mangrove islands and we were greatly relieved when, after a rough voyage, we landed on the pier at Saumlakki. There was a small Dutch force of Javanese soldiers, 13 all told, with an Ambonese, Sgt. Tahia in charge of them. A Dutch radio officer, and a Dutch Chief of Police also were there. They all treated us well and we were told that an Australian boat would be in in about a week.

This news was something to rejoice over, but it was far too good to be true for on our fourth day at 4.30am we were awakened by a native who was banging violently on the door. He said that two Australian cruisers were lying off the pier. I walked down and saw two cruisers but I told them they were Japs. As we watched 6 boats were lowered and all we could hear was the dip, dip of their oars as they came towards the pier. Sgt. Tahia had his men in dug-in positions covering the 500 yard pier.

The Japs came down the pier after having landed at the end of it four abreast with their rifles slung over their shoulder. When the column was about 150 yards from Sgt. Tahia he ordered them to stop in many languages and then opened up with his twelve tommy guns and while the tommy guns reloaded, the Lewis gunner opened up.

Freeman and I were back a little from this trying to get a tommy gun each. The cruisers then were using their searchlights and six inch guns plus point five machine guns, and the situation was rather sticky. The radio officer raced up to Freeman and I and said we had to go with him to try and get a message through. We then had the job of forcing our way through about 1 1/4 miles of screaming Chinese and natives.

The searchlights picked us a few times and were followed by shells. On reaching the wireless station we managed to get out S.O.S. once before the wires were cut.

The firing at Saumlakki had then ceased and so we wrecked the set and carried the magnetos away and took them into the swamps. We headed for our R.V. which was quite a fair distance away. After trudging through swampy jungle for half a day we came to the R.V. Here we waited until Sgt. Tahia and his men joined us. Our party now consisted of Freeman, Sgt. Tahia, the Dutch Controller, the Dutch Chief of Police, the Controller's manservant and seven soldiers plus myself.

At the R.V. we stopped long enough to eat a fine handful of red rice and then pushed on as fast as possible. One of the Javanese soldiers had a piece of schrapnel in his back so travel was slow. Continuing on after dark we had to light torches of half wet wood. We then

reached the village of Makatiandol at 10.30pm tired, and owing to lack of boots my feet were sore. This village was at the end of the track across the island. Next night, we left by a large canoe and sailed up to the next villages. Our only danger now was from the sea and air. Every day, two Nip single-seater planes flew up and down the coast. I had one of my many attacks of malaria here.

Here Sgt. Tahia left us to go to the island of Larat on a reconnaissance. Meanwhile the rest of the party sailed to a small island called Teinman, on which lived an old German who had served time with the Darwin mounted police. His island was only about a mile square and he used it for a copra plantation. He knew nothing much of what was going on outside.

Sgt. Tahia returned to us then accompanied by about 12 Javanese soldiers from the Kei Island who were stationed at Tual. The Japs had attacked them the same night they had attacked us, but with eight cruisers instead of two.

We planned an attack on Larat which we still believed had a few Japs on it. This time we had a two-masted boat of about 30 feet. We planned to land at dawn but fate was against us. We hit a reef about midnight and leaking badly we had to wait for the tide.

We landed on Larat at 10am and stormed the town. Not a Jap was in sight, so we proceeded to haul the lugger off the beach. The job took us two days. When we left, we took the controller and his wife and son with us because two spies had already left to inform the Japs at Saumlakki of our stay there.

Our new boat was much faster, and for the first time we seemed to be really sailing. It was a boat of about 45 feet and 10ft beam with two masts. We dropped anchor off the island of Vordata. Here we had to wait for one Javanese soldier who had been left behind on Tanimbar. He turned up after 2 days and we fixed all our water casks and that was our main worry as we had plenty of food brought from the Kei Is.

The people of little Vordata wished us well and we set sail for Australia.

Our first mishap was off the west point of the island where a huge wave nearly overturned our heavily laden boat which now had 33 persons on it. We circled the island, and with half our water knocked overboard by the seas,

we headed down the east coast of Tanimbar and hoped for the best. Luck was with us and as we watched Tanimbar fade away, all of us saw a convoy of ships going towards Saumlakki. The seas were kind and we made fair headway. We were very cramped, but that was the least of our worries.

The Dutch radio officer and Sgt. Tahia took charge of the navigation, using an oil compass and a school atlas.

It took us eight days to sight the coast of what we guessed was Melville Island and we sailed along the coast heading west for two days until we struck Austey Strait which divides Melville Island from Bathurst Island. As we turned into the mouth of the strait, a Hudson bomber flew over us. We waved and shouted like mad and it circled us twice, gave us a wave and then heded in the direction of Darwin. At this spot we had run aground on a sandbar and an Australian waved to us from the shore and in an old dugout canoe brought us a sugar bag of turtles eggs which were most welcome. He offered to guide us through the channel to Fort Dundas. We lifted off the sandbar with the tide and at sunset we landed at Fort Dundas, where there was a missionary. He gave us a real Australian welcome and sent a native runner to the radio station at Bathurst.

The next day we set sail down the Strait and after grounding a number of times we reached the radio station. A Moth plane came in and took the Dutch radio officer straight to Darwin. The next morning they sent an old trawler manned by the navy, which we all boarded and it towed our lugger to Darwin. We were met by Intelligence Officers and all sent to Darwin Hospital.

Freeman and myself had made notes of everything important on the different islands and it proved quite useful.

We offered to lead troops back to Timor, but it was of no avail.

The Javanese and their native friends left us and we remained in hospital until we returned to our Company. Larvey and Webb less fortunate, had been take to jail for causing a disturbance on Babar.

And so ends my storey of a trip which taught me many things.

L/Cp. D. L. Lillya.

A 50 YEAR MIRACLE

Surviving members of the original 7 Section on Timor are now very conscious of the old saying 'miracles do happen.' It all came to light in a most unusual and unbelievable way and the writer, Archie Campbell, will have difficulty in doing justice to the story.

For ages, and in three states, investigations were made to track down some of the relatives of mates we lost. Some were known here immediately after the war, but in the main we were bereft of clues.

Just prior to our Commemoration Service last year I had a call from the son of Ernie and Marie Evans. He had seen a Red Double Diamond on a book I had given my ear specialist to read and it had been left in the surgery waiting room. The young man asked the specialist how he had come by it and asked for my phone number and then contacted me.

It turned out his mother Marie was a sister of Charlie Stanton, one of my boys lost on Timor. I had carried a photo of Marie around for ages from 1942, then post-war to Sydney, Melbourne and back to Perth over a period of nine years. I had extracted it from Charlie's belongings, thinking it would be nice to return it to her. With no luck in contacting her I put it in the old oak chest and ultimately it disappeared.

I got in touch with the Evans family and we spoke at length. They were delighted to meet someone who knew what had happened. The whole family, including in-laws, came to our Commemoration Service and produced a photo of Marie. It was the identical photo I had carried for so long. What an emotional moment it was, best of all it was shared by Keith Hayes, Ron Dook, Peter Alexander and Ted Monk, all that remains of the original 7 Section.

That was an amazing situation which took 50 years to happen. But, on the very same day that the Evans family got in touch with me, Jim Smailes phoned to tell me he had a call from a Mrs May Mansfield about his book of poems which had a write up in the local hills paper. May was the sister of 7 Section's Sgt Gordon Chiswell. She had looked for years to see if anyone knew Gordon and what had happened to him. Jim visited the dear lady. That was a grand action Jim, and with such a positive result. I phoned her that day and what an

emotional phone call it was, the strain of a 50 year wait, she said, lifted in a flash. All she wanted was to see me or any of the boys. May is the oldest in the family, into her eighties and a widow. Keith Hayes and I went up to her home in Lesmurdie and had lunch with her and to see three people with tears in their eyes most of the time both with sadness and joy, was something to behold.

We are all now firm friends, first the Stanton family, now the Chiswell family, with the 2/2nd Commando Association having gained some great admirers. They all maintain they will celebrate our 50th Anniversary with great gusto.

Fortunately I had kept a diary on Timor and was able to put it into book form with the help of Keith Hayes and we gave the Stanton and Chiswell families copies to serve as a memory of Charlie and Gordon. All the boys of 7 Section agree that it has been a fantastic happening and what joy it has brought to both families.

Keith and I have been busy posting books all over Australia so as no one would feel left out. It was a labour of love and our thanks to God for making it all happen. The 50th year of our formation will also be a miracle year of a grand reunion with the families of Charlie and Gordon and their relatives right across Australia.

Photographs of both boys accompany this story, many who served on Timor will remember them. Along with a lot of other 2/2 personnel, the words 'Lest We Forget' apply with force to Charlie Stanton and Gordon Chiswell, fine soldiers, real men, great mates.

Archie Campbell
7 Section Officer — Timor.

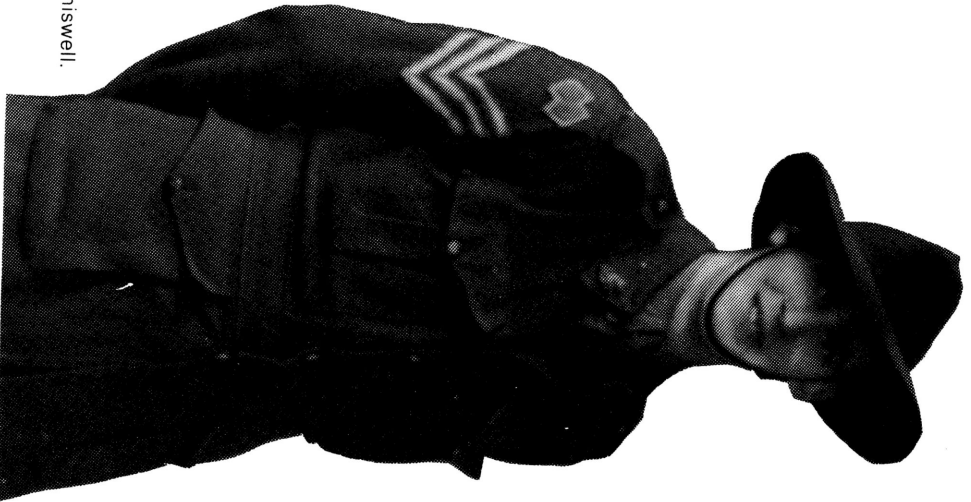
MANDURAH HOLIDAY RESORT

The Fifth Military District Army Holiday Resort, Mandurah, offers comfortable, low cost holiday accommodation in a popular and

A 50 YEAR MIRACLE



Charlie Stanton



Gordon Chiswell.

relaxing location. The units are situated at 14 Beam Road and 111 Ormsby Terrace, Mandurah.

Retired service personnel and Legacy widows are eligible to book into the Resort under the Army Booking Priority System. This system gives preference to serving Army members during the school holiday periods but leaves dates outside these periods open.

At present there are vacancies from March to June 1991, with the exception of Easter and school holidays.

The accommodation comprises:

14 Beam Road — 3 x 2 bedroom flats with sleeping accommodation of 6. 1 x 3 bedroom flat with sleeping accommodation for 8.

111 Ormsby Tce — 2 x 3 bedroom flats with sleeping accommodation for 8.

Each flat is fully furnished and self contained with all kitchenware, cooking facilities, beds, pillows and blankets provided. You only need to bring linen, towels, tea towels, toiletries, cleaning items and food. Extras provided with each unit are colour television, gas barbecue and bicycles.

The tariffs are: 2 bedroom flats \$120 per week. Casual rate \$24 per night. 3 bedroom flats \$140 per week. Casual rate \$28 per night.

If any members are interested please phone the Manager of the Resort, MR JIM SPENCE (09) 537 1086.

W.W.C.P.

HARRY HOLDER is in the throes of a bad spin and has been through a fair bit of hell. He is in "The Lodges" at Osborne Park Hospital. If you are thinking of visiting him, please ring first as he may not be available. Maisie has been a real stalwart and tremendous support to Harry. Our prayers are for your quick and complete recovery Harry, and our love goes to you both. God bless.

PETER BARDEN suffered a collapse at home on January 23 and was taken by ambulance to St John of God Hospital where he spent six days. He is now at home recuperating and taking it easy. He is such an effervescent character that you would not know he had a problem. Best of luck Peter and our love to Joan.

BRUSS FAGG has to get around with the use of a walking stick because of the wog that got in his right leg in Timor, although his health generally is good. He is as bright as a button and right up with everything. Good luck old timer. Keep the chin up.

'SPECIAL AND SECRET'

Refer December Courier

Members wishing to obtain this book are asked to contact Lesley McKay at Double View, NSW on (02) 327 1354 or write to her at 401 New South Head Road, Double View NSW 2027. The cost of the book is \$28.95 plus postage.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

McLAUGHLIN, Mr J.

Jim

54P Meakers Way
Girrawheen 6064

SPENCER, Mr J.

Jack

C/- Murray Pow

Lot 225 Corncrake Crt
Southern River 6110

WELLER, Mr E.

Eric and Margaret

136 Kempton St

Bluff Point 6530

(099) 23 2287

TEAGUE, Mrs N. J. Teague

Nancy

Unit 50

Cardinal Freeman Village

Clissold St

Ashfield 2131

ADDITION

THATCHER, Mrs P. L.

6 Park Rd

Middle Park 3206

DONATIONS

Joan Scott, Ralph Conley, Aldyth Laffer, Joyce Chapman, Dulcie Gay, Alma Moore, Bruce Poynton, Bill Walsh, Gloria Wilcox, Beryl Smith, Ted Cholerton, Gerry Slade, Gordon Watts, Don Young, Cisco Coles, Albie Friend, Ron Morris, Tom Nisbet, Peter Barden, Nancy Teague, Nancy Hiatt, Peter Mantle, Ernie and Marie Evans, Andy Beveridge.

STOP PRESS

THE VICTORIAN JUBILEE SAFARI CELEBRATION

What a superb event! Truly marvellous celebration of such a momentous occasion!

The organisation of the highest possible value, the venue at Phillip Island absolutely splendid, the weather at its most kind. Surely fate or whatever looks after these wonderful occasions must have been on the organisers' shoulders.

The celebration opened with a steady flow of participants arriving at the Sea Horse Motel apparently most eager to part with their hard earned 'brass' and get their instructions. Greetings were the order of the day after the settling in period.

The evening took the form of a splendid barbecue at the Sea Horse Motel, with David and Thais Brown attending to the Sausage and Steak Sizzle and plenty of the fluid that cheers to loosen the tongues. Organiser Leith Cooper gave instructions as to future events and announced that Keith Dignum had donated \$30 for the purchase of drinks for the evening, which had been expended on champagne for the ladies. President Tom Nisbet thanked our worthy chefs for their terrific effort and the imbibing steadily continued. A great start to the Jubilee celebrations.

Wednesday saw the entourage on the way to Wilsons Promontory and Tidal River for the Memorial Service. The transportation went without a hitch and arrival was well on time, with the old Prom trainees trying their very best to define where the various camps existed. The barbecue lunch provided by the Bus Company was excellent. This was followed by the form up of members under the S.M. for the day, Jack Fox. The march to the Memorial would have done 'Dad's Army' proud.

Jack Fox introduced Sir Bernard Callinan who gave the Memorial Oration which told of the formation of the training area in 1941 by the British Mission. The Last Post and Reveille was sounded and a most impressive ceremony was concluded. This ceremony was watched by our good ladies, a great number of tourists and countless thousands of seagulls, all apparently enthralled. Again, everything went off with aplomb. The evening was spent mainly at the R.S.L. Club.

Thursday was to be the day of the year for the Victorian Branch — the day of the Celebration Dinner at the Continental Hotel. After pre-prandial drinks everyone assembled in the

dining room. The meal was excellently catered and well served. Norm Tillet, as Toast Master, was in top form. The toast list started with 'Remembrance' by the President of Phillip Island R.S.L., 'Grace' was said by Leith Cooper and Jack Fox proposed the 'Loyal Toast.' President Tom Nisbet welcomed guests and members in a most stirring speech and later followed up with the Toast of the Day, 'The Unit.' Tom traced our formation and our deeds in the field. Col Doig made the response and specially thanked the Victorian members for their efforts in the Unit and to the Association with most special reference to Harry Botterill and the late Bert Tobin. He also gave an account of many of the more momentous events in the long life of our great Association. This was enthusiastically received. Alan Luby handled the Toast to Absent Friends with his usual meticulous precision and drew special attention to those who had paid the supreme sacrifice and those who had passed on since demobilisation. This was responded to by the President of the Victorian Branch of the Commando Association who was a member of the 2/6th Squadron.

It has to be admitted that this was the Dinner to be truly remembered, and ended the formal side of this momentous three day celebration. Many members once again retired to the R.S.L. Club for further good fellowship.

Thanks must be extended to all the venues at which participants were billeted and to the Continental Hotel for their excellent catering. This Celebration will go down in a big way in the Annals of the History of our Association.

A full list of participants is appended.

Col Doig.

Bert and Sylvia Bache, Harry and Olive Botterill, Eddie and Dorothy Bourke, Fred Boradhurst and sister Phyllis, Bluey and Mary Bone, Alec and Beryl Boast, David and Thais Brown, Rolf Baldwin, Sir Bernard and Lady Naomi Callinan, Jock and Fay Campbell, Arch and Dawn Claney, Bill and Coral Coker, Leith and Marj Cooper, Grace Davies, Denny and June Dennis, Colin Doig, Jack and Julie Fox, Nina Grachan, Alf and Gwenda Harper, Win Humphreys, Peter Krause, Bert King, Alan and Edith Luby, Roy and Joyce Martin, Max and Noreen Miller, Ken and Margaret Monk, Peter and Ethel McCracken, Lionel and Elsie Newton, Tom Nisbet, Bill and Margaret Peterson, John and Cath Roberts, Jack Renehan, Frank and Muriel Shaw, Bruce Smith, Maurie Smith, Bob Snowdon, John and Shirley Southwell, Max and Patsy Thatcher, Norm and Fran Tillet, Bill Tucker, Wilma Tobin, George and Dorothy Veitch, Mick Wellings, Sep and Monica Wilson.