



2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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President W. Howell. Secretary J. Carey. Treasurer T. Monk.

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EDITORIAL

Brief Summary Of 50 Years Victorian Branch Association

The beginning of the Victorian branch started during 1947 when about a dozen members met at R. F. McLaren's dairy produce office in the basement of Rialto building off Flinders Lane Melbourne. R. F. McLaren was the father of Bruce McLaren and a first war world veteran and very interested in our Association.

Present were Bruce McLaren, Bert Tobin, Alan (Darby) Munro, George Kennedy, Harry Botterill, Max Davies, Jack Servante, Jim Robertson, Jock Campbell, Johnny Roberts, Fred Krause. Alan Munro was our first President, Jack Servante Secretary and Bert Tobin Treasurer.

After a quiet beginning mainly due to thee boys settling down to civilian life again after the war years, our first big organised event was the Melbourne Olympic Games Reunion in 1956. It was a great success and our branch owes a great debt of gratitude to Bert Tobin who was our (Col Doig). He was a wonderful worker and kept us going through the quiet periods. He organised our Melbourne Cup Sweep for years which

was our main force of finance and when Bert passed on we all lost a great friend.

During the sixties we organised Christmas parties for the children of members at Bonbeach on the first Saturday of December. These were a great success and really started the family feeling in our Association and followed on during the later safaris in all states.

Throughout the years we have had very good support from various members who have held office and still do. Among them were Bernie Callinan, Alan Munro, George Robinson, Jock Campbell, Gerry Maley, Tom Nisbet, Norm Tillet, Jack Fox, Leith Cooper, Fred Broadhurst, Alec Boast, Bill Tucker, Bluey Bone, George Veitch and Ken Monk.

I would like to pass on our gratitude and thanks to all involved in the *Courier* as this has been a wonderful help to our Association through all these years – also the address book.

Harry Botterill

Vale: JOHN HASSON

Once again that bell has rung, the bellringer seems to be over busy at the present time. This time for our dear friend Jack Hasson on 20th July, 1996 at Hollywood Private Hospital, of the dread scourge cancer. Jack has suffered severely for some time so, in some ways, it is a blessed release. He was 79 years old.

Jack joined the Army as a young country boy aged 24, from the Ballidu area. He was an original member of the 2nd Independent Company, joining at Wilsons Promontory in July 1941, when he was immediately drafted to No. 2 Section of No. 1 Platoon under Gerry McKenzie. After training at Wilsons Promontory and Katherine in the N.T., he sailed with the 2nd Independent Company to Timor, arriving on 14th December 1941, and almost immediately found himself with No. 2 Section on the aerodrome at Dili in Portuguese Timor.

When the Japanese landed on 19th February 1942, Jack, along with John Fowler, was the first to give the alarm of the landings by the enemy. He was very much part of that vicious encounter on the drome. He continued to serve with No. 2 Section right through the Timor campaign.

For some unknown reason he did not join the Unit for the campaign in New Guinea but spent considerable time at Canungra and the Atherton Tableland along with Jack Sheehan.

He rejoined the Unit for the campaign in New Britain, this time with No. 7 Section in what was now known as the 2/2 Commando Squadron.

On demobilisation Jack married Norma Smith who lived in Boulder and was the sister of Fred Smith who was killed in the Drome show in Dili. He eventually took up farming at Ballidu where the family of Fred, Ken, Kaye and Doug were born. Having sold out the farm at Ballidu Jack took up taxi driving in Perth for a great number of years and when tiring of that he was employed with the Water Supply Department where he finished his working career.

Jack, even when at Ballidu, took a keen interest in the affairs of the 2/2 Commando Association. When he and Norma and family came to live in the city his interest was even deeper. He became a Committee man in 1964 and President for three years from 1965 to 1967. During these years many of the social activities really prospered. He and Norma came up with the idea of those most successful car rallies. He also worked hard on the original idea of the Great Safari of 1968. The original was to be a motorcade. This proved not to be viable after a considerable amount of organisation, and turned into a railway tour. Jack unfortunately did not join to see the end of a lot of hard work.

Jack and Norma's interest in affairs of the Association continued for many years and Norma was the proponent of what is the mid year Ladies Day bearing her name.

Jack became a Life Member of the Association in 1970.

So there goes a great soldier, husband and father and a pillar of the Association.

We extend sincere sympathy to Fred, Ken, Kaye and Doug and their families in the loss of a good father, father-in-law and grandfather.

Farewell my long term mate.

Col. Doig

The following attended Jack's service at Karrakatta on Friday, 26th July – Tom Bateman, Tony Bowers, John Burrridge, Jack and Delys Carey, Dick Darrington, Colin Doig, Jess Epps, Albie Friend, Reg. Harrington, Keith and Val Hayes, Bill Howell, Bernie and Babs Langridge, Jim Lines, Don May, Nellie Mullins, Bob Smyth, Henry Sproxtton, Dusty Studdy, Clarrie Turner, Jack Wicks.

There was a large gathering of friends at Jack's funeral. Ken and Doug Hasson delivered very moving eulogies for Jack on behalf of their family. Bill Howell said the Ode.

Vale: DON HUDSON

There seems to be a ceaseless ringing of that dreaded bell, this time for that long term hard case Donald Hudson, at the Pinjarra Hospital in the early hours of 22nd July, 1996.

Don had been in crook health for quite a considerable time but with the courage for which he was well renowned he kept up a very full face and never did much wimpering.

Another of a very young brigade, born in 1922, he had not made 20 by the time he joined the 2nd Independent Company in July 1941. He was drafted to the original No. 2 Section under Gerry McKenzie. After training on Wilsons Promontory and camp building at Katherine in the N.T., he went with the Unit to Timor in mid December 1941. He, along with all of No. 2 Section, was very much in the original action on Dili Drome and lived to survive the trauma of that engagement. He saw the whole of the Timor campaign out and joined the Unit again in New Guinea half way through, serving this time with a newly formed 10 Section. Once again he was to see out the final campaign in New Britain.

'Huddy' was a very courageous soldier, seemingly not knowing the word 'fear.' Always the typical larrikin, he would fight on the drop of a hat, especially with a few steams under the belt. When demobilised he went working in the

coal mines at Collie along with his good mate Roy (Pluggler) Watson. He rejoined the Militia and served in the Collie Platoon of the 28th Bn. for some years being one of that Unit's crack rifle shots.

After his stint in the mines he joined the Long Line Section of the PMG and worked on the construction of long lines over the Nullabor and up the north west for many years.

He married at Collie but this ended in divorce.

Don's latter years were spent at Madora in the Mandurah area until ill health forced him to move to the RSL Home at Meadow Springs.

Don was a keen supporter of the Association and there was not much in the way of Association 'bun fights' that didn't see the handsome figure of Don Hudson in attendance. From way back when he turned up in Sydney unannounced until the most recent Safari at Maroochydore, Huddy was an attendant. He, along with Roy Watson, was made a Life Member of the Association in 1994.

Well, a very lively performer has gone to his eternal rest.

Huddy was always a great mate of mine as I admired his larrikin ways very akin to my own at his age. So, once again I have lived to see a mate depart forever. Vale Huddy, you will be missed by a lot of your mates.

The Association extends its sincere sympathy to his relatives and especially to Nellie.

Col. Doig

The following attended the service for Don held at Karrakatta on Thursday, 25th July – Jess Epps, Nellie Mullins, Tom Bateman, Tony Bowers, John Burrridge, Jack Carey, Colin Doig, Ralph Finkelstein, Keith Hayes, Bill Howell, Jim Lines, Don May, Bob Smyth, Henry Sproxtton, Dusty Studdy, Clarrie Turner, Doc Wheatley.

Phillip Perrin, Don's nephew, delivered a very moving eulogy on the life of Don and Bill Howell said the Ode.

Sleep peacefully Huddy

Apologies for both Don and Jack's services were received from Ernie and Verna Bingham, Stan and Barbara Payne, Ted and Peg Monk, Wilf and Lorraine March, Len Bagley, Betty Illsley, Joe and Helen Poynton, Peter and Pat Campbell, Don Turton, Gerry and Dot Maley, Arch Campbell.

Vale: GEORGE STRICKLAND.

The wheel of death has turned again as it grinds its eternal way, this time with our good friend and member George Strickland who died on Saturday, 15th June 1996 at Hollywood Hospital at the age of 78 years.

For the last four years George suffered much illness but about four months ago he had a hernia operation which went terribly wrong as far as his crook lungs were concerned and finished up on oxygen on a permanent basis and then he got a twisted bowel which was inoperable due to his lung and heart condition which was to prove fatal.

As is well known, George was an original member of our Unit, serving with Don Turton's Saddle Sitting Sappers in Timor and then followed up with service in New Guinea and New Britain. He was an outstanding soldier and one of the Unit's better football players (Aussie Rules).

George had served his apprenticeship as a carpenter and joiner and was a top grade tradesman and very much a precision worker in wood. For a time after demobilisation he and his brother bought out Russells Transport which they operated for quite a while but George left this to operate a mobile cement mixing truck for many years. He married his dear wife Colleen and they had a family of two girls and two boys.

In the early days of our Association George was a very good worker on the Committee and provided the transport for our kegs on Anzac Days in those halcyon early years under the palms on the edge of the Swan River. Anzac Day meant a lot to George and he was one of the regular attenders. Sporting-wise he and his family were very keen followers of the Swan Districts Football Club and then both took up bowls and were not only keen but excellent performers.

It is sad once again to bid farewell to one of our originals from the days of Wilsons Promontory but the man with the scythe travels his inevitable swathe and nothing can stop the awful progress, but we always regret these passings despite their inevitability.

Our most sincere sympathy is extended to Colleen and family and let me say that once again I have lost a good friend.

Col. Doig

A cremation service was held at Karrakatta Cemetery on 19th June 1996. The following Unit members and friends attended: Ernie Bingham, Jack and Delys Carey, Jess Epps, Gerry and Lal Green, Keith and Val Hayes, Wilf and Lorraine March, Ted Monk, Don and Ida Murray, Bob Smyth, Clarrie Turner, Don Turton, Doc Wheatley, Jack and Hazel Wicks, Bill and Elvie Howell, Bernie and Babs Langridge.

The Eulogy was given by President, Bill Howell.

Like all gathered here this day, I feel a deep sense of loss and I have been asked by

Colleen and family to present this eulogy. The right words seldom come to one, and if they do they always appear to be inadequate, but a quote I once read often comes to mind – *“Very few of us are destined to do great things, but we can all do lesser things in a great way”* and this I believe was George.

George was not a man of double standards, he had only one standard – the highest, and he carried this through in all walks of life, in himself, his family, his work, his friendships.

George joined the 2nd Independent Company on Wilsons Promontory with the original group of lads from W.A. and was made a member of the Sapper Section under Lt. Don Turton, after arduous and strenuous training on the Promontory. After a memorable trip to Katherine in the Northern Territory, and the building of that camp, he was sent to Timor, Koepang and Dili and served the whole campaign in the Sapper Section with distinction, firstly in the mining of the ‘drome in Dili and building the camp at Three Spurs on the Eremera Road where he was on the memorable night of the invasion by the Japs and shared all the hard work and long and dangerous patrols with the Sappers and blowing up of the Glano Bridge. After Timor he went to New Guinea, then to New Britain where he endeared himself to all with hard work and dedication. He was liked by all who met him, he was an excellent soldier under all conditions.

On demobilisation he married a lovely girl, Colleen and started a family of three boys and two girls. He became a keen lawn bowler with Colleen and proved himself a good indoor carpet bowler, winning the Mick Calcutt trophy in the 2/2 Association competition. George was involved with the Association for many years, serving on the Committee in 1954.

Above all he was one of us and my mate. It was my pleasure to know him.

Bill Howell

We have to advise of the passing of **Jack Boardman** of the 2/8th Company, who died as a result of an accident on the 19th June, 1996.

Jack was a staunch member of the Friends of East Timor Association and also took quite a strong interest in the affairs of the 2/2nd Association.

His interest in the welfare of the East Timorese was quite outstanding and he was on the ship that was going to East Timor on a protest mission, and was turned back by the Indonesians.

It was very sad to hear of the death of such a gentle person who was really dedicated to the affairs of those poor people of East Timor.

Our sympathy to his wife and family.

Col. Doig

Vale: The Brave Soldiers of the Special Air Services Regiment

What a tragic day was the 12 June, 1996 for the Special Air Services Regiment while out on a training exercise in Townsville, where two Black Hawk helicopters collided.

Eighteen soldiers were lost, 15 in the uniform of the SASR, 3 in the uniform of the 5th Aviation Regiment. Shock waves went right across the country and it certainly hit the 2/2nd Commando Association who are so close to the SASR boys – very hard indeed.

Jack and Delys Carey rallied around on our behalf in their usual caring manner, taking a sheaf of flowers to Campbell Barracks to lay on their Memorial as a visual sign of our grief and affection.

We were represented at the Memorial Service on June 18th by Treasurer Ted Monk and Secretary Jack Carey. There were well in excess of 2,000 mourners who filled the church and spilled onto the verge outside. The men's wives, girl friends, children, mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters cried openly, it was a very touching scene. Fifteen soldiers from the SAS Regiment and 4 from the 5th Aviation Regiment stood at the front of the Cathedral representing their colleagues who were killed in this tragic happening.

Tributes came from far and wide, headed by Her Majesty the Queen, via our Governor-General Sir William Deane, in which she said her heart went out to the bereaved families, friends and comrades of those who died. She offered her prayers for the injured. A special tribute came from our Governor in W.A. in his address which bears repeating – it was magnificent. Here it is in part. Major-General Michael Jeffrey, a former Commanding Officer of the SAS Regiment paid tribute to the survivors and their bravery in rescuing the injured and evacuating the dead from the burning wreckage and exploding ammunition and fires. He said that in more than 40 years in the Armed Services he had never been so proud of the Army as in the past 6 days. He said that as a nation we have in this time of great sorrow been privileged to witness a display of outstanding human bravery, a unique and sophisticated level of professional conduct of unparalleled compassion and

spiritual bonding that has been inspirational. He said he witnessed the incredible courage of the families who did not panic or apportion blame, but offered tremendous compassion and love to each other. His message to the children was simple and profound, he left it until last. "For the Bens, the Kenneths, the Matthews, and the Karens who have lost their dads, you now have a big responsibility to look after your mums and one another in every way you can, but I want you to know this, that while your pain is very deep, over time it will ease and in that time you will understand and appreciate that your dads are truly national heroes. They are heroes because they have done what they have to do with cheerfulness, with courage, with great skill and determination, knowing all the while that there was always a great risk but accepting that risk without complaint or fear. And in their passing they have helped to inspire us all as a nation to be like your dads, to be a little bit better, a little more caring, to try that little bit harder to be proud of being Australian and to be proud of being a soldier. There is no higher accolade than being an SAS soldier."

The 2/2nd Commando Association are so close to the SAS Regiment in every way to be almost blood brothers. We are both proud and envious of such a situation. After watching their reaction to this tragedy in training we are blown up with pride to know such an elite Unit, manifest by their response to a dramatic situation. They have claimed over the years by men representing them from the Regiment that they are 'our modern counterparts.' Knowing the calibre of the Special Air Services Regiment, that is indeed the ultimate compliment – we are truly humbled by this knowledge.

Archie Campbell – Editor.

Vale: JACK RENEHAN

Once again the bell has tolled, this time in Melbourne where Jack (Niggerly) Renehan passed away on 17th June, 1996. The numbers are decreasing most steadily over the past few years.

Jack was one of those many who joined the Unit ex Canungra and served with No. 3 Section of 'A' Troop in New Guinea and New Britain. He was an excellent soldier and very well thought of by all in the Unit.

I personally got to know him during the New Guinea campaign and can speak most highly of him as a soldier of intense loyalty to be relied upon when the going got tough.

On demobilisation Jack returned to Victoria and I understand was engaged as a tradesman in the electrical switching trade. I have been given to understand that he was something of a loner and was not seen a great deal at Association affairs but I did personally run into him at the big 1968 Safari and again at the 1991 50th year celebrations at Philip Island.

Jack was a staunch supporter of the Collingwood Football Club.

We would like to extend the Association's sympathy to his relatives.

Col. Doig

An Army Tragedy

News of the loss of 18 fine young men, 15 from the Special Air Service Regiment and three from the 5th Aviation Regiment who died in a training accident near Townsville on the 12th June was received with a sense of profound regret by our members.

Over the years the Association has developed close ties with the S.A.S. Regiment so it was only fitting that we should offer our support and solace to the Regiment in what must surely have been one of its darkest hours. Action taken included sending a letter of condolence to the C.O. of the Regiment, Lieut-Col. Mike Silverstone on behalf of the Association. A sheaf of beautiful roses kindly provided by Don Turton was delivered to Campbell Barracks, the headquarters of the Regiment on the eve of their private Commemoration Service which was held at their Remembrance Shrine, on the 18th June. This service was attended by our President, Bill Howell and wife Elvie representing the Association. Bill met up with Mike Silverstone after the service and tendered sympathy on our behalf. Ted Monk and Jack Carey attended an Ecumenical Memorial Service held at St. Mary's Cathedral at 11 a.m. on the same day. The Cathedral was packed to capacity with many hundreds having to hear the service in the Cathedral's surrounds. It was a very impressive and moving ceremony. A notice was also placed in the Tuesday edition of *'The West Australian'* which read:

S.A.S. Regiment

A special tribute to the fine young men of the Regiment who died so tragically. Heartfelt sympathy to their loved ones.

President and Members of 2/2nd Commando Association of Australia.

Lest We Forget

Jack Carey

From Lieut-Col. M. J. W. Silverstone
The Special Air Service Regiment
Campbell Barracks,
Swanbourne 6010

Dear Mr Carey

Thank you for your expressions of sympathy regarding the death and injury of our members as a result of the Blackhawk accident at the High Range Military Training Area near Townsville on Wednesday, 12 June, 1996.

During this difficult time over the last three weeks, the Regiment has received tremendous support from the Australian community from all levels of the Australian Defence Force and from our overseas brothers-in-arms. In this time of need, the support in all manner and forms has been genuine, purposeful and thankfully received.

The night of Wednesday 12 June and the day that followed have reinforced the high standards and professionalism which exist in the ADF generally, and the Army specifically. This was apparent in a number of ways. First, by the immediate response by the soldiers on the ground who regardless of beret or Corps rushed in to assist and rescue those injured from the burning wreckage. These soldiers acted as one in an uniformly courageous and professional manner. Second, by the military staff in Townsville, while frustrated by their isolation from the scene, who successfully dealt with numerous challenges calmly and effectively amid confusion and uncertainty. Finally, by the professional and purposeful actions of those in Perth who were ably supported by the staff of the Defence Centre Perth and its supporting units, who also ensured that families and next of kin were quickly advised and support systems put in place.

I would also like to mention the inspiration provided by wives and loved ones of those who were killed and injured. They have personified dignity and strength and are a fine example to us all.

No actions or thoughts can replace the loss of our fifteen unit members and the unit will carry the scars of their loss for some years. However, it is a fact that SASR's operational capabilities were only affected for 8 very short time. SASR remains as ready as ever for any operational commitment.

I, and all members of the Regiment thank your Association again for their support and kind thoughts. They have played a major part in easing the pain and grief that we and our families feel.

Mike Silverstone

VICTORIAN NEWS

We regret the passing on of Jack Renehan on June 17th. A service was held at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Clifton Hills on June 21st, then on to the Faulkner Crematorium. Present at the service were Fred and Mavis Broadhurst, Ken and Margaret Monk, Tom Nisbet, Bruce McLaren, Eddie Bourke and Chris Fitzpatrick of 'M' Force who went to school with Jack. We pass on our sincere sympathies to the family. George Veitch has had a visit to Heidelberg Repat Hospital undergoing tests for pleurisy. He was a sick boy for a while but is coming along nicely.

Jack Fox has been having problems with his legs but, as usual, Jack is fighting on.

Sep Wilson had a fall recently and has a leg in plaster – nothing broken but has to keep it on for 8 weeks.

Fred Broadhurst had a phone call from Judy Sharp at Dubbo to let him know she is well and wishes to be remembered to all.

We were all very sorry to hear that Keith Dignum died in April. We pass on our deepest sympathies to Betty and family.

Harry Botterill

GERALDTON NEWS

Members of Geraldton City RSL Sub-Branch were delighted to learn that one of their colleagues, Eric Weller, had been honoured with Life Membership of our precious Association. Hearty congrats to Eric, Ralph Finkelstein, Eric Thornander, Don Murray, Doc Wheatley and Jim McLaughlin on receiving this honour at the AGM and to all those officers who ensure that our Association remains second to none.

It was our pleasure at State Congress to have several motions carried for submission to National Congress. One motion calls for the United Nations to give high priority to the formation of a task force to apprehend those responsible for atrocities against humanity, whether or not a state of war exists between protagonists. It wants these criminals brought to trial before a world court.

Another of our carried motions expressed concern at the previous Australian Government's signing last year of a security treaty with Indonesia without the public having the opportunity to debate the issue first. It wants every effort made through political and diplomatic channels to determine the extent to which Australia's defence treaties with the USA and any other country have been compromised or weakened by the agreement with Indonesia.

We had the delight of reading in our Cathedral Bulletin what was referred to as 'a letter to God from a farmer.' It was a beautifully worded letter which expressed our feelings about the wonderful rain.

God bless you all.

Peter Barden

N.S.W. NEWS

I know that your report on our Maroochydhore Safari is scheduled for print in the next *Courier* so I won't take up much space on that, except to say how much Edith and I enjoyed being together again with so many of our wonderful 2/2 family. Our accommodation at Northcliffe was superb with its magnificent outlook and close proximity to every needed facility, as well as the lovely people with whom we shared. I have sent our thanks to the Queensland organisers but would also say a big thank you to everyone for just being there.

Our return home through that cyclonic rain storm was not the most pleasant trip we've had – it just bucketed down for the 4 1/2 days – we did make a few stops to visit relatives but even so it was the worst conditions I've ever driven under for so far and so long. Thank God we made it home safely. Since return our June meeting was well attended and quite peaceable.

Snow Went came to grief on the way home from Queensland and had his car written off. Luckily no major injuries to his person, but perhaps some to his pride.

Had a nice letter from Kath Press who was unable to attend Safari because of health problems. Sends her love and good wishes to all.

We've been saddened to learn of the demise of some great stalwarts of so many years, George Fletcher, George Strickland, Keith Dignum, Gordon Rowley – how synonymous with the development of the Association they all have been. May they Rest in Peace.

What a frightful peacetime accident that occurred on 12th June when 18 of our finest soldiers were killed. We extend our condolences along with yours to the relatives and their mates in service. Jack Carey was good enough to send me a copy of the Regimental Service. Unfortunately we had insufficient notice to attend the Memorial Service in Sydney.

On behalf of our NSW Branch we say thanks 'Monit Obrigado' to our Independent Trust Fund Committee and Viv. Paust for his most impressive report. I had the pleasure of repeating his report at our N.S.W.

Association's meeting and my local D.Y.R.S.L. Sub-Branch and have sent copies to many people who are most impressed, even that 'rough diamond' Jack Porter from 2/8 Squadron who wrote to me and many others expressing his delight at the project. Jack thought the arrangement made to organise Viv. Paust's visit to Don Bosco College was a fabulous idea.

Jim Fenwick has been having tests and consultations which have given much concern. He has had an operation on his throat probably to remove a 'foot' (pardon me Jim) and we await the results with trepidation. Our thoughts are with Jim and Joan and our prayers that he will make a good recovery and we will still hear that gravelly growl 'Have another Chivas!'

A phone call from Ms Vartsy Vlasna advised that there is a display of Timorese photographs to be shown at our State Parliament House from 5th to 16th August. She asked Gordon Hart and myself to speak at the official opening and to lend our support which we have accepted.

The Commando Association Marksmanship trophy has been won by Cpl. R. J. Gategood of No. 1 Commando Company, Sydney and I am due to make the presentation on 16th July at a Green Beret Parade, along with Gordon Hart, Ray Warren and Harry Levey.

Edith joins in sending love and best wishes to everyone.

Alan Luby

Len's News: Betty and I started our trek to the Maroochydhore Safari with a most enjoyable journey to Sydney on the 'Indian Pacific.' The accommodation on board was comfortable, the meals were first class, as was the service, and we met up with some very nice people from many parts of the world. The meeting place was a large comfortable lounge complete with a well stocked bar where many 'happy hours' were spent. We recommend this mode of travel to anyone looking for a comfortable trip with a difference. After a couple of hours at Sydney Central we were on our way by train to Canberra where we were met by my brother Fred, and so began a great two weeks stay in superb weather conditions. Autumn is certainly the ideal time a visit to Canberra. Fred and Erika were perfect hosts and made sure we saw as much as possible of the ACT. This included a long visit to the War Memorial, an equally long visit to Parliament House with a guide whose knowledge and humour made it very special. We visited Jim and Joan Fenwick who showed us their proposed itinerary for the 1998 Safari and it was very impressive.

We phoned Chris Roberts who is now a Brigadier and was, at that time stationed in the ACT. He visited us one evening and we did a lot of reminiscing. He is still very interested in the welfare of the 2/2nd Association and proud of the fact that he was able to make it possible for us to become so closely associated with the S.A.S.R. in W.A. He sent his best regards to all.

Another great evening was spent with Major Doug Hasson and his family and they also sent their best wishes to friends in W.A.

Len Bagley

NORMA HASSON DAY

On Friday, 5th July, 49 people, including 17 from Mandurah, converged on the Airways Hotel, Perth for our mid-year get together.

The weather was kind to us and it was the usual happy gathering at this very classy venue.

Apologies were received from Jack Hasson, Roy and Kaye Hanson, Ralph and Eve Finkelstein, Don Turton, Henry Sproxton, Bonnie Criddle, Arch Campbell, Bill and Iris Rowan-Robinson, Betty Hopkins, Mary and Paddy King, Fred Growns.

Jack Hasson was not present due to illness but his sons Ken and Fred came along on behalf of the Hasson family. Although Kaye was unable to attend, her husband Roy kindly brought in orchid corsages for the ladies. This is a lovely gesture by Kaye each year and the ladies appreciate it.

Col. Doig introduced our special guests, Viv and Verna Paust and Viv gave a most interesting and light hearted account of his visit to East Timor earlier this year. Viv also presented the Association with an album of photographs taken during his two months in East Timor.

Eric Thornander was celebrating his 85th birthday and we all joined in wishing him Many Happy Returns.

A first class buffet meal was enjoyed by everyone and the friendly staff helped make this a special day.

CORRESPONDENCE CORNER

Mrs J. Palm
'Aldis Park'
Gracemere 4702

Many thanks to all who helped make my visit to Maroochydore Safari a very happy and fun time. Arrived home amid rain which was most welcome. Left home a dust bowl but arrived

back to lovely green surrounds.

Enclosed cheque for *Courier*.

Best wishes to all.

Jean

S. McKinley
32 Limbert Avenue
Seacombe Gardens 5047

Please note change of address. I never thought to see the day when I would desert my home state to live in another, but the constant 'needling' of my children to join them in Adelaide, particularly in view of my poor health in 1995, finally prevailed so I sold up at Mandurah regretfully, and moved over here in November last. Wonder how long it will take to become a 'crow eater'! Certainly miss all old friends, Unit and otherwise, in W.A.

Summer lasted about ten days I think, with some very cold weather in January (believe it!) and indifferent since. Have had little chance yet to contact Unit members but will get around to it.

My thanks to Jack Carey and Len Bagley for ensuring I received December and February copies of the *Courier*. Donation enclosed.

My best wishes to all members and friends of the Unit Association.

Syd

Good to hear from you Syd. We miss you in the West but hope you have settled in and that you are in good health. Regards, **Len**.

F. C. Broadhurst
140 Christmas St
Fairfield 3078

It was good to see so many happy smiling faces of the 2/2nd family at Maroochydore. It is sad to think and see how many have fallen by the wayside in the past few years, on the other hand its amazing how well everyone looks at these safaris and how much they enjoy each others company.

Mavis and I would like to congratulate the Queensland Committee for their detailed planning, work and effort that went into the Safari to make it a great success. We would also like to thank Tex and Bridget Richards for their great company while sharing our unit for the ten days. I think they were counting on ten quiet, peaceful days (surprise - surprise). We thought the weather was unkind to us but, the day we flew out all hell broke loose, storms, high winds, floods all down the east coast, so it looks as if someone up there does like us.

Cheers for now.

Fred and Mavis

C. Andrew
15 Ironbark Road
Caloundra 4551

Hope everyone had a pleasant trip home from the Safari.

Cheque enclosed.

Regards

Col.

J. Steen,
37 Chateau Street
Thornlands 4164

Enclosed is cheque for *Courier* which Beryl and I look forward to for keeping up with the news.

We wish to thank Ralph, Neil and their good wives and all else who participated in the organisation of Safari 96 to make it the great success it was, and trust that Canberra can do as well.

At the moment Beryl is well but I am trying to get around with a pinched nerve in the spinal column and it's sore.

We are, with best wishes

Beryl and Jack

J. Chalwell
20 Kyle Court
Joondalup 6027

Please note our new address and phone number. Enclosed is a cheque for the *Courier*.

We arrived home on 21st May after leaving Maroochydore on 2nd May, a wet and windy retreat it was too. North of Maroochy, about Rockhampton, the weather returned to sunshine and stayed that was all the way home. The roads are excellent, being bitumen all the way and in good nick, no problems with vehicle or van.

The Safari was a credit to the organisers and we are looking forward to the next one, this time Qantas can do the driving.

(Tich) John & Olive

K. and E. Jones
'Gibrigil' McIntyre Rd
Barraba 2347

Please find enclosed donation to the *Courier*. We greatly enjoy reading the paper and think you have done a wonderful job with the address book.

Sincerely,

Ken and Edith

Mrs B. Criddle
124 Nanson St
Wembley 6014

Am enclosing a donation and sending my best wishes to all associated with the 2/2nd.

I regret I will not be able to join you on Norma's Day so have the odd beer for me and a great get together.

Sincerely

Bonnie

Mrs B. Hopkins
14A Norman St
Bentley 6102

Enclosed cheque towards *Courier* expenses.

Fond regards to all. Am looking forward to the Norma Hasson Social and enjoying the company of one and all.

Sincerely

Betty

Mrs B. Dignum
24 Selkirk Ave
Seaton 5023

To members of the 2/2 Commando Association (W.A.).

Thank you sincerely for your kind thoughts of sympathy.

Betty and family.

G. and B. Coulson
Beach House
14 Castaway Cove
Marcus Beach 4573

Enclosed are some photos. Hope you all enjoyed the Safari. It seemed to go so fast. It was great to see you all.

We are going to the 2/2 barbecue in Brisbane and hope to catch up with any news.

We have just returned from 5 weeks in New Zealand where we had a splendid holiday. Flew into Christchurch and joined friends at Akonoa Bay where we went sailing in their yacht and caught some flounder. We flew up to Auckland and hired a Toyota and caught up with five members of the family and went to Coromandel. We caught lots of snapper, oysters and mussels then went to Rotorua and up to Taporua onto a sheep and cattle property. The young ones went shooting wild ducks, scrub turkeys and possums. George is busy making a video of the bungy jumping the young ones did.

Keep well and we'll see you in Canberra.

Betty and George

Mrs N. Grachan
15 Banksia Court
Mulgrave 3170

Committee members, one and all.

'Tis high time I submitted my contribution to *The Courier*.

I have waited with bated breath for arrival of June issue to note the great success of Maroochydore, however as I too will be travelling north in near future for some weeks, think it best I salve my conscience now.

Must confess I relish reading great 'keeping in touch' news. Hopefully, apart from creaking bones and all that makes for growing younger most are blessed. Sadly for some this state of health eludes them. My thoughts and prayers reach out to them, especially so to those who have lost a loved one of recent months. May they find comfort knowing our thoughts are with them.

Fondest regards to all.

Nina

A. Bowers
9 Talbot Close
Halls Head 6210

A few lines to thank the Queensland Committee for a job well done at the Maroochydore Safari. Everything was spot on, accommodation excellent, Management and staff at Maroochydore Hotel were kind and friendly. The cook for Sonnies Restaurant gave me a plum pudding to bring home. Wasn't that nice of her. Must make a special mention of Hoop – it was nice to see at the dinners that he saw that everybody was seated and had their meal served before he sat down himself.

It was nice to see Ken Jones and Colin Holley – have not seen them for thirty years.

Had a call from Hooper and he said he had not been good but was OK now.

Regards to all the chaps and best of luck.

Enclosed is a cheque for the *Courier*.

Yours sincerely,

Tony

Mrs D. Boyland
25/7 Beddi Rd
Duncraig 6023

Enclosed is a donation to *Courier* funds and thank you for the new address book.

Sorry I have been forgetful lately, but have had a lot of health problems that have been hard to cope with. I hope at long last I have passed the worst.

Best wishes.

Dorothy

R. Williamson
2 Goldsworthy Crescent
Gleneig North 5045

Am having trouble with my writing hand so this is being written by my best friend. I have had several problems recently but am now well on the way back. I am very fortunate in having a wonderful companion.

We suffered a blow recently with the loss of Keith Dignum. He was the chief organiser of the show, and my very good friend. The 2/2nd is very thin on the ground here now.

I often see Kel Carthew and Carl Marks. The latter recently sold his fruit block at Loxton and has purchased a home in Adelaide and will be moving in soon, so I should be seeing him a lot in the near future.

I enclose a cheque. Would you please send me a new badge and a tie if available, the remainder to go to the *Courier*.

I wish all the boys and theirs all the best for the future, particularly healthwise.

Bob

B. F. Dennis,
614 Sackville St
Albury 2640

I guess that many letters have been written about the Queensland Safari. I just want to add my comments, that it was worth the effort to make the trip and enjoy the company of our one big family. For those who cannot make the trip for one reason or another, I say they are the ones missing out. The organisers did a first class job and I am sure they got a lot of satisfaction from their efforts.

On the way home I called into Iluka on the Clarence River to spend a couple of days with Eric and Lorraine Herd but because of the rain and floods, had to stay 10 days, nothing to do and nowhere to go, so every day was a drinking day, the bar opened early morning. Had Theo Adams been with me he would have had his share of cold tea smell. When I eventually got away I had to head north to Ballina, Lismore, Casino and Tenterfield before heading south. The stop at Iluka was worth the effort as Lorraine and Eric certainly run a good boarding house.

Enclosed is cheque for donations to the *Courier* and the Trust Fund,

For those good people who would like to know, my health is stable, so much so that I have three months leave from the Oncology Department.

Regards to all.

Denny

B. F. McLaren
 13A Grange Road
 Kew 3101

On the 21st June I attended the funeral of Jack Renehan, along with Ken and Margaret Monk, Fred Broadhurst, Eddie Bourke and Tom Nisbet. It was a fine service for a great soldier. I was with Jack in 'A' Troop and will always remember his wisdom and kindness.

The enclosed cheque is to be split between the *Courier* cost and the Museum Appeal.

All the best of good health to all members.

Bruce and Lorraine

P. Campbell
 30 Castletown Quays
 Esperance 6450

Well, here we are sitting in a caravan park in Karratha with Helen and Joe. We have had great adventures since we left Maroochydore, all very enjoyable and beautiful country all up the Queensland coast. At Cairns we went up on the Sky Rail to Kuranda, a wonderful trip high up over the rain forest and came back by train. When we got to Kuranda the men went out on a fishing trip for the day but not very successful just six nice fish.

We had a week in Broome just lazing and swimming – the water and weather beautiful. Went to hire a T.V. and left my handbag (stupid) on the seat of the car and when we came out it had gone. Luckily I had my money purse and card but lost my address book for the 2/2nd so if you have a spare one would you please send one home.

We are heading for Exmouth for a month with Reg. Harrington who is there with his son Terry who is a Ranger at Cape Range National Park.

All the best to all Association members and enclosed is a cheque for whatever. Regards to all.

Peter and Pat

G. Stanley
 30 Francisca St
 Everton Hills 4053

Dear Len and Betty, please find enclosed our donation to the *Courier*.

It was a great pleasure to meet you in person at the Safari and I really admired Len's red braces which added distinction to his outfit.

We have just spent a day with Bert and Sylvia Bache from Adelaide. Bert was 'best man' at our wedding in Melbourne just 40 or 50 years ago. When Bert married Sylvia in 1954,

Gordon and I escaped the clutches of our three small children to witness this great event. We warned the Minister that, after our visit the church might never be the same again. That night we were tossed out of bed by an earthquake, the church spire fell down and, no doubt 'the earth moved' for Bert and Sylvia.

Anyway, we had a great time at the Safari and we're looking forward to seeing you all in Canberra in 1998.

Good health and best wishes.

Gordon and Joan

R. Morris
 53 Hilder St
 Weston 2611

What a terrible journey we had back to Canberra after the Safari. Rain, rain and more rain, all the way, and yet when we arrived home we were struck by the dryness of Canberra. I then had to turn to and water the garden.

I must thank you all for once again accepting me into your fold, it is a great honour to be 'one of the boys' on these occasions and to join with you all in reminiscing over good times past.

Hazel and I had not been to the Sunshine Coast, to stay, before, and we found it very interesting, but where was the SUN? It must have been very disappointing for those of you who organised this Safari. You had planned to show us the beauty of your area, only to be confronted by rain every day. We have to be thankful that our prayers were answered for a beautiful ANZAC DAY, we could not have wished for a more glorious day.

Thank you for Archie Campbells' Book on the 2/2nd. I will be presenting it at an informal meeting in A.D.F.A., Sen. N.C.O.'s Mess when Jim Fenwick comes out of hospital and is able to have a short trip out. Yesterday was the first day that Jim has been allowed visitors and I was able to visit him for just five minutes. He seems to be perking up slowly and was going to be allowed a sandwich for his lunch. No doubt this is a big treat after soup and jelly being the only thing on his menu for days. When we do eventually present the book there will be a photographer in attendance and I will let you have some pictures for your records. The A.S.M. will be leaving A.D.F.A. at the end of the year to take up his post as R.S.M. of the Army.

Thank you Maroochydore Ladies for all the help you gave your husbands in making the Safari such a great success. What would we do without you? God Bless you all.

Ron

1996 MAROOCHYDORE SAFARI REUNION

Saturday, April 20th: Members from all states converged on Maroochydore from all points of the Australian compass in all manner of transport. Perth was the focal point for the Editor to give a written picture of a Safari getting into action. A contingent from W.A. flew out of Perth at midnight on the 'Red Eye' special and arrived at Brisbane Airport at 6 am to a warm welcome from members of the Queensland Branch and Theo Adams' two charming daughters holding big signs of 'Welcome the 2/2nd.' We were taken by bus and cars to Maroochydore where we were met by Neil Hooper, as robust as ever, Ralph Conley one of the chief planners, Ron Archer, Theo Adams and a number of others and taken to our luxury accommodation.

Maroochydore knew the 2/2 Commando Association was in town as old comrades met in the streets and the years rolled back and welcomes took place there and then. The stage was set for yet another Safari, one to remember.

Sunday, April 21. Settling time in the morning, with the afternoon free. At 6.30 pm a welcome was held in 'Sonnies' Maroochydore Hotel to enable everyone to get together and catch up with those who had not been seen for many years. Old friendships were renewed and emotions stirred. A beautiful dinner, plenty of laughter and fun, a warm welcome by the Queensland President, Tony Adams set the scene for Safari 1996.

Monday, April 22. An 8.30 am start from our apartments, first stop The Ginger Factory at Yandina. This active marketing company which is the world's largest ginger factory and 100% Australian owned, is set in an oasis type atmosphere oriented to sales and service, cast in Australian heritage style. We enjoyed morning tea in the courtyard and a leisurely trip through the glorious landscaped gardens on the historic Queensland cane train – an enjoyable and educational stopover.

Our next stop was at the Big Pineapple to partake of a delicious smorgasbord lunch and some welcome refreshment. The afternoon attractions were seen from the sugar cane train, a tropical plantation, a rain forest area, animal nursery and abundant fruit trees. Then we had a 'Nutmobile' ride to inspect Australia's largest macadamia nut processing plant. Next was the 'Tomorrow's Harvest' boat tour tracing the development of agriculture and featuring hydroponic and aeroponic gardens.

Tuesday, April 23. A free day, with the official dinner in the evening at 'Sonnies' Hotel. In spite of steady rain, 147 people, including four guests gathered to celebrate what is always a

memorable occasion, the reunion of members in an emotionally charged atmosphere. The ladies were elegantly dressed and the men in their semi-formal gear made it a gala occasion. The Toast List was nicely streamlined with George Shiels as M.C. Grace was said by Harry Handicott, the Loyal Toast was proposed by Gordon Stanley and then came the Welcome from Tony Adams who made special reference to the part our ladies play at all our functions. He then asked us to turn to our immediate neighbours and greet them with whatever affection was relevant. A great innovation that set the night on its merry way.

Our distinguished guests, Frank Rourke, President and Stan Riley, Secretary of the Maroochydore RSL Sub-Branch and their respective wives Cath and Pat were given a special welcome by Tony.

The Unit Toast was delivered by George 'Happy' Greenhalgh and what a great run down he gave on the Unit from its inception to its disbandment and we all had a picture of the progress of our beloved Unit in all its campaigns. Thanks 'Happy' for handling this most important toast – we were all the better for you taking us on this trip down Memory Lane. Archie Campbell responded on behalf of all present (and I trust I did justice to all your feelings).

The toast to Absent Friends was in the capable hands of Ralph Conley who broke the toast into the various parts of 'absent friends' and the reasons. Thanks Ralph for giving this toast such thought.

'Bulla' Tait handled the toast to Our Visitors with sincerity. It was brief and effective.

Wednesday, 24th April. A free day and quite a few took advantage of a coach trip to Brisbane.

Thursday, 25th April – Anzac Day. We joined members of the Maroochydore Sub-Branch of the R.&S.L. to honour fallen comrades. The Dawn Service at 4.15 am, a silent service, was as always impressive. The morning Memorial Service commenced at 8.30 am with over 70 members of the 2/2 Commando Association leading the parade. Our ladies helped to swell the enthusiastic crowd. The 2/2 contingent was led by Tony Adams, Tony Bowers carried the banner and Joe Poynton was the right hand marker. The men marched beautifully to the music of the Salvation Army band. The 'eyes right' to salute Brigadier Tom Parslow saw the men move as one. They had put on an impressive display and the crowd of approximately 3000 gave them a rousing cheer.

Anzac Day was very successful in all respects and our thanks go out to the Maroochydore people for their wholehearted acceptance of us during our ten day visit to their lovely town.

Friday 26th April. The Association meeting was reported in the June *Courier*.

In the afternoon we were taken to Underwater World at Mooloolaba where we enjoyed a first class smorgasbord lunch at Murphy's Restaurant, followed by a tour of Australia's largest tropical oceanarium. 'A Seal of Approval' headed the presentation of the remarkable performing seals which intrigued our large party. It was an afternoon with a difference and was enjoyed by all.

Saturday 27th April. The day was cloudy and wet as we boarded the coaches for a tour of the Blackall Range. The beauty of the Glasshouse Mountains was blotted out by the clouds but small lakes could be seen between the high peaks. The townships of Maleny and Montville were interesting, especially the latter where we had a morning tea stop and were able to visit the many arts and crafts shops for which it is famous.

The light rain persisted as we headed for our lunch stop at the R.S.L. Club at the well known town of Nambour which produces so much tropical fruit. This was an excellent venue and everyone enjoyed a class smorgasbord lunch, after which the poker machines were the attraction until we left on our way to the 'Moonshine Valley Winery' which produces a variety of wines from all sorts of fruit except grapes. Tastings were in order and many purchases were made while we studied the blue ribands which had been won at the Perth Royal Agricultural Show for the best non-vine products. This was a day of real contrasts which everyone enjoyed.

Sunday 28th April. A free day.

Monday 29th April. A free day until 6 pm when we gathered at 'Sonnie's' for our farewell function. Again we were to partake of food that was par excellence and refreshments which kept up the tempo of enjoyment.

With Len Bagley as M.C., it was time to make presentations to the following Queensland members who worked so hard to make their Safari a big success: Tony Adams, Neil and Margaret Hooper, Ralph and Sheila Conley, George and Bettye Coulson, Col. and Jeanette Andrew and Ron Archer. Special thanks to Edna Vandeleur for attending to the floral decorations at our social functions. They added to the decor and were much admired and appreciated.

The Queensland 1996 Safari will linger long in our memories.

Tuesday 30th April. Depart for home.

We all went our separate ways with hearts full of sadness as we left old and dear friends for another two years, but our joy surpassed the

sadness for we are the 2/2 Commando Association, the finest Association in Australia. God bless you wherever you are, as Tony Adams mentioned in his farewell speech 'Keep the Courier alive, it is our lifeline, it will be more so in future years. Without it there would be no Safaris, no functions of any sort that would bring us all together. The children of the fathers and mothers can play a leading role in keeping alive the memory of the Association and the men who laid down their lives in the cause of freedom. You young, vigorous men and women can build for yourselves a 'Remembrance Club' to be proud of and highlight the words

Lest We Forget

Archie Campbell

The Editor

JUST A THOUGHT

There is in existence in Victoria a **Perpetual Trust Fund** styled **OAN KIAK** (Tetum for ORPHAN) that is devoted to the education of orphans in East Timor. It is administered by an honorary committee who control the capital of the Trust in Melbourne and the interest is used to fund the education of orphans in East Timor through the Catholic schools as opposed to the Education System by the Indonesians as these orphans would not be catered for by that system.

The fund was originally raised by making a sale of a C.D. (nothing to do with C.D. Doig) made by twelve of Australia's leading Rock Bands, together with the proceeds of two Rock Concerts in Sydney and a further C.D. is on the way, which will further boost the funds.

All that is a preamble to what I want to say. There must be some among our members, especially those who served in Timor and to a very large extent owe their very lives to the natives of East Timor, who would like to remember them in the **Wills** by making a bequest to this worthy **OAN KIAK PERPETUAL FUND**.

Let me say that I have made an adequate provision for the Fund in my Will, as I feel my debt to these people has not yet been fully paid.

If anyone requires more advice my telephone number is (09) 387 2764.

As I started off – **Just a Thought**.

Col. Doig

Mary MacKillop Institute of
East Timorese Studies
PO Box 299, St. Mary's, NSW 2760

13 March 1996

Dear Bob,

Greetings and peace to you. I am writing to convey the good news that our consignment of books arrived in Dili and was cleared through customs. As you know, this shipment contained hundreds of books in Tetum which have been produced by our Institute for the people of East Timor. Br. Ephrem handled the shipment at the Dili end and has informed us that the books are now being distributed to various schools and parishes.

May I thank you most sincerely for the generous support and advice you gave us about making this shipment. We followed your instructions closely, used the same shipping companies, Seatram and Yufam, and were guided by your information regarding shipping documents etc.

Br. Ephrem has proved to be an excellent contact for us in Dili and has been most helpful in receiving and distributing the books. Thank you again for your invaluable support and encouragement. May we continue to work for peace and justice for East Timor.

Yours sincerely,

Sr. Josephine Mitchell RSJ

CURLY'S COMMENTS

*From quiet homes and small beginnings
Out to the undiscovered ends
There's nothing worth the wear of winning
Save laughter and the love of friends.*

These words remain as valid today as they were when Hilaire Belloc wrote them many years ago. They are our great legacy of the war, true, constant and enduring.

Truth, as we know, is always the first casualty of war; the last casualties are the legacies war inevitably leaves in its wake, most of them a source of sadness. Unfortunately mankind (I exempt women) is inherently insane.

Consider how man has been turning the wheatfields into cemeteries for thousands of years, then turn to the newspapers and television.

Consider too, some of the lesser legacies still with us ... rhetoric, tub-thumping and the memoirs of generals and other leaders of both sides.

Fair dinkum! A critical look at some of these memoirs indicates that their authors would have been flat out running a chook raffle. So our love and laughter sounds better every day.

Col Doig could have been echoing Hilaire Belloc when he wrote in the *Courier* that the greatest achievement of the 2/2nd Commando Association was the remarkable way it had stuck together.

"The comradeship," he said, "has the quality of the highest grade cement fused with the highest quality of granite." And that, indeed, is a great legacy.

It is exemplified by the safaris held every few years when men come from all over Australia simply to remember and renew their friendship.

The last safari, at Busselton, was a triumph of planning, content and execution; the next, at Maroochydore, I am confident, will be equally successful.

Recently, I have been in touch with one of the organisers, Neil Hooper, with whom I share good memories. Big Hoop has long been one of my favourite Australians 6ft 4ins, 17st, or whatever ... laconic and easy-going, the archetypal ridgy-didge.

I never fail to associate him with things I can best call allegoric western, and a small town in Portuguese Timor called Ainaro.

This town had many overtones of the wild West and provided a rich tapestry of people and events.

You climbed a mountain from Atsabe, reached a ridge on the top. You were stinking and sweaty and, if you had been sleeping in the native huts, scratching madly at head and body lice. The diet mainly had been boiled rice and sweet potatoes, not very nutritious. Somewhere behind you in the mountains were other sections and, of course, the barbarians, bent on doing you the utmost mischief.

Then you looked down from the ridge and saw Ainaro nestling in a rich green valley. It was a tribute to Portuguese colonial planning. The villas, chinese shops and steeped church were of white stucco, one street slightly cobbled a la Avenida Liberdade in Lisbon. No cars, no vehicles at all, no pollution. A small sparkling river ran along the eastern side.

Shangri-la at last. A great place for a growing boy. But it was to have its dark side too.

My memories now are kaleidoscopic rather than categoric.

Market days were a blaze of colour, with men and women wearing their best batik sarongs. This was long before the Indonesian nation was born and President Sukarno had ordered women to hoist their sarongs under their armpits.

The natives would bring their horses and produce - rice, coffee, tobacco, poultry, eggs and fruit such as paw-paw and yellow and red bananas.

Ainaro seemed frozen in time. Even the enemy fighters and bombers kept away. But signs and portents were there.

We were well aware, of course, that the world as we knew it had fallen apart. The barbarians had taken Singapore and overwhelmed Australia's 2/40th battalion in Dutch Timor. Even then the survivors of that gallant group were on their way to the death camps and Burma railroad.

Alamein, the Solomons, the Kokoda Trail, the great battles of Stalingrad and Kirsik were in the future.

We wondered about Australia and I guess Australia wondered about us. No word since the invasion. But nobody seemed to worry much and I never heard any whinging.

Col Doig had got through and was stricken with terrible fevers. At the time in Ainaro we reckoned that one clean shirt would see him out, if we had had any clean shirts. But he fought back and went on to lead troops in Timor and later in New Guinea and New Britain.

I had the pleasure of ringing him recently and discovering that my call had come on his 84th birthday. I guess the real Ironmen never needed surfboard.

Every day we O-pipped from the church steeple. The sight of rifle barrels sticking out from slats in the white walls seemed somewhat incongruous.

Early on, I sat in a hut next to the church one night in the company of a Dutch priest who owned a radio. He had tuned into the BBC and we heard a statement that went like this "The Australian Minister for Defence, Mr Francis Forde, today sent this message to all Australian and other Allied troops still fighting in the Dutch East Indies: 'Hang on, help will be forthcoming within six weeks.'

Well, Mr Forde later became Prime Minister for a brief period and was knighted. Timor, and most of the Dutch East Indies remained under enemy occupation until the end of the war. I leave politicians to your own judgment.

I was told that the Dutch priest who had the radio was taken by the barbarians and burnt to death. Given their track record, I saw no reason to disbelieve this.

Men in green uniforms kept turning up in Ainaro from what we called the wrong side. We were ordered to ambush one such column. We hid in long grass and Bunny Anderson told us to wait until they got real close before firing. When they got close, we saw that they were native conscripts for the Dutch, with odd-shaped helmets and with rifles and at their side, fearsome looking swords. We shouted the equivalent of "gotcha." They threw up their

hands, let their rifles and swords fall on the ground and we were friends. Later, I suspected they traded their uniforms for sarongs and blended into the local population. Nobody suggested them as likely reinforcements.

Another time, after Squirt Clarke and I had evacuated the town, but were keeping it under observation, we were told to investigate four armed men wandering about the streets.

We hid behind a white wall, shouted "gotcha" and found that they had the high cheek bones and uniforms of Ambonese conscripts, our allies. One of them had a big bandage around his neck. I told him to take it off and, as they had dropped their rifles, he was in no position to argue. He kept trying to tell me that a Japanese officer in Koepang had tried to slice off his head with a ceremonial sword.

But there was no tricking this boy, who knew all about spies and codes and people who hid radios and codes under bandages.

Reluctantly he unbound the bandage and revealed a great gaping hole sliced in the back of his neck. "Gee," I thought, "if this bloke shakes his head its bound to fall off."

He rewound the bandage and he and his companions disappeared into limbo. Regrettably, I never remember apologising to the poor devil.

Malaria, dysentery and tropical ulcers went with the territory in Ainaro, and it wouldn't have been any use trying to get stress leave or counselling. Such things hadn't been invented then.

Games on the village green ... Gerry McKenzie who had led the defence and demolition of Dili aerodrome during the invasion, would stick a loaded revolver into our stomachs day after day.

Finger on the trigger, he would say: "Disarm me."

The idea was to knock down the revolver with one hand and chop his wrist with the other before doing him real damage. Gerry also used to stick his revolver in our back and we were supposed to spin round and give him the old routine.

I never doubted Gerry's expertise, but I certainly doubted my own, especially if confronted by a big, angry barbarian.

Then came news that 3000 of the enemy had landed on the east coast from Koepang and were going to wipe out each and everyone of us.

I don't know who counted the barbarians, but Gerry detailed a patrol to engage them. In a rather stirring message he said we were to "fight to the last man and the last bullet." I did a quick count of heads and thought "What? the whole 12 of us."

After a couple of days march, we got to the point where we were to engage them in mortal combat (our mortality, I suspect).

Wonder of wonders. They had left the day before, diverging into the mountains, possibly to outflank someone or other.

They appeared to have been efficient troops. An inspection showed that, apart from empty cigarette packets and fireplaces, they had left their encampment scrupulously clean.

Anyway, we had no orders – or burning desire – to pursue such a force into the mountains. So, like the swallows came back to Capistrano, we came back to Ainaro, fleet of wing and light of heart.

The nights there were wondrous ... stars so bright and seemingly so close, you felt you could reach out and touch them.

No worries about the barbarians suddenly descending on us. Guards were always posted and every evening, mountain village called to mountain village, presumably to report anything untoward.

Again, we had Peter Campbell and you learned to shake Peter by the foot and whisper: "Pete, your turn for guard." If you shook Peter by the shoulder, he would come at you with both hands round your throat. No wandering Indjun would ever get to scalp Peter, unless he wanted a fatal dose of shortness of breath.

We were with No 2 section in a large Portuguese villa, sleeping on the stone floor of what could have once been an ornate dining room. A log fire burned in the centre of the room and the tableau was perfect western ... shooting irons everywhere, all of them as clean as a whistle, faces lean and bearded, most of them anyway. I tried to be socially correct by growing a beard. I used to burn the fuzz on my face, but succeeded only in getting scorched.

Appropriately, the barbarians, by this time, had officially labelled us "outlaws," put prices on our heads and pronounced death sentences. This merely added to the atmosphere.

Apart from the singing, there wasn't much entertainment, though we got a slight lift when a huge rat bit Squirt on the toe one night ...

Ah, but the singing – straight from the heart and not a care in the world ... Steamboat Billy, The Last Time I saw Paris, the World War One Song: "This world is a world of lies/ Here's a toast to the dead already/ And here's to the next man to die." And every night Big Hoop would wind up proceedings with "Ride Tender foot Ride." It sounded great.

Now, if you're still with me, we'll move to the shootout at the O.K. Corral," or rather the shootout at the Portuguese coffee planter's villa, part way up the mountain to Hatu Bulico.

I was on my way up the mountain (9380 ft, if I recollect correctly), early on a bright and sunny morning.

I had to pass the villa, in which I knew No 2 section had moved.

I thought I would give them a wakey-wakey, cheerio, good morning call.

Now I knew that this mob would put on a blue in an empty house and that they would be a lot worse than hornets if anyone stirred them up.

Nonetheless, I went ahead and fired four or five rifle shots through the roof, before proceeding blithely down the dirt path towards the front door.

Suddenly the front door exploded, and out came Big Hoop, a most formidable sight, wearing only an old pair of khaki shorts. He was barefooted, bare-chested and wild eyed. Worse, he was carrying a rifle under his arm and firing from the hip as he came.

It was a mismatch. I was about seven stone sopping wet in an old khaki shirt and Chinese-made black shorts. Furthermore, my rifle was slung over my shoulder and I had peace in my heart.

At the time I was quite fascinated by the manner in which Hoop was expertly palming the bolt of his rifle for rapid fire. I was even more fascinated by the puffs of dust kicking up around me ... one about a foot from my left foot, one about a foot from my right foot and another about a foot in front of me, and bullets zinging just over the top of my crumpled slouch hat.

Many years later I thought what a ding-a-ling I must have been. The best I could have hoped for was to end up singing in the Sistine Choir or hopping around like Long John Silver, with one leg, and a parrot on my shoulder. But back to that memorable morning.

As I neared Hoop, he lowered his smoking gun and said in a most friendly manner: "Gooday, Curl. How have you been going, mate? Come in and have a cup of coffee."

Very civilised!

So I went in and had a cup of coffee before proceeding up the mountain, as we all proceeded up our various mountains in Timor, New Guinea, New Britain and civilian life.

Childhood days, wildwood days, days of long ago ...

In my post-war pursuit of a quid, I have met world leaders of politics, big business, sport and show business. Many were extremely pleasant, despite obvious egos, lust for power and money oozing out of them.

I never met any I would have preferred to have with me on those patrols through mountains

and flatlands. I don't think they would have gone real well in mud baths like the Usini track.

I have heard academics decrying mateship, claiming there was something odd about it. I suspect that those critical academics had never known comrades.

Certainly, I never heard anyone in this mob singing soprano or expressing a wish to put on ladies' clothing.

Still, every cobbler to his own last.

And so I look forward to Marochydore and seeing blokes from all over ... Bulla from cane farming up north, Theo down from New Guinea. blokes from right round the country to Mandurah in WA, and in Perth Arch, Finky, Don, Jack, Bing and, of course Our Father who art in Floreat, Col Doig. And hallowed be his name for all his dedication and work over the year.

I'll even listen to Big Hoop singing again, without caring that his voice may have broken.

And I trust (or rather hope), that Hoop will greet his guests sans armaments.

I believe (or rather hope again) that after 56 years Big Hoop will accept that his aim might have gone off a bit.

So it goes.

Curly O'Neill

Courier Donations to 16th July 1996

'Blue' Sargent, Syd McKinlay, Jean Palm, Jack Steen, Sheila Forsyth, Bill Howell, Jack, Ken and Doug Hasson, Ron Dook, Col Andrew, John Chalwell, Tony Bowers, Jess Epps, Denny Dennis, Ken 'Blue' Jones, Bruce and Lorraine McLaren, Nina Grachan, Bonnie Criddle, Dot Boyland, Betty Hopkins, Bob Williamson, Joan Stanley, Col Doig, Dick Darrington, Ted Monk, Vince Swann, Edna Fullarton, Ray Aitken, Dusty Studdy, Eric Thornander, Mark Jordan, John Poynton, Stan Payne, Val Hayes, Peter and Pat Campbell, Olive Thornton.

Army Museum Donations to 16th July 1996

Archie Campbell, Bruce and Lorraine McLaren, Eric Thornander.

Independent Trust Fund List No. 13 to 18th July 1996

Eric Thornander	\$250.00
Denny Dennis	75.00
Dot Boyland	50.00
Clarrie Turner	30.00
Olive Thornton	100.00

SICK PARADE

Alf Blundy is in the palliative care section of Hollywood Hospital and is facing up to his problem with great courage and resignation.

Jim Fenwick underwent a major operation in the Royal Canberra Hospital early in July. Jim is making good progress which is good news and a great relief for Joan and the family.

Don Turton had a knee replacement on 12th July in St. Anne's Hospital, Mt. Lawley. Don said the nurses were very attentive and kind - he was almost sorry to leave the place! However, he is now recuperating at home and doing very well.

Recently, Peg Monk had the misfortune to fall and break her left arm.

Our best wishes go to them all.

Address Book Additions, Alterations, Corrections

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COMING EVENTS

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSOCIATION

will be celebrated at a luncheon on

Friday, October 18, 1996

at the Heritage Reception & Function Centre

44 Charles Street, North Perth

**Letters will be sent out to W.A. members and their ladies to
remind them of this important function.**

COMMEMORATION SERVICE

Lovekin Drive, Kings Park

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17th at 3pm

LEST WE FORGET

**Please note DEADLINE for
OCTOBER COURIER COPY
THURSDAY, 19th SEPTEMBER.**