



# **2/2 COMMANDO COURIER**

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

President T. Monk. Secretary J. Carey. Treasurer J. Poynton

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**Vol. 110**

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**Price 1c**

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## **COMING EVENTS**

### **Annual General Meeting**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 1995**

**At 11 am at Anzac Club**

Members are asked to try and make this meeting.  
Refreshments and Snacks to follow.

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## **ANZAC DAY**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 1995**

Assemble in our usual place in St. George's Terrace at 9.30 am.

March off at 10.00 am.

Get together after the Parade  
at Airways Hotel, 195 Adelaide Terrace

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## N.S.W. News

Our Christmas luncheon held at Dee Why R.S.L. Club Bistro on Saturday, 3 December, was an extremely pleasant function and, being so close to public transport makes it so much better for those who wish to enjoy the festive spirit. In all, 31 members, wives, widows and friends joined in this happy event.

We were joined for a while by Club President Ted Jackson, an old friend in both service and civvy life to Arthur Littler, who also 'shouted' some wines for our table.

For special effort, I must mention Harry and Amyce Handicott and Joy Smith who travelled down from Newcastle to participate. You each receive the 'Gold Star on the Forehead' award! All in all, a delightful day.

In August last year I had a letter from Danny Daniels, Secretary A.C.T. Branch, asking the possibility of obtaining copies of Commando Unit Histories for presentation to various Australian Government and/or Defence Service organisations. The Association Committee took up the idea with strong support, especially as the 4th, 5th and 6th Squadron publications were hot off the press.

Following discussions it was arranged that I would attend the A.C.T. Christmas luncheon on 22 November, at which various presentations would be made and then proceed to the National Parliamentary Library to present these, and 2/2 Squadron historical volumes compiled by Colin Doig, Sir Bernard Callinan, Christopher Wray and Jim Smalles.

By the efforts of Danny Daniels a framed tapestry containing our Unit colour patches was presented to W.O.I Frank Cahill for the Australian Defence Academy.

We also presented a replica colour patch shaped shield to the Senior N.C.O's Ness at the A.D.A. thanks to the skill and effort of Fred Janvrin, and later to their counterparts at Duntroon Military College.

These were, and are presented on behalf of Commandos Australia wide, and **not** just on behalf of any individual Association or Group.

I must express appreciation to those who made books available, and in particular to Andy Pirie who, when he found out I was going to Canberra by train, phoned and said 'No you're not, you're coming with me by car!' and his company was most welcome. He did his own presentations in his inimitable manner and was wonderful company. Thanks Andy

We also visited the Australian War Memorial Historical Section and if anyone has any memorabilia left and wondering what to do with it, contact Ron Gilchrist who will be only too pleased to look it over and advise.

We also met up with a most interesting bloke named Ken White who lives in a library of books with his wife, a bed and a stove at Isabella Plains, A.C.T. Ken would have probably the best collection of military literature anywhere in Australia. If anyone has enquiries give me a call for his address and/or phone number.

One final thing — we have listed for 'Australia Remembers' our Mini Safari at Young over the weekend 10, 11, 12 March 1995 for our 2/2, 50th Anniversary event and trust we will have a good roll up to enjoy it.

Good health for 95.

Alan Luby

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## COMING EVENTS

### 2/2 COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

10, 11, 12 MARCH, 1995

#### MINI SAFARI

will be held at YOUNG, N.S.W.

Contact Betty Craig — (063) 82 1895  
if attending

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## VICTORIAN NEWS

Our Christmas luncheon was held at Patterson River Country Club on a very warm day, Monday 5th December and was attended by 39 members who enjoyed a lovely luncheon. Present were - Alex and Beryl Boast, Bluey Bone, Harry and Olive Botterill, Eddie and Dot Bourke, Fred and Mavis Broadhurst, Leith and Marg. Cooper, Paul Costelloe, Don and Joan Fryer, Nina Grachan, Alf and Gwenda Harper, Win Humphreys, Wal and Bet Kerr, Bruce and Lorraine McLaren, Ken and Margaret Monk, Tom Nisbet, Bill and Pat Petersen, John and Cath Roberts and son Craig down from Darwin, Bill and Eileen Sharp, John and Shirley Southwell, Norm and Fran Tillet, George and Dot Veitch, Jack Fox. Apologies from Jock and Faye Campbell, Julie Fox, Dulcie Gray, Grace Davies, Peter McCracken, Jack Renehan, George and Dot Robinson, Wilma Tobin, Sep and Nonnie Wilson, Chris Wray, Sir Bernard and Lady Callinan, Pat Thatcher, Bill Tucker, Rolf 'Baldy' Baldwin. Grace Davies and Peter McCracken have been in hospital lately but coming good, Dulcie Gray is very ill, Julie Fox is in a nursing home, Wilma Tobin was attending the War Widows Christmas luncheon, Chris Wray is in Perth at present, Pat Thatcher is overseas, Bill Tucker has had a

small operation on one of his eyes but otherwise is OK.

We wish all our members throughout Australia a very Happy Christmas and a sickness free year in 1995.

**Harry Botterill**

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## CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

The attendance of 67 at Anzac House, Perth on Friday, December 2nd exceeded all expectations. Len Bagley, as M.C., welcomed members and visitors from near and far and delivered messages and apologies from many who were unable to attend. Dick Darrington was there, having recently returned from an extended overseas holiday taking in many parts of England, Ireland, Belgium, Germany, France and his favourite, Austria and the alps. Although happy to be home he is already looking forward to a trip to Canada next year. Jack Hasson and his family, Kaye, Ken and Rhonda, Fred and Robyn were there, Dusty Studdy brought his sister Joy Kelly along, Betty Hopkins brought good wishes from brother, Peter Barden who was staying with her while down from Geraldton having treatment for his leg problems. There was a special welcome for Jean and Mick Morgan who have not been able to be present for some time. Apologies from Jim McLaughlin, Joan Burns, Ron and Nan Dook, Ralph and Eve Finkelstein, Spriggy McDonald, Gordon and Eve Rowley, Clarrie and Grace Turner, Dot Boyland, Lew Thompson. Ted Loud was in hospital and sent his best wishes. Interstate messages came from Alan Luby, Kath Press and Harry Handicott.

The scene was one of total enjoyment as old friends (and a few new ones) mingled and talked of many things and there was, of course, much laughter as always. May this state of affairs continue for many years.

The Anzac House caterers excelled themselves and we sat down to a delicious festive meal with all the trimmings.

President, Ted Monk conveyed Christmas and New Year greetings to everyone before presenting Tom Foster with his Life Membership badge. Tom was obviously thrilled and expressed his pleasure and appreciation with a few well chosen words.

**All 2/2 Association functions are good and this was one of the best.**

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## Mandurah 2-2s Christmas Luncheon

Another happy get-together on December 9th when 37 members and friends gathered at the Mandurah R.S.L. Sub-Branch. This proved to be an excellent venue and the tables had been made to look very special with artistic floral decorations by Joy Chatfield.

Pre-luncheon drinks and happy talk were followed by a delicious 3-course meal and it was quite apparent that a good time was had by all.

Christmas greetings came from a lot of members but there was a special one from Isabel and Pat MacDonald from Moura in Queensland, 20 miles east of Rockhampton, and in the midst of a severe drought. Isabel is the sister of Gordon Chiswell who was lost in the Timor campaign. Her sister, May Mansfield, was with us in December for our Christmas party.

A very generous donation came, as it has done over the last few years, with a message from Isabel and Pat wishing all members a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year. Particular mention was made of Gordon's 7 Section mates, wives and families who were so kind to them when they visited Perth in July/August 1994. They wished the Association all the luck in the world and said they love their involvement with their newly found family.

**Archie Campbell**

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## CORRESPONDENCE CORNER

**K. and M. Monk,  
Poovong 3988**

Dear Friends of the 2/2nd,

Another year has almost slipped by and as Christmas approaches we send greetings to dear ones everywhere. We hope 1994 has been kind to you all and we wish everyone all the best for 1995.

There are always glad times and sad times and we must cope with these the best way we can.

We have fitted quite a lot into this past year. Our holiday in W.A. was wonderful. It was great to meet again and enjoy each other's company and reminisce over past times.

The Busselton reunion was just marvellous as are all the Safaris. We enjoyed the experience of driving across and home again and our thanks again to all our W.A. friends who helped to make our visit so very enjoyable. We were away from home for almost nine weeks.

In October we set off for another holiday, this time just for a week to Bermagui on the N.S.W. south coast. The first day we had 4 inches of

rain which was badly needed and after that the weather was beautiful. It is a very pretty area. The countryside was looking extra well and the farmers were busy making silage and hay.

On the 20th November we went to the Cairn at Tidal River for the annual Commando Pilgrimage. Weather rather wet in the morning but cleared in time for the service and wreath laying. Just five of the 2/2 boys there — Alex Boast, George Veitch, Bill Petersen, Tom Nisbet and Ken. It is always an enjoyable day and the drive down was delightful. The blossoms were in abundance and everyone remarked that they'd never before seen it so beautiful. We have had a very wet Spring which has made the growth so lush. So far for November Ken has measured over 6 inches of rain and for the year 39.76 inches. We didn't get our usual rain in June and July but since then have had a lot.

On the 5th December the 2/2 Christmas dinner will be held at Patterson Lakes. We always have a really happy day.

Our family are all well and busy, the boys on the farms are milking a lot of cows and are now into harvest. Ken and I helped by feeding about 80 calves for Robert. Elva and Rod are still at Padang in Sumatra but will finish there in January. As yet they don't know what their next move will be. Their daughter Catherine is at an Australian school in Sinsapore and Finlay is studying in Melbourne. Barbara is still nursing three nights a week. She and Owen enjoy time at their country property at Healesville. They have 20 acres and run a few cattle and also have a very good garden. Their three girls are doing well with their studies. The younger ones, Colin and Joan's two girls and Robert and Cathy's Ben and Amy are all doing well at school and enjoy tennis on Saturdays. Ken and I still like gardening and it keeps us very busy.

Enclosed is a donation for our wonderful little paper, the *Courier*.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

**Ken and Margaret**

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**S. R. Marsh  
17 McGough St  
Glenorchy 7010**

Enclosed is a donation for the *Courier*.

Joan was pleased to get back home and so was I. She enjoyed most of the places in England.

Our 2/40th mates who were with the 2/2nd in Portuguese Timor are starting to thin out. We certainly miss them at our reunions.

Best wishes to all members

**Joan and Swampy**

**R. Archer  
36 Soudan St  
Toowong 4066**

It's that time of the year again. The locals had a happy Christmas lunch at Clontarf recently and caught up with each other's 'news and views.'

Next month expect to do the survey on the Sunshine Coast for some of the events for our 1996 Safari. I will have the assistance of our local members and there will be quite a choice of interesting activities BUT be assured we are not going to attempt to make it too hectic and beyond our veteran mates and our dear ladies.

Do hope all members enjoy the happy seasonal events and that 1995 will be a good and improved year for everyone.

**Ron**

PS: We can hardly wait to see how Delys and Jack are going with Delys' Love Affair on the bowling green. We just MUST see Kitty and Jack together!!

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**G. Smith  
37 Shaw Crescent  
Muswellbrook 2333**

Hope all have enjoyed good health for the Festive Season.

We were very disappointed at having to miss the Busselton Safari but Gloria was in hospital during April having the second knee joint replacement. Now that both legs have been done we look forward to more long caravan trips. We were fortunate to be able to spend some time with Denny and June Dennis at Port Macquarie during August.

Our sincere sympathy to all who have lost loved ones during the year. We wish everyone good health and happiness for 1995.

Please find enclosed a cheque toward *Courier* costs.

Our best regards.

**George and Gloria**

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**J. Fox  
47 Rowans Rd  
Hightett 3190**

Enclosed is a cheque for the *Courier* or whatever.

I saw Bay Webber in Mt Gambier in March 1994 and he was the best I have ever seen him over many years. He even walked a few steps, the first time I have seen him on his feet. He even smiled a few times and wished all Unit members well.



Haven't seen much of the other fellows since Anzac Day because of caring for Julie who has not been well. Except for a short bout of flu last year I have been reasonably well. All the fellows seem to be in good shape except for minor ailments.

Cheers for now and all the best to all members wherever they are.

**Jack**

**Editor:** Thank you for your generous donation Jack. Good to know you are fit and well and trust Julie is going along OK now. All here send their love to you both.

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**W. Wilson**  
**88/55 Alexander Drive**  
**Mt Lawley 6050**

Thank you for your letter and comments about the bugle! I was very happy to be of service on your special day and very pleased to see the good turn out you had. The Guard of Honour were particularly smart (and that's from an ex Grenadier Guard). I will be pleased to do the same again this year should you so want, and if I am still on deck blowing my own trumpet, as it were!!

It was also very pleasing to see the inside of a Sergeants' Mess once again.

Best wishes to one and all.

**W. Wilson**

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**C. A. Sadler**  
**P0 Box 108**  
**Wongan Hills 6603**

Just a short note enclosing fee for the *Courier*. I look forward to receiving it.

I thought the 1994 gathering at Kings Park was about the best I have been to. The march was pretty good but don't think I could have lasted much longer.

Mavis and I expect to go to Bremer Bay about the end of February. It is cool there about that time. We do a bit of fishing, don't catch much.

Not much news.

Sincerely,

**Charlie**

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**M. R. Coles**  
**2/29 High St**  
**Greta 2334**

I have changed my address to the above. I am on my own now as the daughter is going to

move soon. I'm also sending a cheque for the *Courier*.

Hope you are all well. I limp a bit on the right foot, still hope to be better soon.

Love,

**Cisco**

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**M. Lindsay**  
**3 Roper St**  
**Vincentia 2540**

My donation for the *Courier* is enclosed. All the best to the boys for the New Year.

**Mal**

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**A. Thomson**  
**PO Box 145**  
**Capel 6271**

Dear Jack,

Thanks for letting us know about Loudy, have sent his letter care of you, also enclosing cheque for whatever.

Alex sends his kind regards. Clarrie and Grace seemed to be improving last time we saw them.

Had a few grandies staying for holidays so kept busy.

Regards to Delys and yourself and any other 2/2 chaps.

**Wyn and Alex**

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**Mrs H. Cowie**  
**2/68 Albert St**  
**Warners Bay 2282**

Have changed my address to the above after losing Bill (who I am missing so much). Have moved from one side of Lake Macquarie to the other. The house was too big and away from transport, so made a big decision (with my two daughters' approval to be close to them) and ten minutes to shops and transport etc. After 56 years of marriage it takes some adjusting.

I love getting the *Courier* which brings me close to Bill, as he always looked forward to same. Not much news only I have become a great gran. **A boy for Bill.**

I wish everyone a **Healthy** New Year and hope to meet one day.

Am including my donation, keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely,

**Helen.**

**W. Sharp**  
**2 San Fernando Ave**  
**Portarlington 3223**

Dear Courier friends,

Am enclosing a donation from Bill. It seems quite a while since we sent one.

Hopefully the drought has broken on the Bellarine Peninsula. We had 11 inches of rain in 40 minutes one evening which has been followed by another inch over the next few days. Do hope it goes inland to the farmers.

Bill survived a very tough year, the worst episode being a perforated gall bladder. No one expected him to come through the life supports were turned off, but after ten days he decided that his number wasn't up and came home a week later.

It was great that we were able to make the Christmas dinner this year and enjoy the company of all. A real scorcher of a day – 38° – our weather has gone mad.

We send best wishes and trust that this will be a good year for everyone.

**Bill and Eileen**

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**Mrs A. Moore**  
**10 Poplar St**  
**Dwellingup 6213**

Enclosed is a donation towards the *Courier*. I do appreciate receiving it and reading it, very much.

Regards.

**Alma.**

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**P. Barden**  
**2 Dampier St**  
**Geraldton 6530**

I am writing this letter at the residence of my sister Betty at 14A Norman St, Bentley, after having returned to Perth for further medical treatment following ten days at Geraldton during the Christmas-New Year break while my Scottish doctor had a short spell from the wonderful work he is doing with chelation (key-lay-shun) therapy.

Although I am receiving good results from the treatment for leg circulation problems, most of the other patients have had heart problems. The magnitude of the success of the chelation therapy can be gauged from the fact that half of the 20 patients Dr. Neil Scrimgeour (Skrim'ja) treated one day in recent weeks will not have to have by-passes. The clinic is at 177 Grand Promenade, Bedford, close to the

Bedford Bowling Club and the phone number is 271 1668.

It was great to have a visit from Association stalwart Keith Hayes while in Perth and to further discuss the 2/2's wonderful display of wartime memorabilia I had read about in the *Courier* following the Western Arms and Armour Society's annual Fair at Claremont Showgrounds. Hearty congratulations to all associated with this very professional display that was justly voted the number one presentation.

Also hearty congrats to Paddy Kenneally for having what he described as 'a few words' with the parasites who pushed their way into a legitimate demonstration, displayed their greed, and any odium that would rebound on the Timorese, following the Commemoration Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral on the third anniversary of the Dili massacre. Keep up the good work Patrick, in support of the Timorese situation, and may we be blessed with many more of your wondrous letters.

Let me also heartily congratulate President Ted Monk on his lovely Christmas message that graced the front page of the December *Courier*. It is expressions such as these that typify the very essence of our wonderful organisation and the high calibre of the stalwarts who keep its heart ticking. As Ted said, 'may the new year bring its many blessings, love, happiness, good health and friendship.'

Many thanks to Jack Carey and Colin Doig for their expressions of support during my Perth visit.

**Peter.**

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**J. P. Kenneally**  
**28 Wilkins St**  
**Yagoona 2199**

You may be light on material for the February *Courier*. There is not much people can write about the festive season. Apart from confessing we eat too much and drink too much, one compensating factor, the Family Reunion. There were about 35 here for tea, covering all age groups from grey heads to wide eyed toddlers, all having one thing in common, a wondrous capacity for eating and drinking. God bless the women, they can most certainly feed a multitude most efficiently. Just as well it wasn't left to the Lords of Creation, our contribution sitting quaffing and talking.

Bill Coker loaned me 'The Purple Devils' a history of the 2/6th Independent Coy — 2/6th Commando Squadron. This Unit has a most impressive record. What fascinated me, apart

from their record, was the detailed reports of all actions and patrols, times, places, dates, contact with enemy casualties, rivers, creeks and features named, position and details. An official report on an action at Isariba (a place we knew well).

'C' Platoon (less No. 9 Section) 6/10 December 1943. Map Ref. 3656 1" Provisional defensive diagram attached, followed by the first report of enemy movement at 2330 on December 6th until final action at 0815 on December 10th. It included enemy strength, their armament and tactics. Their own movements, armament and tactics. It was the most comprehensive coverage of an operation I've seen, and done when they were under very heavy pressure. Their history is well worth having and reading.

Their casualties were high. 58 killed in action, 80 wounded in action, total number that served in the Unit from July 1942 until cessation of hostilities in August 1945, was 791, a casualty rate of almost 15%. They had a tough, hard war.

Don't know if you have been notified about the death of Jack (Porky) Thompson. He died towards the end of 1994. Be landed in Timor with the first reinforcements in January 1942. He was with 'Baldy' Garnett's party around Villa Maria at the end of February, early March 1942. That party finished up around Remexio about April 1942 and were definitely the first troops in that area. Jack Thompson guided Mick Morgan and 4 Section from Lital to Remexio. He was a member of Garnett's diversion party on the Beach Road when Geoff Laidlaw led 4 Section into Dili on a raid. Garnett's party was replaced by 4 Section in the Remexio, Daralau area and O.P.s after the Dili raid. They finished up in the newly formed 'D' Platoon and 'C' Platoon. I didn't see Porky Thompson again until the Canberra Safari in 1986. He told me the rest of the story. He was only 15 when he joined the AIF. He had his 16th birthday in Timor in October 1942. When he got back to Australia and went on leave his father soon put paid to his army career and apparently a few well chosen drover language sentences about cradle snatching army recruiters, although in fairness to the recruiting sergeants, Jack was a solid lump of young bloke. His father took him away bush once again, I presume droving. Later he did a bit of seafaring and did a couple of trips from Darwin to Timor's south coast with equipment and supplies for the oil drillers there. He only attended one function at the Canberra Safari, that was the night some of us had at the Woolshed pub. He met us in company with his wife, had a few drinks, a talk here and there with the blokes he knew. We saw him no more. Don't know if he had any children, don't even know his address except he was living in

Canberra. All I know is that for a while he was living in a native hut up in the mountains between Villa Maria and Ermera after moving ammunition from down around the Glano River. I was sick, weak and hungry. 'Porky' Thompson was the bloke who scrounged the food and fed me. He was only a youngster but he took on a man's job with the 2/2nd. He did it with the best of them, and better than many. To his widow and family, if any, I extend my sincere sympathy in their loss.

May you Rest in Peace Jack 'Ho Maromak fotulun ho hein O.'

**Paddy**

**Ed:** Thank you Paddy for your write up on 'Porky' Thompson which is in itself a suitable Vale.

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**O.K. Dignum  
24 Selkirk Ave  
Seaton 5023**

Dear Archie and the Courier Committee.

A short note, first of all to wish the Committee all the best for 1995, and hope you will all enjoy the best of health and carry on the good work.

In South Australia we have excelled ourselves, we have had two festive occasions, most unusual for us. The first occasion was Lionel Newton was down from the Hill, house and dog sitting for his son and daughter-in-law, allowing them to take a holiday. We rallied at the Rex Hotel for a meal and a couple of sherberts.

The second occasion Lionel and Elsie Newton were down in Adelaide for medical reasons and it coincided with the Commando Christmas dinner, also held at the Rex. The same crowd of the 2nd Coy attended. Those present were Lionel and Elsie Newton, Kel and Ruby Carthew, Bob Williamson and friend Aub., Keith and Betty Dignum, apologies from Bert and Sylvia Bache on both occasions.

At the Christmas show we had a 5 Coy man and wife, Cliff Thomas a Norwood footballer, and acquaintance of Kev. Curran, who played for Hawthorne and Cliff Thomas played for North Melbourne, would be a bit taller than Kev. Cliff said Kevin was hard but fair. Cliff and wife Beth helped to swell our numbers to 10, not bad for us. So there is life after something, all we need is a catalyst, and on both occasions it was Lionel Newton.

These country conventions you have, wild horses couldn't drag me along, the casualty rate seems higher than N.G.

Now we relax until someone else drops in. The Association still have their monthly luncheon,

the first Wednesday in the month except January, still getting over Christmas. Betty, myself, Bob Williamson and Aub. turn up. Aub. is a newcomer to our group and she enjoys our priceless company – she isn't hard to please.

Regards to all for 1995.

Keith.

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### **Jo Easton, Quinninup, W.A.**

Eric Weller, his daughter Jo, son-in-law Bryce and grandchildren travelled from Perth to Wagga Wagga over the Christmas break.

We left on our big trip across the Nullarbor on Boxing Day. We managed to get away on time and this seemed to be a positive omen. Unfortunately, it was the only good omen we had for the rest of the trip. We were towing a hire van and by the time we had travelled 60kms we began to have problems. Perhaps we should have turned back then, but stubborn pride kept us going. The bearings were over heating so we took off the wheels, to discover no packing grease and that the bearings were too tight. By lunch time we thought we had solved the problem and on we went.

We managed 460 kms that day, only 140 kms less than our daily target, and we felt confident that we would make that up tomorrow. Hah! If we had only known!

Tuesday morning dawned fine and clear, no dreaded easterly so we packed and got off to an early start. The first 160 kms passed without a hitch and we pulled into Norseman before morning tea. 60 kms down the road and the hand of fate reached down and tapped us on the shoulder. We blew out a tyre on the caravan because it had overheated. We changed the tyre and pushed on. 40 kms later we found that the spare was also so hot that we were in danger of blowing it. After much deliberation and with heavy hearts, we turned and began the return trip to Norseman. That 100 kms took three hours and we felt sure we would have to return to Perth. However, a second hand tyre and some information on tyre pressure got us back on the road but once again our target of 600 kms was unattainable.

No tyres! That was the story we would hear for the next 2000 kms as we began our search for a decent spare tyre. Predictably by now the tyre that the van required was impossible to find.

Balladonia to Eucla was the next section and all was going well until 40 kms out of Eucla when Eric noticed smoke billowing out of the wheel of the caravan. Bryce pulled over and Eric threw the drinking water over the wheel!

We had come within an ace of losing the caravan and of course the vehicle attached to it. The wheel took nearly an hour to cool down and on pulling it apart we discovered that the brakes had seized and the hub had shattered. Eucla was home for the next 22 days while we waited for spares to arrive.

Finally the caravan was roadworthy and we once again ventured forth onto the highway and finally managed to cross the border and leave W.A. behind us. The weather, which had been delightful until now, decided to join in the conspiracy against us. The wind went from a gentle breeze to very strong winds to gale force. The final 200 kms were through violent storms of wind, rain and blinding dust.

Since we have arrived the children have been sick, our cat ran away from the babysitter, the video camera stopped working and the still camera was on the wrong light setting. What scares me is that we still have the return trip to survive but, I am determined to enjoy this trip, even if it kills me!

Jo.

Enclosed please find \$10. Regards to all.

Eric.

Thanks Jo for your interesting account of what sounds like a horror trip. We all feel for you and sincerely hope your return trip was trouble free and most enjoyable. We would really appreciate a further letter from you with details.

Best wishes to you all.

**The Courier Team**

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## **NEW YEAR GREETINGS**

**Ralph and Sheila Conley** sent greetings to all.

Plans are going well for the 1996 Safari at Maroochydore which, Ralph reminds us, is only 15 months away.

**Blanche Sadler** and family sent greetings to everyone, especially the *Courier Team* who get our welcome magazine on the road.

**Frank and Judy Sharp** sent best wishes for a bright 1995. After a few set backs things are much better and they hope to see old mates at Maroochydore in 1996.

**Lyle Litchfield** sent best wishes for an especially bright New Year.

**Grace Davies and Peter McCracken**, despite a few problems, sent Seasons Greetings. Peter had a knee operation last year and Grace has been hospitalised for a lengthy period but is slowly recovering.

Good luck to you both, may your health be 100% in 1995.

## INDEPENDENT TRUST FUND

### School Text Books

In a phone conversation Ephrem Santos advised Colin Doig that he had just received approval to 'go down and take delivery of the books.'

Although each carton was indexed to its contents on the manifests provided, it is suspected that the shipment may not have been presented to Santos in that state.

Time is required to re-group the shipment into prospective areas of application before we can expect a report from Santos. At that time what dare he say? Nevertheless including the 31 new medical books for SUAI Hospital it is imperative that we get some reliable feed back.

### Interplast Australia

Interplast approach to the Indonesian Authorities in Jakarta to run a project in East Timor was declined. Four other areas in Indonesia were approved. We advised Interplast that we would require to divert our funding to an alternative project.

However, we have agreed to Interplast's request to allow another three months.

**Bob Smyth**  
26.1.95

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### Don Bosco Training Centre Attention Br. Ephrem Santos S D B

Dear Ephrem

Greetings: re USED SCHOOL TEXT BOOKS

YUFAM Pte Ltd of Singapore advised that of the 99 cartons unloaded for transshipment, 20 cartons were in a damaged state, "because the outer cartons were pre-used." We are puzzled because they were to have been shrink wrapped on their 3 pallets.

However, Yufam arranged re-packing and shipment to Dili to arrive on or about 17th December 1994.

We have this a.m. T T to their Bank as requested, their charges of S \$581.05 Presumably this will release the shipment to Fr Locatelli (and on to you).

Distribution – Primarily to benefit Indigenous T children. (My first letter to Dili requesting information and permission to set up the Book project was posted 23/6/1992).

I sincerely hope that following our endeavours, shipment reaches those for whom it is intended!

Granted it will take a long time for the books to be categorised for use. Many may not be of any value.

It is possible we could get more medical books from various hospital libraries.

We will wait with interest your comments and recommendations,

### INTERPLAST AUSTRALIA

Last February we made application to fund a 2 week visit to Dili of an Australian Interplast team of Plastic Surgeons. They correct cleft palates, hare lips, facial deformities and repair burn scar contractures to ease movement. We were pleased to receive Governor Soares approval for a Dili visit.

Unfortunately we have been advised that following Interplast Australia representation to Jakarta via Perapi a Dili visit was ruled out. Other Indonesian areas were approved.

At this time I am joined by all the members of our 2/2nd Commando Association in wishing you and all those around you a share of the joys of Christmas and the hope that a better understanding can be achieved to improve all circumstances in the New Year.

Most sincerely,

**Robert N. Smyth**  
22/12/ 1994

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### East Timor Water Supply & Sanitation Project PO Box 1295 Dili, 88000, Indonesia

Hon. Sec  
2/2nd Commando Association of Australia  
21 September 1994

### Re 2/2nd War Memorial, Dare, East Timor

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 12th August last and forgive me for this tardy reply. We are pleased to be able to assist the Association with the reconstruction of the War Memorial.

Due to the pressure of existing works however, we have not yet been able to schedule the reconstruction. I am, however, confident that the work will be done within the next 6 to 9 months. As soon as we have some firm plans and costings I will write to you again.

Best wishes.

**John Wilkinson**  
Australian Team Leader

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**P. Dandy**  
58 Gertrude St  
West Geelong 3218

Dear Mr Carey and Members,

The last time I had any correspondence with

the Association was when I purchased a copy of Mr Doig's works from you, in regards to my research of the Markham/Ramu Valley campaign. This is to inform you that the time has finally come where, after seven years of hard work, Volume One of a Two Volume set regarding the Markham/Ramu Valley campaign has come to fruition and will be going to press in December 94 or January 95.

I have endeavoured to give as much coverage as possible to Major 'Bull' Laidlaw's Force and their exploits while in the two valleys through the respective War Diaries and Mr Doig's works which have been of great assistance to me.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask if anyone has information that may be of use to insertion into '*The Kookaburra's Cut-throats*' Vol. Two, if they would be willing to lend me the articles, the greatest of care will be taken and postage costs reimbursed, along with the articles being returned post haste, either by mail or delivered personally if they should live in Melbourne and/or surrounding areas.

Phillip Dandy

### 'The Kookaburra's Cut-throats' Vol. 1

#### Order Form

I, Mr/Miss/Ms/Mrs.....  
of .....

wish to purchase ..... copy/copies of  
'*The Kookaburra's Cut throats*' at the purchase  
price of \$45.00 postage included.

Please post order form and payment to:

**Mr Philip Dandy**  
**9 Cobden St**  
**Highton 3216**

Vol. 1 traces the activities of all units concerned, from September 1, 1943 through October 31, 1943. There will also be some 40 photographs and about 15 to 20 maps.

### The Story of Jack Steen (Stafford) in New Guinea & New Britain

I went to Wilson's Promontory as a batman to an officer whose name I can't remember. For the first week there we did nothing but laze around and drink, until one afternoon on parade the powers that be told us to have our final bust that night as we would be starting training the following morning. How right they were — at 1 am we were all up packing our gear in those Mt. Everest packs with a metal frame for the back and a head band to keep

the pack up on your back. They told us we had to shift camp (the liars) so blankets and all had to be carried. Away we went and as it was pretty cold especially at that time in the morning, everybody was rugged up pretty well. I forget the exact number but there were over 300 of us and after the first mile you could easily follow the trail for there were scarfs, balaclavas, gloves and what have you being shed. We were like a bunch of bloody snakes shedding their skins. For five miles we went at a good clip before we halted for five minutes to adjust our packs, then away we went again for seven miles when we were given a mug of tea and told to have a couple of hours sleep. You should have heard the moans and groans and mine were in there with the best of them.

After a couple of hours away we went again but it was back over the road we had just come in on, 12 miles straight back to camp where we started from and there were only about 40 of us that finished it so a lot were returned to Units and some had their ideas of Independent Companies changed and decided they didn't want any part of it. Well, all this took place at Darby where we spent about another 10 days getting sorted out to what we were going to be and naturally as I was a sig. that is what I would stay.

The next move was down to Wilson's Promontory where the real training started, making our own bombs out of tins and gelignite, a bit of fuse and a detonator, unarmed combat, shooting, compass marches and what have you. There was a fair crowd of us there and the RSM was a real bastard and never stopped bellowing. The fellows put up with it for a few weeks then one night an almighty blast went off at about 11 pm. It seems somebody had put half a plug of gelignite under the feet of the bed boards instead of under his head. You never saw such an uproar, officers running around smelling blokes' hands to see if they had been handling gelignite, the blokes cheering and yahooing, so there wasn't much sleep for the rest of the night. Next morning we were all on parade and as the RSM could not speak, one of the CSMS had to take the parade for him. Anyhow, the C.O. was there and made one of the silliest requests I have ever heard, that is 'step forward the person who put the gelignite under the RSM's bed?' As if anyone would be so stupid, anyway, we copped a forced march to Darby and back which wasn't so bad seeing the RSM up front in the lead.

There was this mountain at the back of the camp that if you bugged up in training you had to run up and place a lantern on the top and the next bloke would have to run up and bring it down and so on. Charlie Anderson used to cop punishment about three times a



week and the other four evenings he would run up there for fun, a very fit man was our Charlie.

Knife throwing was another of the pastimes and this bloke put his hand on the tree trunk and said to the knife thrower '*I bet you can't hit it.*' He thought the bloke wouldn't throw and the thrower thought he would pull his hand away. Anyhow, after a piercing scream there was the bloke's hand pinned to the tree — the best damn throw I've ever seen.

Well, time passed and we were picked to go to Timor to reinforce the 2/2nd. Charlie reckoned there were too many chiefs and not enough Indians. I think there were three officers and about 8 O.Rs. I can only remember two and they were Charlie and Alex Boast. We got to Adelaide and boarded the Ghan, we would have gone faster if we had gone by camel train, there would be a bit of a rise and the train wouldn't make it so we would go back about five miles and take a run at it. My memory is going but I think we got off at Alice Springs and went by truck to Larimah where we stayed to wait for the 2/2nd as they were being evacuated from Timor. All we did was put up tents and go for route marches. It was after Christmas that we took off by truck and away we went for Mt. Isa, a bloody long trip in the back of a truck.

We finally got to Canungra. There was about a platoon of us there and Col Doig called us on to parade one morning and a Captain (I think it was the Adjutant) from the main camp across the way and a bloke I recognised as WO.1 Billo (I knew him on the ship coming back from the middle east). Anyhow, this Captain proceeded to blast the hell out of us and it was only that Col Doig was there that saved the miserable bastard's life for the fellows would have killed him. So it was at Canungra that we got re-kitted and went on leave. Some of the fellows of the 2/2nd, what with 14 days leave and travelling time, would be away over a month.

Neil Bray and I went to Sydney for our leave. We reinforcements only had seven days so when our time was up Neil and I reported to the show ground but did not hand in our leave passes so we would be there for parade each morning then away we would go again. This went on for about 10 days when we thought that some of the fellows would be getting back to camp, so on the next morning parade we complained to the CSM that fellows who had handed in their leave passes after us had been put on drafts and were back with their Units (it's marvellous what a bit of '*bull*' will do). Anyhow, back at Canungra we started training again and nobody taking anything in, mostly listening to lectures sitting in the sun you just went to sleep.

I had a mate in a tank unit that was based at Southport so got him to book 'Happy'

Greenhalgh and myself into a boarding house for the weekend. 'Happy' and I were in the same room as a wine traveller and he was lavish with his samples. We were drinking at about 9 pm the first night when a bloke knocked on the door and after a bit of waffling around he came out and asked us if we minded if he slept with his girl friend. All we could do was look at each other then the wine bloke said not it was OK with us so next morning at breakfast he asked if everybody had heard the bell and the poor fool had to ask if he meant the breakfast bell and the wine traveller told him no, the bell he meant was for 'visitors to return to their own rooms.' The Poor girl's face looked like a sunset over the Indian Ocean.

The training just kept going on and then we heard our name was to be changed to Cavalry Commando or something like that and we were to go to the Atherton Tablelands for more training. Thank God we never got there, we went as far as Cairns and propped there for I believe the Unit got a warning order. We returned to Townsville and after a while boarded the SS Duntroon where 'Happy' had managed to get me on the duty list for the crew's quarters where in the mornings we just peeled spuds or washed vegetables for an hour and were finished for the day. Some of the boys told the crew that my old man owned a pub. Boy, I was treated like Royalty and they wanted letters of introduction to buy whisky. '*Old Court*' whisky was then about 12/6d a bottle so I told the old man to charge them 12 pounds a bottle and he sold them cases. The old bugger never gave me anything out of that so is it any wonder I used to touch the Peter whenever I had the chance. The crew were getting 38 pounds a bottle off the Yanks. We were at Moresby I think for about three weeks then we boarded planes to take us up to Bena Bena in the Highlands, then Goroka. Anyhow, we weren't there long before 'Happy' and I were told that we were to go to the Ramu River to a place called Sepu and be the radio link for the 2/7 Commando Squadron who had an op there. If I remember correctly, the journey was to take us about a week. Hell it was hard going over the Bismark Range, I thought we would never get to the top, then it was just as bloody hard going down as it was going up and we got to a 2/7 out post on 'Happy's' birthday so the Lieut there said to stay over for a day and so luck plays a big part in war. We took off and camped for the night between Guibe and Sepu and early the next morning made contact with the two brothers who got jumped at Sepu, so decided to camp for the day on the track and see what eventuated. The two brothers were only lightly wounded but had no arms as they had been caught without their weapons. I was out on sentry down the track about 50 yards

from our camp when I saw this figure staggering up the track using a stick for support. He was naked except for a belt with a clasp knife on it and a pair of boots. Anyhow, instead of rushing out I let him come to me and pass me so I kept an eye down the track to see he wasn't being followed. Everything looked OK so I stepped from behind cover and said 'Hold it' He was around fast with the stick up in the air so I told him to take it easy and I would help him into camp. Hell, wherever I went to touch him he was either cut or had a bullet hole in him. I told him it was only about 30 yards to go so he said he had made it this far so he would do the next little bit. I think his name was Roffe and I will say that he was one of the gamest bastards I have ever known, there was never a complaint from him while 'Hap' and I bandaged his wounds although we must have hurt like hell. Only for us stopping over for the day for 'Happy's' birthday we would have been in it.

'Hap' took off up the mountain and wirelessly for Doc Mac to come forward as we built a stretcher and had our carrier boys carry him out. We waited there at a place I think it came to be called '*half way house*' until 'Kiwi' Harrison came through on his way to Sepu to check it out, we then went back to Guibe where Col Doig had his Section H.Q. where I stayed and 'Hap' went on. From Guibe a lot of patrolling was done but Lt. Doig would not let me go on any. I was the sig and my job was to sig, he told me, so I used to fill in time doing RAP work and some of the fellows had some great boils and what not on them. We were a couple of months at Guibe and then went to Bundi and boy, was that a trip.

From Bundi we went on a patrol across the Ramu then started up into the Finisterre Ranges. We slept that night on the side of a ridge. I had wedged myself into a fork in the roots of a damn big tree and woke up early in the morning sitting in about eight inches of water. New Guinea was a hell of a place. Anyhow, away we went up the track to this village and we could see all of us sneaking along when everything hit the fan. The bullets were that thick that you could bloody near walk on them. We started to shoot back and were at it for awhile when somebody yelled to get out as we were going no good where we were and I wasn't sorry to leave there and I can tell you nobody passed me when we took off down the track. We made it back to the Ramu so, only to make one trip in the canoe, I stripped off and was going to swim across and George Merrit said he would do the same only he left his boots on. We were swimming together and got about 3/4 of the way across when George said he couldn't make it so I got him on his back and with an arm around him tried to take him across that way but was making no progress

so I would drop down to his feet and give him a hell of a push forward and we finally got to where we could stand up. I could have killed him for swimming with his boots on. We made it back to Bundi after joining up with the rest of the patrol. After spending some time at Bundi we went out for a rest at Goroka. It was only a mission house in those days but it was bloody heaven, nothing to do all day but sport and shooting with a sniper's rifle, shooting at jam tins at 900 yards — that rifle had a beautiful scope sight on it.

A padre came to visit us around Christmas, a real snooty bloke who was not liked by anyone. He used to hold church parades that I don't think many attended. During one of these parades Eddie Rowe got a stallion and a mare from the horses that belonged to the mission and with his shouting at the horses and telling them what to do, the parade didn't go on too long. Eddie Rowe was a very funny man.

We spent a nice time at Goroka, about 6 to 8 weeks I think, but then it was back to Faita, an airstrip where we all took turns at cutting the kunai grass which was hot work. Went out along the river on a patrol, and coming back we had to cross a stream about 8 feet wide. Everybody just slid down the bank and waded across through a bit of mud that is, all but Tom Tierney. I carried his rifle and webbing over as he was going to '*jump her*.' Well, Tom cleared a track back so that he could get a good run at it and took off. He was going a fair clip when he got to the edge and was about to take off when his foot caught in a vine and the next minute Tom is in the middle and all you could see was legs waving all over the place. For a long time after Tom was known as 'Jumpa.'

We went off to Isareba and from there went off on a hell of a long patrol, I forget the name of the place we were going to but about a week out we were camped for the night and 'Kiwi', Eddie Rowe and I built a hoochi to sleep in. 'Kiwi' got up during the night with a tooth ache and went to the RAP bloke for something to relieve it and when he came back he saw a snake crawling across Eddie's and my legs. He waited for half of it to get off Eddie and then he started stamping on it. Well, you never saw such an eruption. Eddie and I shot through the hoochi like a couple of rockets. 'Kiwi' said he was sorry but Eddie was trying to tell him what he could do but was stuttering so badly that he couldn't quite get it out.

Went out the next day and crossed the river (don't know its name) through a barbed wire fence which the Japs had put across the track and we climbed this ridge where we were going to camp for the night. While we were setting up some fellow was taken short and had his pants down when a Nip took a couple of shots at him with a pistol. He did a back flip



over a bank, George Merrit came down and had his magazine shot off his Owen for his trouble, then Ross Smith who was carrying the Bren put paid to the Nip and we started back down the track to the river with 'Kiwi' Harrison acting as forward scout. He got half way over the river when the Japs opened up with a machine gun. 'Kiwi' trod on water until he got to the other side and dived behind a bank. The officers then decided we should cross the river further down, which we did, and went up a cliff face in the dark that we couldn't get down in daylight. After we got back off that patrol I peeled my socks off and all the skin on both feet came off like gloves. They were very sore for a while.

While we were in this camp 'Kiwi' was a bugger for delousing grenades and so forth, and he came up with a 3" mortar bomb from somewhere. Well, we all gathered around watching, somebody was holding it while 'Kiwi' unscrewed the nose cap, which he did, and took off and all of a sudden this striker shot out about an inch from the bomb. Well, everybody did the vanishing act, including 'Kiwi', leaving the poor bastard standing there like a frozen statue with the bomb in his hands and not knowing whether to throw it, eat it or lie down with it. When it didn't go off in a couple of minutes we all got brave again and 'Kiwi' took it off him and threw it down a gully where it probably is to this day.

We went back to Dumpu then to Wau and then on to Bulolo where the boxing started up. That was a really good camp and poker was the daily game. I sat in on a game one day and bought the Queen of spades to make a royal routine, the only one I've ever had and I even had to borrow money off 'Happy' who was standing behind me and could see what I had, and boy did I clean up.

While at Bulolo I had won seven or eight fights and thought I was pretty good. Later on, I don't know now if it was at Moresby or where but I was asked to fight this fellow as the person who was to fight him was crook. Well, I took him on, when I climbed into the ring and we met in the centre for instructions I was looking at his navel, hell he was tall and I will never forget his name till my dying day — '*Spider*' Laws. I will swear that he took after his name sake and hit me with each of his eight legs or arms in turn. I went the distance with him, but he changed my mind for me about taking up professional boxing — nobody ever said I couldn't take a hint.

After Bulolo we returned to Aussie for leave and it was great but it was better getting back to the Unit as we were just about in the DTs. We went back to Strathpine, the camp outside Brisbane, and it wasn't a bad place to be. While we were there Col Doig nominated me

as barman for the Officers' Mess which was a bad mistake on Col's part for a hell of a lot of jugs were going out the back, in fact sometimes there were more O.Rs drinking out the back than there were officers in the bar. I suppose all good things come to an end for we were packed up and I think it was about April 1945 that we took off for New Britain and landed at Jacquin Bay. After moving around a bit and 'I' Section fellow and I went from Wide Bay to Open Bay.

Paddy Kenneally was the fellow in charge of the patrol. They were a bunch of no-hopers, didn't believe in patrols further out than about 200 yards from the camp. My job was to pass information back to our camp about what was happening so there wasn't too much radio traffic going on. It was in this camp that I received word that the atom bomb was dropped on Japan and then a couple of days later another, so that was where I was when peace was declared. We had been at this Chokko camp for about six weeks so when we arrived back at Wide Bay all of that lovely beer had been saved up for us, 2 bottles per week, a dozen lovely bottles. I did my best that night on the beach but had to give a lot of it away which reminds me, I think it was at Jacquin Bay that Tom Tierney, myself and somebody else saved up a dozen bottles each but then we were told we were moving so, as we couldn't take it with us we decided to drink up and the first person who couldn't drink any more was leaked on by the other two. The fellow whose name I can't think of at the moment had enough and shot through so Tom and I kept at it. After about six bottles I'd had enough and went out and curled up under a bush but the rest of the blokes who were watching the contest came hunting me and found me and carried me back to the tent and put me on my bed. Tom told me to drink up or else! Well, I couldn't get another drop down so Tom carried out his threat. You can bet I never got to that stage at Wide Bay.

It wasn't long after this that we went home on the points system. I should have gone to Japan but made the blue of getting discharged. I think I was in the first dozen to leave New Britain as I had accumulated a lot of points for overseas service.

Some time later I was serving behind the bar of the old man's pub when who should walk in but 'Kiwi' Harrison, Ralph Finkelstein, Drip and Drop Hilliard, Curley O'Neil and a couple of others, with beer and war stories flowing somebody mentioned that a train load of Nips was going to embark from White Bay in Sydney. Away the boys went and headlines in the paper that night were how the Commandos went through the train from one end to the other bashing up the Nips.

Well, that finishes the story and for the next four years I drank, got married, gambled and couldn't settle down — but that's another yarn.

**Jack**

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### COURIER DONATIONS

Sid McKinley, Jack Fox, George and Gloria Smith, Ken and Margaret Monk, Val Hayes, John Poynton, Tom Foster, Bernie Langridge, Les Halse, Henry Sproston, Jess Epps, Bonnie Criddle, Mick Morgan, H.A.R. and I. MacDonald, Swampy Marsh, Ron Archer, Charlie Sadler, Patsy Thatcher, Alma Moore, Alex and Wyn Thomson, Cisco Coles, Bill and Eileen Sharp, Mal Lindsay, Helen Cowie, Eric Weller, Faye Lawrence.

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### INDEPENDENT TRUST FUND DONATIONS

Les P. Halse	\$200.00	Final Payment
Patsy Thatcher	\$50.00	

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### SICK PARADE

**Col. Doig** had a successful prostate operation in St. John of God Hospital, Subiaco on January 10th but was kept in hospital to try and get his old leg ulcer problem cleared up once and for all. The rest up is doing him good and he is in fine spirits.

**Ted Loud** has had a very rough four months in hospital. He survived two major operations at the Royal Perth Hospital and is at present in the convalescent section of Mt. Henry Hospital where he will be for at least another six weeks and would welcome a visit from some of his old mates from 'B' Platoon.

**Mick 'Dutchy' Holland** was in Hollywood Hospital for a couple of weeks recently. He does not enjoy the best of health.

**Gerry Maley** is to enter Royal Perth Hospital in February. We are all wishing you well Gerry.

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### CHANGES OF ADDRESS

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### PLEASE NOTE:

**Deadline for copy for the  
April Courier is**

**WEDNESDAY,  
MARCH 22, 1995.**