



# **2/2 COMMANDO COURIER**

Print Post approved 637597 / 1646

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

President R. Darrington. Secretary J. Carey. Treasurer T. Monk.

**Vol. 131**

**SEPTEMBER 1999**

**Price 1c**

## **COMING EVENTS**

### **COMMEMORATION SERVICE**

Lovekin Drive, Kings Park, Perth

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21st at 3pm**

Lest We Forget

### **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**

TERRACE HOTEL

195 Adelaide Terrace, Perth

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3rd, 1999**

Refreshments from 11am – Luncheon 12.30pm

Please wear your name tags

Please notify Jack Carey of your intention to attend the Christmas Luncheon  
**NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 27th**

This is essential for catering purposes

### **HOBART SAFARI**

**MARCH 8th - 15th, 2000**

**BOOK NOW**

## Vale Ralph Finkelstein

Ralph passed away in the Hollywood Hospice Section on Sunday, 8th August surrounded by his loving family. In March, 1998 he had a major operation for lung cancer and continued to receive treatment until he died. During this 18 months period, though at times in great pain, Ralph, or Finky as we liked to call him, displayed great courage, maintaining he would beat the dreaded disease right up until the end, but it was not to be.

Ralph, the first son of William and Jean Finkelstein, was born at home in Bulwer Street, Perth on 2nd June, 1920. He was later joined by a brother Lionel and two sisters, Beatrice and Lilly. In his early years the family was often on the move in country areas, so much so that Ralph had attended 13 different schools by the time he left school at the age of 12. He was brought up the hard way. At 10 years he left school for 6 months to help his father on the farm, chopping fence posts. Living in Mary Brook in the south west Ralph would be up at 4.30am, milking cows and doing other chores before going to school and then working up to 7.30pm on returning home. This hard work ensured that he grew up to be a very strong young man with a fine physique. He took up boxing and won a number of state middle weight titles and at one time was a contender for an Australian title. He was proud of his Jewish faith and always wore the Star of David on his boxing shorts when in the ring.

Ralph later joined the 2nd AIF and went on to be a Sergeant Major in the Army Service Corps. He gave up his rank to join the 2/2nd in New Guinea and New Britain, serving in 7 Section. Finky was a good soldier, a top PT instructor, a leading member of the Unit's boxing troupe and was well liked by his mates. After his discharge in February 1946 he learnt the cabinet making trade and during this time met Eve Lederer at a dance. They fell in love and married in May 1948 and so began a wonderful partnership which was to last over 51 years, producing two fine sons Peter William and Paul Henry and later 5 grandchildren, Juanita, Ari, Joel, Jay and Romy. Ralph was always a devoted family man and a terrific grandfather. He did quite well in the furniture game, one of his enterprises being Beaufort Furniture Manufacturers and another retail outlet Capitol Furniture in Mt. Hawthorn. For relaxation he took up bowling and golf and played pennant bowls for many years. He also retained his interest in boxing. He took a keen interest in Association affairs, serving on the committee, he was our Vice President in 1995-96 and President in 1997/98. It was in this last year as President that he became seriously ill but he was determined to carry on until his term was up, displaying great courage and

perseverance. Ralph was made a life member in 1996,

Ralph was interred in the Jewish section of the Karrakatta Cemetery on the 9th August before a large gathering of family and friends. The Rabbi paid a great tribute to Ralph in his eulogy, saying he was 'a good bloke and great Australian.' Ralph always had a great affinity with Zionism and his religious ideals which earned him much respect. The service ended with The service ended with Reveille, the Ode and Last Post. The Association was represented by Keith and Val Hayes, Ray Aitken, Bob Smyth, Doc Wheatley, Don Turton, Ray Parry, Jack Carey.

There were a number of apologies. The Association extends its deepest sympathy to Eve, Paul, Peter and the family.

### Lest We Forget

#### Jack Carey

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#### The Editor

On behalf of Peter, Paul, myself and the family, I would like to thank all those good people of the 2/2nd for the cards and letters of sympathy we received during our recent bereavement. It was a great consolation for us to see former army mates of Ralph present at his funeral service. Ralph was proud to have served with you all and especially proud to have been President of such a fine Association in his final years.

May God be with you.

#### Eve Finkelstein and Family.

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We are sorry to inform you of the passing of Sheila King, wife of our late member, Stan.

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## VALE Mick Holland

Mick (Dutchy) Holland passed away on Monday, 14th June in the Mandurah Hospital following a fatal asthma attack.

Nick was born in the Dardanup Post Office on 17th April, 1924, the 4th child of a family of 8. Mick's mother was a post mistress for 48 years and his father a railway man. Mick was a likable rebel at school and picked up pocket money milking the neighbours' cows. He left school at 14 and for a time worked at Benger with Roy Watson digging spuds. It was in the depression years when jobs were hard to get. Mick was a good little boxer, winning the Bantam weight Cup at 17 when in the Citizen Military Forces. After serving in the 44th Militia

Btm he enlisted in the AIF in August 1942 and went on to join the 2/2 Squadron early in 1943. Mick served in 8 Section in New Guinea and New Britain and was discharged from the Army early in 1946. He was a good soldier, tough, with a good sense of humour and got on well with his Section mates. He caught Dengue Fever in New Guinea and was flown to Queensland until he recovered and rejoined the Unit.

Mick worked as a PMG Linesman in the south west for a couple of years after the war and then did a rehab. course of painting and decorating in Canberra for 3 years. He became a top tradesman and eventually ran his own business. In 1953, at the age of 29, he married Jean Cassey and they had 2 daughters, Pam and Lorraine. They built a home at Carlisle and lived there for 23 years. Mick and Jean were great hosts and their door was always open to their friends and the 2/2nd. At our Commonwealth Games Safari in 1962, they entertained over 200 members and their families at a terrific barbecue evening. Mick was always willing to assist with any of our projects and was made a Life Member in 1998. Mick and Jean eventually moved to Mandurah and enjoyed crabbing, fishing and meeting his old mates at the Mandurah 2/2 functions. Mick liked his beer and used to brew his own. In his early 50's frequent asthma attacks caused a deterioration in his health and forced an early retirement. His health gradually worsened and he suffered a lot in his latter years. Mick was devoted to his 3 grandchildren Josh, Michelle, and Mathew who were the apple of his eye. Mick was 75 when he died.

A special tribute should be paid to Jean for her care and devotion to Mick in those difficult last years.

The 2/2nd was well represented at Mick's funeral at Karrakatta on 17th June.

The Association extends its deepest sympathy to Jean, Pam, Lorraine and families on their sad loss. May he rest in peace.

Lest We Forget

J. Carey

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**VALE:**

**Neil William Singleton-Hooper**

On the 3rd June we lost our very dear friend and mate Neil Hooper after a long period of illness and distress. He was always large in life as well as frame and it is hard to realise is no longer with us. His exploits during his service with the Unit are legendary as his mates in 2 section would know!

Neil was born in Perth on the 5th of June, 1922 and passed away on the 30th May 1999. His mother passed away at an early age and as a five year old went to live with an aunt as his father, a professional singer was frequently on tour with the J. C. Williamson Company. He attended secondary school at New Norcia W.A. where his prowess in all sporting activity showed out. At age sixteen he left school and worked in several positions until at age nineteen he enlisted in what he referred to as the "Hush Hush."

He saw service in 2/2 Independent Company in Timor, New Guinea and New Britain and was a good soldier. While reticent to say much about his war service he played a notable part in the defence of Dili airfield with his beloved 2 section. He served also later in 7 section in the Rabaul area.

Married to Norma McMullen after being discharged from the Army in 1946 he was father to two children James and Margo. Unfortunately Norma passed away after a serious illness and Neil met and married Margaret in 1978. They formed a great partnership.

Together they made a great success in the Hotel Industry. How could they fail with "Hoop's" Mine Host personality and imposing frame. Neil was a caring person of great integrity and his interest in community matters was highlighted in being elected as Mayor of Roma Qld. for a 12 year period 1952 to 1964.

Rest in Peace Neil you were a legend! We will miss you.

Unit members attending were: Tony Adams, Ron Archer and Lyn Love, Butch and Pat Barnier, George and Bettye Coulson, Fred and Ellen Otway, Gordon and Joan Stanley, Jack and Beryl Steen, Paddy and Josie Wilby, Bulla Tait and his daughter, Happy Greenhalgh, Russ Blanch, John and Margaret Evans, Murvin Murphy and Ralph and Sheila Conley.

**Ralph Conley**

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**VALE: Arnold Ray Barnier  
"Butch"**

On Sunday, 13th June our good friend and comrade "Butch" Barnier passed away. He had suffered ill health for some time but in his jocular way made light of his feelings.

Of all things he disliked was being called Arnold and while he outwardly presented as a rough diamond, like the precious stone very hard, was underneath as soft as butter.

I first met Butch in Koepang when he was with 2/11 Field Coy Engineers filling in on occasions

as a transport driver delivering supplies to other units in the area. We met again at Tjamplong Brigade HQ after the Japanese landing in Koepang following an encounter with enemy paratroops and strafing aircraft and the no alternative surrender of our units after three days intensive fighting.

We later met up in D platoon formed at Mape under Don Turton's command. We shared some tough and traumatic times spiced with humour. He was a good soldier. He will be sadly missed by many friends particularly those in the Queensland Commando Association where he was a Past President and Life Member.

Butch was born in Grafton N.S.W. on 3.9.21 having two brothers and two sisters. He married Pat in 1944 in Brisbane and was a dedicated husband to Pat and father to his children Andrea and Greg. His five grandchildren adored him.

He was laid to rest after a Chapel Service at the Anzac Memorial Cemetery "Pinaroo" on 17th June. A large congregation attended representing the many organisations with which he had been associated. Pat, family, and relatives were supported by friends.

Our group included Ron Archer and Lyn Love, George and Bettye Coulson, Fred Otway, Murvin Murphy, Paddy and Jose Wilby, Gordon and Joan Stanley, Margaret Hooper, Jack and Beryl Steen, John Evans, Theo Adam's daughters, Alex and Esse Veovoden, and Ralph and Sheila Conley. Tony Adams was unable to attend as unfortunately Iris was not well.

**Rest in Peace Butch.**

#### **Ralph Conley**

Mr J. Carey and 2/2nd Commando Association,

Your kind expression of sympathy is sincerely appreciated.

#### **Pat Barnier and Family**

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### **VALE Reg Harrington**

**WX13252**

The Association lost one of its most loyal members when Reg passed away peacefully in the Bunbury Hospital on Monday, 31st May. Diagnosed as having cancer of the oesophagus under a year ago and, despite chemotherapy and radium treatment it beat him in the end.

Reg was born in Miling W.A. on 8th December, 1919, one of a family of thirteen to Edward and

Mary Harrington. He spent his boyhood in the Miling, Cowaramup and Mandurah districts going on to complete his education at New Norcia. After working on various farming jobs he enlisted in the 2nd AIF in May 1941 volunteering for the hush hush group and so became an original member of the unit. Reg served in No 6 Section B Platoon in Timor – New Guinea. He was a top soldier, handled difficult situations well and was highly respected in his platoon. He was made a Corporal in 1943. Following his discharge from the army in February 1945 he returned to Miling and then worked for a time on a timber mill at Cowaramup. He then moved to Pithara where he started a carrying business. It was here he met the love of his life in one Dorothy Dickens. They married on the 12th April, 1947 and according to son Laurie his honeymoon was a one night stay in Mandurah before bringing a load of super back to Pithara the next day. Their marriage was to last 47 years before Dot's untimely death in April 1994. They were blessed with five fine boys and a lovely daughter followed by 23 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren – a proud dynasty indeed!

Early in 1948 Reg began farming at Wyening and though they experienced some tough times he and Dot made a success of it. Reg, always a busy man, showed enterprise in building the first self emptying wheat bin in the Bolgart District. A community minded couple they entered into those activities for which country towns are noted. Reg went on to become the President and a Life Member of the Bolgart Bowling Club and a well known and respected figure in the district. Dot too was a leader in the ladies social and charitable works. Both were wonderful supporters of our Association and in November 1965 Reg and Dot opened their farm "Ainaro" to a visit of a bus load of Legacy children who all had a memorable day due to the kindness of the Harrington family. Reg was made a Life member in 1997 for his contribution over a long period. On their retirement he and Dot spent many happy times at Exmouth fishing and enjoying the sunshine. Reg was never really able to accept the loss of his lifelong partner and often spoke of her.

Following a requiem mass at Bolgart, Reg was interred with his beloved Dot at the Toodyay cemetery before a large gathering of the Harrington clan, 125 in number, and many friends (over 500) from surrounding districts and elsewhere. It was a very moving ceremony closing with the Last Post and Reveille. The Association was represented by Tom Martin and Stan Payne (his old 6 section mates), Barbara Payne, Jack and Delys Carey, Keith and Val Hayes, Eric and Twy Smyth, Jess Epps, Joe and Helen Poynton and daughter



Julie Ann, Fred and Robyn Hasson, Tom and Mary Foster, Mavis, Blanche, Margaret and Peter Sadler.

**May he rest in peace – Lest We Forget.**

**J. Carey**

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### **VALE George Timms**

**WX11477**

George Ormonde Timms was born in Victoria on 28th August, 1919 of a large farming family. He went to school at Dandenong and at the age of 18 moved to Western Australia. After spending a few years working on the land George enlisted in the 2nd AIF in May 1941. Being a natural bushman he had no trouble being accepted for the hush hush group which, after training in Victoria became the No. 2 Independent Company. George went on to serve in Timor, New Guinea and New Britain with the Unit before his discharge in January, 1946. He was a top soldier, possessing great stamina, a keen sense of humour and an infectious laugh.

He served in 8 and 9 Sections in 'C' Platoon and was made a corporal in April 1945. On leave from Timor early in 1943, George met and married nursing sister Nancy Beeck, a marriage which lasted over 56 years and was blessed with a fine family of 4 sons and 2 daughters. Not long after his discharge he obtained a land grant and commenced wheat and sheep farming at Qualeup in the great southern area. With farming in his blood and through sheer hard work George became a very successful farmer. He went on to acquire more properties in the district and saw to it that his sons who had helped him were well looked after.

The family also bought a cattle station in the Pilbara where George and Nancy spent many happy days. In the 1970's he retired in Como and in the 1990's bought a small property at Wolsley near Collie where he and Nancy had a busy time building up a small orchard. Unfortunately, George developed a severe cardiac problem which gradually worsened and as a result they were obliged to sell up and move back to Como to be close to specialist care.

Tragically, over the last 12 months George suffered great pain and although he fought hard it was too much and he died peacefully in the St. John of God Hospice, Murdoch on 9th July, 7 weeks short of his 80th birthday. George always wanted to know how his old mates were getting on and was good to Jack Wicks during his illness. George was better known as Pat to his family and friends.

A burial service was held in the Fremantle Cemetery on the 15th July. George's mother was a member of the well known Samson family of Fremantle. Representing the Association were J. Burrige, T. Bowers, Jess Epps, K. Hayes, M. Wheatley, D. Murray, J. Poynton, P. McPhee, R. Parry, J. Carey, Bernie and Babs Langridge, Bill and Iris Rowan-Robinson and daughter Janice.

The Association extends its deepest sympathy to Nancy and the family.

**Lest We Forget**

**J. Carey**

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### **VALE Neil Blight**

**TX 3463**

I regret to advise that Neil passed Away on 30th May last. He was an original member of the 2/40 Btn as was his brother Merven who became a POW. Neil was a bit luckier. When the fighting broke out on 19th February, 1942 when the Japs invaded Timor Neil, who was in the Transport Section of HQ Company, was able to make it to Atomboia and then with others into East Timor to join the 2/2nd. He served in Campbell Rods Section throughout 1942 and was evacuated from the island late in December with the main body. Due to his poor state of health he was not transferred into the 2/12th Btn as many of his 2/40th mates were, and his continuing bad health resulted in his discharge in January 1944.

Neil was a good soldier and was always grateful to the 2/2nd for giving him a chance to survive. In civilian life he was a waterside worker but he was still subject to bouts of ill health which resulted in his early retirement. He had the misfortune to lose his wife Iris late last year, after being 50 years together and this set him back.

He enjoyed the Courier and attended many of the 2/40 Btn Association reunions, the last being in February of this year. He also advised that he would be attending the Hobart Safari but it was not to be.

Neil's funeral service was held at Burnie before a large gathering of relations, waterside workers and his R and SL mates.

It seems far too often we hear those bugle calls and those comforting words –

**Lest We Forget**

**Bert Price**

**Tasmania**

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**Fred Broadhurst**  
**140 Christmas Street**  
**Fairfield 3078**

To the 2/2nd Family

I would like to take this opportunity to say farewell to a great mate. Roy Duncan Campbell (Jock) 31.7.23 - 11.1.99.

Jock and I first met when we were selected for reo's to 6 Section 2nd Independent Company at the finish of the Commando Course at Canungra after a shoot at the rifle range we became 1 and 2 on the Bren and a great lifelong friendship was started.

Jock was a quiet achiever – a great person, a great sense of humour, he never complained, just did what had to be done and did it well. He was a cool customer, unflappable in all circumstances.

On 2.5.43 we moved out of Canungra. On 16.6.43 we embarked on the Duntroon to Port Moresby, then on to Goroka, Bundi, Fiata, our last patrol Yaula.

We returned from Yaula to Fiata and walked out of there to Dumpu. Flew from there to Lae, by barge across the mouth of the Markum River and by truck to Wau where we were fed on fresh meat and fresh vegies for a month or so and played some sport to keep fit. The idea was to fill us out so our family would recognise us when we got home (the idea was a failure).

We landed back in Australia on the Taroona on 8.9.44.

After leave we assembled back at Strathpine, Queensland before going to New Britain on 9.4.45 to Jacquinot Bay, from there by boat up the east coast to Wide Bay and patrolled across the Island to Open Bay. It was here the Unit reorganised, NCOs to officers school, officers to training units like Canungra and the like.

Jock was transferred to our Intelligence Section.

The bomb was dropped, surrender signed and we moved by barge to Rabaul.

Back to Australia, disembarked Brisbane 29.1.46, returned to Melbourne for discharge on points system.

**Fred Broadhurst**

on one occasion delivered a telegram personally to Dame Nellie Melba and was upset because he said 'she didn't give me a tip!'

After leaving school he did casual engineering work but like many people pre World War II during the depression years, he found life very hard. In 1943 he enlisted in the AIF and joined the Australian 2/2nd Cav. Commando Squadron at Canungra. He saw active service in New Guinea and New Britain. All soldiers had nick names – his was naturally SPUD!

After his discharge in 1946 he met in Sydney and married in Brisbane, Doris Dobbie who lived at Ipswich. There was one daughter from their marriage, Rosemary Margaret, who grew up and went to school from the family home at Mt. Gravatt. She married Henry Shannon and they have had three children, Lucinda, Charles and Marianne. A large part of their life has been spent in Tasmania and Murv visited them frequently. As Dad and Grandad those visits were very popular with his family. .

Prior to moving to Mt. Gravatt Murv worked at the Ipswich Railway Workshop. No doubt his engineering experience and qualifications helped but in 1952 business became slack and he became a tram conductor on the Brisbane Trams and earned a Courtesy Award from the C.W.A. When the tram era ended he was retrained as a bus driver and for some years prior to his retirement he was the Depot Master at the Carina Bus Depot.

Murv had many other interests and activities. In 1956 he joined the CMF 9th Bn and rose to the rank of Battalion Warrant Officer Class 1. As such he was not averse to keeping all ranks, including junior officers in step!

He was a member of the 2/2 Commando Association of Australia, a member and committee member of the Queensland Commando Association, a member of the Cooparoo Sub Branch RSL and Services Club.

Murv was a top kind, caring husband, father, grandad and uncle. He was my best and great army mate – we served together in the Commandos. He will be missed and remembered by many for a long time.

**Ron Archer**

**Lest We Forget**

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**VALE: Murvin Llewellyn Murphy**

Murvin Murphy was born in Brisbane on 25/7/922 where he grew up and was educated. He spent some of his school holidays with his uncle, Captain Eric Bartlett stationed at the Fortress Artillery, South Head, Sydney. At times he was a telegram boy while there and

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**VALE: Lt-Col John Cardy**

**Soldier, Philosopher**  
**1912 - 1999**

Everyone who knew him called him George, although perhaps not to his face. Lieutenant Colonel John Cardy, who has died at the age of 87, was a remarkable army officer.

John Allan Cardy was born at Enfield, near London, and ran away to sea when he was 14, signing on as a galley hand on a merchant ship.

When he arrived in Sydney he worked in a variety of jobs, before saving up his fare to return home.

Back in England, he decided to join the army and (as he'd never tire of telling anyone who would listen) he chose the King's Royal Rifle Corps because it was the best regiment in the British Army, it had won the Great War, and its soldiers didn't waste their time polishing brass buttons – theirs were painted black.

He served in India for the next seven years, in action on many occasions against the Pathan tribesmen on the North West Frontier. He was awarded the North West Frontier Medal for that service (but didn't wear it while in the Australian Army; he thought that would be pretentious).

In 1937 the Australian Government called for volunteers from the British Army to become instructors in the Australian Instructional Corps, professional soldiers who were charged with training the militia divisions of the citizen army.

Part of the success of the AIF in the early stages of the war – including the capture and defence of Tobruk – can be traced directly to the training those soldiers received from the AIC. One of their instructors was Sergeant Cardy, who made his second journey to Australia, this time to stay for good.

As a warrant officer he served with distinction on Timor with the 2/2 Independent Company. He took part in an action against the Japanese in Dili.

His platoon commander – the legendary "Bull" Laidlaw – told him to take his section of 20 soldiers and annoy the Japanese garrison of some 2,000 men. Laidlaw would later recall: "I expected Cardy to nibble around the edges but he took his section right into Dili and attacked the Japanese headquarters. We had heard a lot about the fanatical fighting skills of the Japanese. But after Cardy and his men attacked, all I could see was a great deal of bloody fanatical running."

Postwar, and with promotion to captain, Cardy was posted to various units until 1955, when he was appointed adjutant and quartermaster of I Commando Company – a CMF unit based at Georges Heights, Sydney. When the commanding officer left for England soon after, Cardy became acting CO, adjutant and quartermaster, positions normally held by three officers.

Aided by two warrant officers and a sergeant from the Royal Marines, he set about turning national servicemen into commandos any

wartime unit would have been proud of. No quarter was given or expected in the quest for the Green Beret.

Cardy did all his commando tests with his men and, in July 1956, became one of the first Australian soldiers to be awarded a Green Beret. He was then 44; most of the soldiers on that parade were half his age.

He spent the last 10 years of his career at Victoria Barracks Paddington, as a major quartermaster, a vanishing breed.

He retired in 1972, put his age back 10 years and got a job with British Petroleum, serving it for a further decade. On turning 60 for the second time, he retired again.

A devoted family man, he had six children – Margaret John, Phillip, Patricia, Christine and Robert – from his first marriage to Mary, who died suddenly. In 1971 he married Rosario (Sary), who also survives him.

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## News from the NSW North Coast

Maclean

Dear Len,

The Sit Rep from the north coast is not as good as I would have liked, however we're all still on deck. Like yourselves, the 'flu hit pretty hard over here and although I had the needle for the first time I got a bad dose. I agree with you Len, I think there are different varieties.

Russ Blanch is OK after having a visit to intensive care in Lismore Base. Had a few dizzy spells etc. but all reports came back OK from Sydney. Russ has to go to Sydney in October for further Laser treatment to his left eye. His garden took a battering during our wet spell and he reckons will not be as good this year as he would have liked.

I spoke to Ted Cholerton on the phone and he reports that he is slowly recovering and feeling better each day.

Along with Tom Yates I visited Jim Cullen in the aged care unit at the Kyogle Hospital. Beryl is in attendance every afternoon keeping Jim's spirits up. Beryl tells me that she is sure Jim recognised Tom and Happy. I hope so. Beryl is doing a wonderful job and I guess most of us have been very fortunate in our choice of partners. Tom Yates continues to keep good health and looks it.

I spoke to Eric Herd from Iluka and noticed in the local paper that his wife enjoyed a lovely birthday party at the Iluka Golf Club. About 60 attended and from all reports they had a great time.

Ken and Edith Jones report all's well at

Barraba and they are looking forward to Hobart next year. I had previously spoken to Ken just before he was going to a golf tournament. When I asked him how he'd performed he suggested I had better forget about it. Being an old golfer, I know what he meant.

Jack and Beryl Steen still going strong although Jack tells me he is on tablets which hopefully will stave off having to have a by-pass. We all hope they are successful. Jack rang me about the passing of Spud Murphy which news I passed on to Russ and Blue.

Since the big wet finished we've had about three weeks of really good winter weather. Days in low 20s after nights averaging about 7 or 8°. It's now beginning to look like Spring. As the bloke sez 'the Spring is sprung, the grass is riz!

Best regards to all in the West and all Courier readers.

**Happy**

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## NEWS FROM QUEENSLAND

A very much smaller group than usual met at the North Pine Dam on Monday, 12th July for a barbecue and get together.

The roll up included Ron Archer, Lyn Love, Margaret Hooper, Beryl and Jack Steen, Margaret and Jack Evans (friends of the Steens), Betty and George Coulson, Murvin Murphy, Pat Barnier and Andrea her daughter and Ralph and Sheila Conley.

It was great to see Margaret and Pat present. Apologies were received from Tony Adams and Gordon and Joan Stanley. Our day was somewhat subdued than usual and we missed our departed mates' company.

You will notice I have mentioned our Ladies' names before the men in this epistle. Sheila said it was about time they had a priority!

Sorry for the brevity. More news next time.

Best wishes to all from Queensland.

**Ralph Conley**

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## Thanks from Geraldton:

I would like to pass on a big thank you to the great Secretary of our wonderful Association, Jack Carey, for the 'Get Well Soon' card sent to my wife Joan and for the warm manner in which he and Del. expressed their feelings and best wishes. The great news is that Joan is making a pleasing recovery after 7 weeks in St. John of God Hospital where she received wonderful attention for firstly a stroke she

suffered in hospital and then for a broken hip the day she was originally discharged. Joan was showered with priestly and episcopal blessings (our Bishop Justin Bianchini has proved a wonderful Bishop) during those risky periods of her hospitalisation, those providing this great support including retired brother, Monsignor John Barden of Como who has been relieving at Mullewa and Mingenew.

Hearty congratulations to George Shiels of Bowen, Queensland, on receiving the highest RSL award, the Meritorious Medal, and to his beloved Margo on providing a copy of the newspaper cutting headed "RSL Legend Honoured." We have a constant reminder of your Geraldton visit Margo, in the form of that lovely tea towel featuring the many attributes of the Bowen area).

Back to Geraldton News: 'More Accolades for RSL' was the heading that the 'Geraldton Guardian' newspaper have to my news item about our Sub-Branch and its Auxiliary again achieving the double in the state-wide prestigious Collett Cup and Country Cup competitions. The Collett Cup is awarded annually for the most meritorious service by a country sub-branch and the Country Cup for the most meritorious service by a country Auxiliary. Geraldton has won the Collett Cup 26 times and the Auxiliary the Country Cup 29 times and the double has been achieved 18 times. It was again my privilege as PRO to compile the Collett Cup submission. Concept plans for the HMAS Sydney II memorial project at Mt. Scott, Geraldton, created immense interest when displayed here in June, to be followed by presentation of a model of the project by renowned sculptors Charles and Joan Smight Gidgegannup. It has been described as a wonderful concept that will be unique.

The Department of Land Administration has vested in the RSL a block next to Birdwood House for a Memorial Park involving a memorial wall, a gazebo, flagpole, landscaping and memorial trees including 2 Gallipoli Pines that have been nurtured by Frank and Gillian Sharp.

**Peter Barden**

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## 18 Andrews Court Padbury 6025

Friends of the 2/2, the end of an era has been thrust upon our family with the passing of Dad 5 years after Mum. I'm writing to express my feelings to what the 2/2 has meant to me over the years. My first memory of the 2/2 was the exciting wait for our Xmas presents to arrive through the mail. Because it was a busy time on the farm we couldn't make it to the Xmas

Tree. The presents were always exactly what we wanted, well done by the organisers. Then there was our holidays at Rockingham with Hassons, visiting Jerry and Norine Haire. I do believe I let his chooks out of their yard on one of our visits. Then there was the visit to the farm of the children from Sister Kate's. Many times during the later years I was fortunate enough to go along with Dad to be part of your functions. My respect for you all really increased when I was privileged to take a group of you to the Barossa Valley and to see the respect and love you showed to the widows and each other, this was truly impressive. That trip was a true highlight of my life. The commemoration service has been a special day as we start by having lunch with our friends the Sadlers in Kings Park. My children really look forward to the commemoration service and have already marked this years date to go along in respect of their Grandfather and all his mates. Mavis and Blanche same time same place. To all our friends of the 2/2, thank you for allowing us to be part of your life and thank you for being part of ours for so many years. Best wishes to you all and good health. I'm truly proud to say my father was a 2/2 commando.

Yours sincerely  
**Laurie Harrington**

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**Mrs M. Hooper,  
 3 Yiada Street,  
 Kedron 4031**

To all my friends from the 2/2nd family who have phoned, sent letters and expressed sympathy in Neil's passing. It is much appreciated to know so many of you care. It was pleasing to see so many Unit members at the cremation service, especially 'Bulla' Tait, 'Happy' Greenhalgh and Russ Blanch who came such long distances to attend. To quote from the language of our era, Neil was a Good Bloke and will be sadly missed. On behalf of Butch, Margo and myself we sincerely thank you all.

I would like to be kept on the mailing list for the Courier and enclose a donation for same.

Kindest regards,

**Margaret**

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**Mrs J. Holland,  
 2 Moat Street,  
 Mandurah 6210**

Dear Jack and Delys

Thank you for all your help in organising Mick's funeral. It was very much appreciated by Pam, Lorraine and myself. Mick died of an asthma

attack and it was very quick, thank goodness, as he had been in a lot of pain the past couple of years.

Those of the 2/2nd who attended the funeral were – Joe and Helen Poynton and Julie Ann, Jim Lines, Bill and Elvie Howell, Ray Parry, John Burrridge, Doc Wheatley, Keith Hayes, Charlie, Mary and Paddy King, Don Turton, Jack and Delys Carey, Tony Bowers, Dusty Studdy, Don May, Bernie and Babs Langridge, Jessie Epps, Colleen Strickland and her daughter and grand daughter, Len and Betty Bagley, Nellie Mullins, Ray Shaw. Apologies from Archie Campbell, Don and Ida Murray.

It was a real pleasure to see them all and I very much appreciated their moral support.

Thank you friends, and I look forward to seeing you under more pleasant circumstances in the near future.

Yours sincerely

**Jean**

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**Mrs B. Hopkins,  
 14A Norman Street,  
 Bentley 6102**

Dear Jack,

Enclosed is a donation towards Courier expenses.

Fond regards to one and all.

Sincerely,

**Betty**

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**Mrs P. Sinclair  
 5/405 Beach Road  
 Beaumaris 3193**

I send, with gratitude to the East Timorese, and particularly Bonabere, my late husband's Creado, \$100 towards the benefit of the East Timorese. My husband was Ken Piesse of the 2/4th Commando Association and also 'Z' Force.

Thank you for your efforts to help these wonderful people.

Sincerely,

**Patricia Sinclair**

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**F. Broadhurst  
 140 Christmas Street  
 Fairfield 3078**

We hope this finds you all well as it leaves us down here. Vale Ray Splatt on 25.6.99. With the 7 Vales in the last Courier and 3 since, its a

bit hard to take. Commiserations from the 2/2nd Family to all the widows, families and loved ones. I remember when we came out of New Guinea they walked us through the hospital and the doctor said if any of you blokes reach 50 you will be lucky. From then on I have always looked at every day as a bonus. Best wishes to all.

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**J. Reid**  
**11 Charlton Road St.**  
**Arnaud 3478**

Enclosed please find a donation to help the Timorese people. I was in 2/4th Independent Coy in Timor. Perhaps without their help I would not be writing this note. I was a friend of Cliff Morris, we were in the same Section. He was always the Timorese people champion and never stopped trying to help their cause. I am ashamed to be an Australian after the way the Timorese were and are still being treated. All governments of all kinds since then are responsible. I doubt if things are going to improve as we have a weak lousy government. We seem to help all types of people in different countries and the ones that really helped us during the war are forgotten. I have read a book called 'Hidden Agendas' by John Pilger. There was a very good part about the Timorese and the way they were betrayed by Australian Governments - part of it because of an oil agreement with Indonesian dictatorship.

Many thanks for the help with the appeal.

Regards and best wishes to all concerned.

**Jack Reid**

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

Once again its time for my cheque toward the Courier. We look forward to receiving it as it keeps us in touch with quite a few of the Unit we know. It also saddens us to see so many have Passed on. We will miss our Phone calls from Dorothy Trengove, a very dear friend and Lady.

This is the third winter we have spent in the sapphire gem fields out from Emerald, Queensland. Have even had some cold nights here, but days mostly near 24°. At home its chiefly been 17, a bit too cold for comfort. The sapphires have been a bit scarce this year, but have seen a few 20 to 30 carat ones in other sieves. We came up here to the gem field in May and will probably go home in October. Lots of people from S.A. come each year too. Have met some from each state as well as

Switzerland. Had a few from Tasmania who transported their cars and vans over on the ferry.

I regret we will not be making the trip to Tasmania next year as I still can't face the plane trip.

Our very best wishes to all.

**George and Gloria**

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**R. Griffiths**  
**2/36 Wandoo Street**  
**Luton 2705**

Enclosed is a cheque for the Courier. The last several months have been rather hard with the loss of my wife of 64 years and stays in hospital. Have had five different specialist doctors giving me the once over. Fortunately I have got well again and decided to walk over what is known as Tulleys Hill for my 92nd birthday. You will recall when in Timor we had Creados to help us. Enclosed you will find photos of myself and Creado (wife) on top of Tulleys Hill. You will notice I have modernised the Creado trade. Tulleys Hill is too hard to walk over too often so the Murrumbidgee River is about 9 miles from where I live so that is where I go for my exercise which is recommended by my medical advisers. My family and friends get concerned because I live alone and cook and look after myself. I don't get lonely when I can walk over Tulleys Hill and down by the river where the blue gums are growing and the birds are singing. Don Turton was my Captain on Timor and he taught me to be tough.

Kind regards to all.

Yours sincerely,

**Reg**

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**Lois Davies**  
**18 Ann Street**  
**Dickey Beach**  
**Caloundra 4551**

I enclose my cheque. Please take for the Courier and put the rest in the Trust Fund. I do enjoy reading all the news and occasionally a familiar name I remember Eric (my late husband) mentioning. Query: If there has been a book written on the 2/2nd I would be very interested to obtain a copy. Thank you in advance.

Best wishes to all.

**Lois**

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**J. Cory**  
**PO Box 607**  
**Goondiwindi 4390.**

Further to "A plea for Timor" appearing in our 2/4th newsletter I enclose cheque for \$300 towards your fund to assist the Timorese.

Yours sincerely,

**John Cory 2/4.**

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

Well, another Anzac Day has been and gone. I had a good day as usual with my mates, "tears and laughter" and memories. Hope you had a good day too.

Our waterfront just finished a walk way and bike track which goes for miles around our beautiful Lake Macquarie. It is very popular especially with walkers, also the Rotunda for bands and concerts (bring your own chair).

Bill's tie pin broke so I had it made into a brooch which looks good on my lapel on Anzac Day.

Please find enclosed my donation to the Courier.

I will close now, wishing everyone 'Good Health.'

**Helen Cowie**

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**J. Fox**  
**47 Rowans Road**  
**Highbett 3190**

I have been going to send this cheque for some years but age catches up and memory goes. Arthritis has caught up with me and writing is painful, although I am really well. Put the cash towards the Courier costs.

Regards,

**Jack Fox**

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**K. Carthew**  
**18 Brixton Road**  
**Elizabeth North 5113**

The Editor,

Just a few lines from South Australia, only one or two things to mention. Everything is reasonably quiet here.

Bert Bache had a triple by-pass in June. He is doing well., still a bit tired.

The 2/2nd Association members here send their condolences to the family of Reg.

Harrington. We were sorry to hear of his passing. I knew Reg. reasonably well as he was one of the Corporals in 6 Section but not the sub-section I was in.

Also our condolences to Neil Hooper's family.

On a lighter note, we saw where the West Coast Eagles went down to Tiger power from Victoria. The Crows here have suffered some serious injuries to their players and the rest are not playing up to their best. The other team, Port Power, has had a successful run of late and could make the 8. It's amazing where Port gave away a player who went home and is now the top goal kicker in the AFL.

We still have our luncheons once a month at the Lakes Hotel. Alan and Hazel always attend and both look well. On the 25th July I attended the Korean/Vietnam Memorial at Hindmarsh to celebrate cessation of hostilities in 1954.

Regards to all

**Kel**

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**L. A. Mitchell**  
**2/35 Canberra Terrace**  
**Caloundra 4551**

A few lines to let you know we have a change of address as above.

I received the Courier this week and it was frightening to read how many have passed on. We are getting old and it is taking its toll.

Please give all members our kindest regards and that goes for you both and John.

Enclosed cheque to do with as you wish.

**Allan**

---

**Mrs Augusta O'Connor,**  
**23 Averil Street,**  
**Abbey, Busselton 6280**

Enclosed donation for the Courier or whatever.

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## PROPOSED ITINERARY

### HOBART SAFARI 8th-15th MARCH 2000

**Day 1 – Wednesday 8th:** Arrive Hobart. Book in Hobart Motor Inn. Evening welcoming barbecue at Navy Club.

**Day 2 – Thursday 9th:** Morning – pay dues. Afternoon – bus trip to Mount Wellington followed by Civic Reception at Town Hall by Lord Mayor.

**Day 3 – Friday 10th:** Memorial Service at Derwent Barracks 1100hrs followed by BBQ Luncheon arranged by R.S.M. 12/40 Battalion. Evening free.



**Day 4 – Saturday 11th:** Suggest visit Salamanca Markets and Antarctic Adventure Exhibition during day. Evening - Official Dinner at Hobart MacQuarie Motor Inn at 17.30 hrs.

**Day 5 – Sunday 12th:** Morning free. Afternoon Ecumenical Church Service 1400 hours. Evening free.

**Day 6 – Monday 13th:** Bus Trip - Port Arthur Guided tour includes short boat trip. Spit Roast Lunch - Tasman Service Club. Evening Free.

**Day 7 – Tuesday 14th:** Morning – General Meeting of Members. Afternoon guided tour Cadburys. Evening free.

**Day 8 – Wednesday 15th (Final day.):** Bus trip through Huon Valley. Lunch at R.S.L. Club Evening wind up at Hobart R.S.L. Club. Auld Lang Syne.

It can be seen that Bert Price and his small team have put a lot of work into setting up this Safari. Bert in particular. It looks a great itinerary.

If you have not yet booked and intend coming – do it right away. Send \$50 cheque or whatever to :

**The Manager  
Hobart Motor Inn  
167 Macquarie St Hobart 7000**

You'll be sorry if you miss it!

## HOBART SAFARI BOOKINGS

**8-15th March 2000 as at 5/8/99.**

**W.A. (17):** Mrs J. Chatfield, Mrs N. Mullins, Mrs J. Epps, Mrs B. Perry, Mr E. Weller, Mr and Mrs J. Carey, Mr and Mrs J. Chalwell, Mr and Mrs E. Smyth, Mr and Mrs B. Langridge, Mr and Mrs T. Foster, Mr and Mrs M. Jordan. Mr and Mrs P. Campbell.

**N.S.W. (14):** Mrs B. Cralg, Mrs K. Press, Mr R. Blanch, Mr H. Greenhalgh, Mr and Mrs A. Luby, Mr and Mrs P. Kenneally, Mr and Mrs J. Keenahan, Mr and Mrs K. Jones, Mr and Mrs W. Coker.

**U.K. (2):** Mr and Mrs I. Ronald

**Vic. (8):** Mrs P. Petersen, Mrs Van Dyk, Mrs M. Monk, Mr D. Thomson, Mr and Mrs L. Cooper, Mr and Mrs D. Brown

**Qld. (2):** Mr and Mrs G. Sheils

**A.C.T. (2):** Mr and Mrs D. Daniels

**A total of 47 in all.**

## Courier Postage Charges

Earlier this year we wrote to the Department of Veterans Affairs seeking a grant of \$500 to \$600 to cover the costs of postage on the four issues of the Courier we send to members each year. We considered this to be a reasonable request. The Department replied saying our request did not qualify for assistance under the present provisions.

We intend to pursue this request further and also decided to ask the Australian Commando Association to write to Veterans Affairs on our behalf.

A copy of Mr Emery's submission follows.

**The Honourable Bruce Scott MP  
Minister for Veterans Affairs  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600**

Dear Minister

I have been appraised by our West Australian Branch, the 2/2nd Commando Association of their submission to you with respect to their difficulty in keeping contact with their Members and the families of deceased Members. This problem is not limited to our WA Branch.

I have had the opportunity of reading copies of letters of 27th August, 1998 to you from Maj. Gen. J. Whitelaw, the letters of 19th February, 1999 and 12th April, 1999 from our WA Association to you and your reply of 26th March, 1999 and that of Mr Gary Kent of your Office of 7th May, 1999 with regard to possible assistance to small associations in the publishing of news letters.

My Association accepts the fact that such assistance does not come within any current program of your Department.

We submit that unit newsletters are a most important aspect of the work of associations such as ours. They keep members, and in many cases widows and families in contact with former comrades and friends made both during and after the war. These newsletters also remind members that in any difficulties they may encounter, they may call upon others for assistance. These two factors are not only most important in keeping up the "morale of the troops" but are a means of passing on to members news of the activities of your Department and of any changes in entitlements.

My Association fully endorses the thrust of the suggestions made by Maj. Gen Whitelaw towards the end of his letter referred to above. We would suggest some minor changes but realise that they would not be relevant at this stage.

Our submission is that your Department would

be doing a great service in particular to remaining World War 11 Veterans, but also to the community generally, by giving consideration to even a limited program which would assist unit associations (and associations such as ours which cover a number of small units) to keep contact with their members and the families of deceased members. Without such assistance, it is feared, that in the very near future we could well lose contact and our welfare work would be greatly inhibited.

Yours sincerely

**H C Emery QC**  
President

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**Mrs G. Penrose**  
**'Cleavecourt', Bingara 2404**  
**(02) 6720 4169**

The Editor

Dear Sir

I am writing to you on the advice of Sandy McNab, 1st Independent Company, with whom I have done a deal of work through the years.

On the 18th August, 1942 a Catalina A24-4 Captain Gil Thurston and crew, flew supplies to Commandos on Timor and brought out 13 wounded. This was a particularly memorable operation as the Cat had trouble with one engine, and could not get off the water until about 1400 hours, having landed the evening before.

Radio Officer Bernard Harte is the sole living survivor of this Catalina crew and he wonders if anyone can remember this operation, who were the 13 wounded brought out and if any are still alive. Bernard remembers them as Commandos because that was the reason of their flight. Sandy said it was also possible they could have been wounded men/officer remnants which the Commandos had picked up and wanted evacuated.

Would it be possible to put a letter of enquiry to this effect in your Newsletter encapsulating this story. I took the bare facts from Jack Riddell's book, Catalina Squadrons 1941-43, but I know I have read the story in greater detail in another book but cannot isolate it in my library. I am currently editing Bernard's autobiography and he would love to locate the names and possibly any of the men they brought out on that trip.

If any of your readers can add to this story, and Sandy is only using logic that it was the 2nd for the time frame on Timor, I would appreciate any information if they could write to me at the above address.

Yours sincerely,

B. (Mrs) Gael Penrose

**Editor's Note:** If anyone can provide information on the above, please drop me a line. The first Catalina flight taking wounded out was much earlier than this one.

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**Excerpt from one of more than 150 wartime experience articles by Bernard Harte, proprietor and journalist in Port Macquarie News, Wednesday, May 24, 1995 –**

### **"Timor"**

In August 1942 we flew across to Portuguese Timor, then occupied by the Japs.

Our mission was to bring out 13 sick and wounded Australians, being members of a platoon of commandos of an Independent Company, AIF. We arrived at the rendezvous at dusk, suitably timed not to disturb the Nips unnecessarily. Our big problem was to sit our Catalina on the open sea on the edge of the surf. The next problem was to prevent her from being washed ashore, knowing that one light anchor wouldn't hold, so we took a couple with us, plus a few drogues.

Using a couple of rubber duckies we took a long rope ashore and with the ready co-operation of able-bodied Independents fastened it to a coconut tree. The rope then became our lifeline. For the next six hours or so, taking it in turns, we worked our way along the rope in our rubber duckies carrying supplies ashore for the commandos moving into Dutch Timor. Each parcel had been wrapped in an oilskin ground sheet, to keep the water out.

Just as the last roll of the surf was dashed on to the beach, willing helpers would grab us as the ducky turned turtle spilling its contents. On the return journey to the Cat we would take one passenger at a time avoiding the huge float coming down on our head, as we manoeuvred our way along the rope.

We had to be off the water before dawn to avoid the regular early morning lap coast patrol by Zero fighters. But, luck was against us. As dawn broke, we could only get one engine going, which meant going around in circles until we dropped anchors again, standing out to sea.

Things were getting a bit sticky, what with 13 soldiers entombed in our Cat, avoiding being washed ashore, and still no second engine. For some unknown reason, the regular patrol was cancelled that morning enabling us to have a gander at the faulty engine.

As we didn't have a full crew on this operation, so as to keep the weight down, working on the faulty engine was a bit of a problem. We surmised, correctly, that the starter motor on the dead engine had been burn out, pointing to

a hand start. In other words cranking it up with a handle just like the old days with cars, except our crank-handle was more than four feet in length.

To turn over a huge twin-row aero engine was an almost impossible job for one man – being me. However, the officer in charge of the contingent came to my rescue. For the next hour or so we cranked away until, ten minutes after noon, the engine burst into life.

Just before the engine came alive, I well recall the skipper, Gil Thurston, standing on top of the pilot's cabin wringing his hands, at the same time smiling. 'Bernie,' he said, 'this is the unhappiest day of my life!' Well, this is a nice time to tell me,' was my quick exasperated retort. The skipper's comment must have spurred me on. Minutes later we were taxiing for take off, but not before I had a few qualms about staying on board.

As soon as the engine came good the blast nearly blew me off the mainplane. However there was a hand grip just below the engine cowling, which I grabbed and then slewed down towards the open blister on my belly, while someone held my ankles. It was now 12.20 and thank goodness we were now heading for a take off. A few hours later we were back in Darwin Harbour.

I have often wondered what happened to those commandos. Perhaps not many would be around today to relate these experience of being entombed in a Catalina with a dead engine. I am the only surviving member of that trip's crew. The skipper on that Timor job, Gil Thurston who had a meritorious career flying Sunderlands of 10 Squadron in the European theatre, from 1939 until posted to the South Pacific, survived the war. Sadly he died in Singapore after becoming ill as captain of a Qantas plane on the Sydney-London run. The second Pilot on the Timor job was shot down and killed a few months later.

The engineer, Jack Dewhurst, with whom I crewed up and remained with on every flight until we parted in March 1943, had a grisly death. About that time the RAAF decided we needed a bit of a break from operations. My posting was the first to come through and I was on my way to my loved one March 8.

That night the Squadron CO Wing Commander Chapman decided to put a crew together to do an attack on the Japanese base at Buka on the northern tip of Bougainville. The Cat was loaded with a new type of incendiary. The incendiaries accidentally caught alight when halfway to the target. The flying boat, now in flames, was put down on the sea with outstanding skill and all the crew taken off – unfortunately by the Japs.

The Japs took the crew ashore to their well-

fortified base at Gasmata and decapitated them. Their remains lie in the Rabaul cemetery.

In 1941 I returned to Portuguese Timor, this time as a supernumerary in an Australian-manned B25. We made an attack on a lap gun emplacement. One of the three B25's involved in the mission was shot down. We returned to base unscathed.

As soon as we got back to base I was informed that I had stepped into the wrong aircraft due to a mix-up on the manifest. I should have been on the one shot down, which carried my friend Bernie Wisneski. Luck – once again – was on my side."

**B. Harte**

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### Captain of Voyager at rest

Rupert Robison, born Springwood, May 29, 1909, died Rozelle June 7, 1999.

Lieutenant-Commander Robert Robison was captain of HMAS Voyager when it ran aground on Timor in 1942.

The Commander ordered the destroyer – attacked where it lay on the beach by Japanese bombers – scuttled to prevent it falling into enemy hands.

A naval board of inquiry found the captain had made errors of judgment in his handling of the ship.

Vice-Admiral Sir Harry Burrell, retired chief of naval staff, while agreeing Robison made mistakes in losing his ship, argues he had not been given an opportunity to defend himself. 'Had he been, a different light may have been shown on the picture,' he writes in a post-war study of the incident.

The official navy war history says that Commander Robison was ordered to embark 250 officers and men of the 2/4 Independent Company, as well as tonnes of stores, at Betano Bay. There were no navigational aids or marks on shore to help in anchoring and Robison had nothing by which to navigate save a very rough sketch plan, the history records.

The ship ran aground during the embarkation of the commandos and Admiral Burrell says the captain could have saved the ship – but it might have cost the lives of the troops alongside in the army barges.

Commander Robison, who received a shrapnel wound to his leg in the Japanese bomber attacks was later discharged as medically unfit. According to a nephew, John Robison, the ship's loss weighed heavily on him and he spent much of the rest of his life in psychiatric institutions.

In 1944, for his 'bravery and enterprise' during the Mediterranean Battle of Matapan, in March 1941. Commander Robison was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC). The citation notes that war injuries prevented him receiving the award himself and it was presented to his son, Richard.

The son of an Anglican minister, Commander Robison entered Flinders Naval College as a midshipman in 1923. He gained colours for cricket, tennis and athletics and on passing out was awarded the Governor-General's Cup for sport and the engineering theory prize. He rose rapidly through the ranks and at the outbreak of war was appointed first officer on HMAS Stuart which, along with the Voyager, was part of the famous Scrap Iron Flotilla.

Commander Robison is survived by his son and nieces and nephews.

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## Timor Memories Series 5

### "An Eventful year"

My first impressions were not very satisfactory, camped in a malaria infested swamp. We all caught the bug. I got mine about 3 weeks later.

I was on an O.P. with Sgt Alf Coupland on a mountain just up from Cactus Flat. The object was to watch out for Japanese. It was my turn off the glasses. Heard some Timorese boys making their way up the side, they landed in with Keith Hayes and what a mess he was in.

I was given the job of taking Keith Hayes through to "C" Platoon H.Q. On arriving there found no one was about the place. Did not go into the lines as I thought the place could be booby trapped. I decided to take Keith through to Company H.Q. I did this in slow stages, leaving him in a good safe place, clearing the area to make sure there were no Japs thereabouts, then doubled back for Keith.

Getting on towards dark I was rumbled by 6 or 8 "C" Platoon blokes, I certainly managed to convince them I was one of them. Don Hudson had had his weapon blown out of his hands and all he could support was a wacking great Catana (Big Knife) and I thought he was going to use it on me. I decided to continue on the Company H.Q. via Ermera then Vila Maria, then up the mountains to Company H.Q. (I was talking to Keith some months back and he did not know it was me who did this, said he remembered nothing. I asked him if he remembered falling off the Kuda (Pony), yes he remembered that).

Had a bit of trouble getting back to my own H.Q. as struck a couple of Jap patrols even then got back O.K. Was given the job of taking a message to Dutch H.Q. near Dili. Was on a

push bike. Discovered the torch battery was flat, kept on the road by the parting of the overhead trees, then went bang slap into a Krow (Buffalo) sleeping on the road. Do not know who got the biggest fright. Arrived at the river to find it in flood. Then decided to take the message to Company H.Q. They had shifted camp. One of the Timor boys agreed to show me the way to go, got there at daybreak.

Some time later our Platoon ("B") got into strife with a patrol of Japs. Eric Mitchell and Paddy Knight were killed, Mick Morgan got one through the leg, Eddie Craighill one through the shoulder, Alan Hollow had his jaw shot away. On the way out we waited for Alan to die. That was 50 years ago and he is still going strong. Had organised stretcher bearers, a Kuda for Mick Morgan. How we got through the next couple of days is a complete entity I do not know. Had to hide our wounded. Japanese patrols missed us by a few yards.

It took about 6 days to get out of this jam. The Timorese boys performance was marvellous. They were taking all the risks virtually for nothing. They were getting their own food and ours as well. We sure had none. We probed along bank sides of a creek and if a Japanese patrol passed on the other other side, could not open up on them on account of the wounded.

I was alongside Ludlow. Tom Nisbet said he was going to try and check on the Japanese patrol and would come back the same way. He did not come back the same way and Ludlow immediately shot him in the leg. This gave us 4 wounded so we had to find another Kuda. I fell for the job of walking alongside Tom Nisbet. He would lean on me to help his leg over difficult places. I spent most of the time sliding on my arse. However, we eventually got them out. Thanks to the Timorese boys.

Next to Flea Hill about 3 miles West of Aileu. Our job was to keep an eye on the Town. Roy Wilson came through, he wanted some information from a Porto in the jail. I knew of a back window to the jail. We managed to get the required information. There was movement in Aileu. Japanese were coming, it looked like they had big guns. So I shifted my blokes to a village further back. In the meantime Wendal Wilkerson had landed in. As my intentions were to stick around for a while I asked Wendal what he was going to do. He said he would come with me.

Noise was coming from the road leading into Aileu so Wendal and I made ourselves comfortable in good ambush positions, we both had Tommy guns. When the Japanese came into range we let them have a small magazine. Do not know if we got many. It was at Flea Hill when I first met up with my Creado. His name was Mosoco. He asked if he could be my Creado. He was filthy dirty so I gave him a

cake of soap and told him to go and wash. He came back later shining like a new pin. I called him "Charcoal." He was to remain with me for the rest of our stay in Timor. He camped on the end of my ground sheet. A wonderful little fellow everyone liked him.

We next went to Bobonara to act as guard to H.Q.

The Emma Fewks (Wild Men) had been there and must have killed most of the population. Could not stay where we wanted to on account of the smell.

"A" Platoon came through from the back. They were No 4 Company. They had Paddy Kenneally with them.

Paddy had told the Creados I was in the area and would not be expecting them. Apparently did not sink in. Paddy has on several occasions thanked me for holding our fire.

Next we went to Same where we ran into a Japanese patrol, exchanged shots but was far too many so we backed off. From there we made our way to Aileu but did not stay too long.

What was of big interest to me was the establishing of an O.P. on (according to map) Camslia. We were sitting right on the doorstep of Dili, gave us a commanding view of Dili, harbour, aerodrome and the road to Aileu. It required an N.C.O. to report information gained, one other rank as a runner. Another runner was stationed about half way to Remexio. I spent a lot of time on this O.P. I have reported as many as 5 ships in one day of all dimensions noted the Bombers left N.T. with the correct bombs. The remarkable thing was the Japs never ever found out we were there. Patrols were on the road just opposite Nanatuto. They could clearly be seen without the glasses. Each time we would be wondering if they were going to get us. However, luck was with us for a time and they never did.

There was only one way in. This brings me to the August Push. Had to get out of Remexio into the mountains. We spaced our Creados, as we thought well out of harms way. They got in the back with dogs, lost all our gear and one boy was killed. It took about a week for "Charcoal" to catch up to me and say was I happy to see him. He was deeply moved at losing my gear.

Had to get out of Remexio into the mountains each section walking in teams until we reach Liltai. Here the Japanese started to use mortars. It was here that Bob was killed.

Strange, he did the rounds of our Section, he shook us by the hand and wished us luck. Seems like he had an idea he was going to go. The Bull claimed 50 dead from here. Our

section was last out and I was the last man. The vine I grabbed to go over the edge of the razor back gave way. I fell a few feet damaging my knee. The boys (Creados) helped me down to the river and were patching up my knee when a patrol of about 50 Japs came down the river bed which was about 100 yards wide. Looks like it was a lucky mishap for me. We went up a re entrant on the other side of the river. It was decided Bill Drage, Joe Brand and myself keep watch while the rest decided to get some tucker from the native village close by. The unexpected happened, an earth tremor, it felt like old ticker had gone moving.

My sub section went to Turisca and about a mile from town in a native village we got information that a patrol of Timorese the big mob of Emma Fewks was on their way to clean up the town. We put ourselves in a position to meet the situation. With instructions to save the town. They entered the town and made straight for the store and were ready to break down the door. We opened fire and killed 10. This was something we did not want to do but it was the only way. They made off and did not come back.

Bill Drage and I got the job of going back to Remexio to check and see if there were any Japs there. The area clear, an uneventful exercise. While there a flight of bombers came over to give Dili a pasting, one got caught in the action and lifted slightly and started to lose formation. The flight just carried on. We later found out that they doubled back to give cover to the lone bomber. The 3 Zeros went after them and only two came back. They must have done some good. I believe the bombers got to Melville Island.

We shifted back to Remexio and resumed the O.P. and Daralau patrols.

Time came when we were due to go home. We had been forced back to Alas area. Had no food and I had an ulcer on my back and could not walk. Waiting for a boat home.

A little story about "Charcoal" (my Creado). I overheard him negotiating a deal about with another Timorese. I asked him what it was about about. It seems he had entered into an agreement with the chap to buy a Kuda for 6 Petacas (about 10 shilling), use the Ruda to take me down to the boat then Charcoal had no further interest in the Ruda. I told him to get this bloke which he did and I paid him his share in full.

I left Charcoal with all my money and Kudas.

A very sad passing.

**Eric Thornander**

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***Submission to Senate Foreign Affairs  
Defence and Trade Reference Committee.  
Inquiry into East Timor by Paddy Kenneally.***

I served in the 2/2 Independent Company in Portuguese East Timor from 20th January 1942 until the Unit's evacuation on 16th December, 1942. During that time the 2/2 Independent Company fought a guerrilla campaign in the mountains and coastal jungle areas. No medical or food supplies, completely dependent on the Portuguese and Timorese for food and shelter. I have visited East Timor on four occasions since, for three weeks in April/May 1990, for over three weeks May/June 1992, two weeks July 1994, three weeks August/September 1998.

Consequently I have a comprehensive knowledge of the country and its inhabitants under Portuguese and Indonesian rule, from the western border areas with west Timor to Tutuala at the eastern end of East Timor. The Portuguese Consul in Sydney during the 1970's was a friend of mine whom I had known in East Timor in 1942. He had supplied much information about the Japanese forces in Dili. He kept our 2/2 Commando Association informed on events in East Timor until the Indonesian invasion on December 7th, 1975. I will take each article of the terms of reference and present my views based on information gleaned from sources in East Timor, and my own observation of conditions there during my visits.

(A) The economic position of the East Timorese places them on the lowest rung of the ladder. They do the menial and hard physical work, the lowest paid jobs. Transmigrant Chinese and Indonesians from other Islands are the traders and business people, they are the shop keepers, the buyers and the sellers. They are farming the land that once belonged to the Timorese, down on the south coastal plain thousands of Balinese are farming land that was heavily timbered.

The post offices, banks, telecommunications and all government positions staffed by Indonesians. By comparison to what I knew of Timor in 1942 the colony was certainly booming, but only for the invaders and the Timorese who co-operated and served them. Social and political conditions, as for the latter there was only one political power and Arbiter, the army, it was, and is all powerful.

There was the assembly in Dili, masquerading as a Timorese Legislature. Nine of its 45 members were, and are military men, appointed by the army. Any power the Assembly had was in the military hands. Mario Carrascalo, the Indonesian appointed Governor of East Timor was, and is a courageous man who quite often intervened to protect his fellow Timorese. The present

Governor appointed in 1994 is completely pro-Indonesian, with little regard for his own people. The social fabric of East Timor under Indonesian rule has been torn apart. The army moved people from their mountain villages into settlements. The military controlled the settlements, thereby controlling the lives of the people who could only work in their former gardens (situated long distances from the settlements, when allowed by the military, even then they had to be back in the settlement before nightfall, thus reducing the time they could spend working their gardens. The removal of the people from their villages has had a detrimental effect on their ability to feed themselves and earn some money from pig and poultry raising, fruit and coffee growing, many of the settlements are in low lying areas subject to malaria infection.

Malnutrition and T.B. ARE RIFE, LEPROSY IS ALSO A CAUSE FOR CONCERN. Medical facilities are poor, I have seen two hospitals, one at Hatahuda, the other at Lacluba, fine looking buildings on the outside, inside 6 or 8 beds, little in the way of medicines. Both had a resident doctor, some female staff who I was told were nurses and only one patient, suffering from advanced T.B. A French Order of nuns built a 60 bed hospital in Luai, complete with operating theatre and first class facilities. The Indonesian Government would not appoint a doctor saying "no doctor would go to Luai, it is too isolated." They would not allow a foreign doctor to take up residence, water to the hospital was often cut off on the excuse the Balinese farmers were using it for irrigation. Filipino nursing nuns were doing their best to run the hospital and provide medical treatment for the people. In many places the only medical treatment was provided by the nuns in the missions and that included attending to Indonesian police.

Schooling at the best is poor. The main centres, Dili, Baucau, Manatuto, would be the best of the government schools, they would be inferior to the mission schools run by the Salesians at Fatu-Maquerec, Baucau and Comor in Dili, the Jesuits at Dare and the Divine Word Missionaries in Dili and Balibo. The nuns in various missions from one end of Timor to the other provide teaching staff and schools, medical care and orphanages and there are many, many orphans in East Timor. Once they would have been looked after by close or extended family members, they now can barely provide for themselves. In one area alone I know a mission priest who is giving food assistance to 500 families in his area. That amounts to about 3,000 men, women and children. That is true of every area of East Timor. All those hardships stem from the removal of the people from their villages and their gardens. If the removal of thousand of



people from their means of livelihood, into settlements where they can be kept under constant surveillance and little chance of employment, is not a negation of human rights, what is it?!

I was in East Timor six months after the Dili massacre in November 1991. The gaols in Baucau, Aileu, Same were crowded with young men, no trial, no charges, and no knowing when they would be set free, many endured torture to varying degrees. One wing of the flamboyant hotel in Baucau was used by Intelligence men for interrogation and torture of prisoners. Many students had not returned to their schools after the massacre. Their tutors did not know whether they were in hiding, in gaol or dead. The only law in East Timor is the military. Human rights do not exist for the Timorese. The mountains of East Timor are littered with the graves of people whose only offence was being Timorese. There have been many far worse than the Dili Massacre of November 1991. However, the army made the fatal error of committing that one when there were foreign witnesses present. In my three visits to Timor prior to 1998 it was obvious the people lived in fear of the military, if police or soldiers were present the people would not speak to foreigners. I made contact with a man who, as a youth, had been an Australian soldier's 'Creado' in 1942. He took me to his home to meet his wife and family. Next morning he was taken by the police and interrogated. That was part of everyday living in Timor.

(B) Indonesian military presence in East Timor dates from October 1975 when it first carried out military operations in the Maliana, Balibo, Butugade areas. That was almost three months before its full scale invasion on December 7th, 1975. What was to be a quick conquest of a small defenceless territory, has dragged on for almost 24 years. The number of men in the resistance force is small. Its potential to harass the Indonesian army is constant, hence the ruthless treatment of the people by the military. The army knows that without the help of the Timorese people the resistance forces would cease to exist.

The army of course has a pecuniary interest in the affairs of East Timor, it wields complete power, enabling it to be part of many commercial enterprises. Army officers are heavily involved in the coffee trade. There were army operated vegetable gardens in the Viqueque area that I saw in 1990. The improvements in the roads and building of many bridges would be at the request, and insistence of the military to facilitate the rapid movement of troops. At the same time the military can completely cut off all access to any area it wishes and it quite often does by setting

up road blocks and check points, even on the mountain tracks I have been stopped and questioned by police or military who can immediately contact their superiors by radio. No matter where I went in East Timor the police or army knew.

In 1992 at various times East Timor was closed to foreigners. I went to Flores, caught a ferry boat to Dili and got out at Dili. A Missioner told me 'you can't stay here, have you reported to the police? I told him I wasn't even supposed to be in Timor, let alone report to the police. His reply 'do so as soon as possible because even now they will know you are here.' I went down to the road to catch a bus or a truck and all I caught was a policeman who demanded to see my passport. Nowhere in East Timor are people far from army, police or intelligence scrutiny, For foreigners all it means is expulsion, for the Timorese it can be gaol, torture and possibly death. The army is everywhere, so are its informers.

(C) With the fall of President Suharto the prospect of a just, lasting settlement is closer. However, other considerations are far more important to that end. First and foremost is the economic position Indonesia is in at the present time. Our Australian government running true to form immediately offered millions of dollars in aid and without conditions. The international monetary fund approached it differently. The European community and the U.S. put pressure on Indonesia for a new approach to the question of East Timor. Within one month of being appointed, President Habibie offered East Timor autonomy. That was in June 1998, however, he stated independence was not on the agenda. The Australian Prime Minister, Mr Howard, came up with a statement 'I agree with autonomy but not independence for East Timor, Indonesia is in desperate straits, the rupiah at an all time low. In September, 1998 100 American dollars was worth one million rupiah. The price of rice and all food items was rising steeply, wages were stationary or disappearing completely as unemployment soared.

Riots continued in Jakarta, there was further trouble in North Sumatra, religious riots in Ambon which caused the death of 200 people, the destruction of homes and villages and the fleeing of transmigrants. Indonesia is being torn asunder, not from one cause, but from many. Economically, Sectarianism, Transmigration, a desire for freedom and the curbing of the power of the military. East Timor wanted only one thing – Freedom.

In August/September 1998 I travelled all over East Timor, the attitude of the people far removed from what I had observed in 1990, 1992, 1994. People spoke freely, they were no longer cowed, everywhere the message was



the same – 'we don' want autonomy, we want a referendum.' People acted as if they were already free. The military and police were not as prominent. Although I did see three convoys, two moving east and one south from Baucau, also along the border areas of East and West Timor the army, not police was manning the check points, I was not allowed to travel overland from Atamboea to Dili. I was stopped at a check point west of Butugade and told to report to army headquarters in Atamboea. The soldiers put me on a bus for Atamboea, instructing the driver to deliver me to army headquarters. There I was informed I could not go overland to Dili. I had to return to Kupang, fly to the island of Alor, then to Dili. What was happening along the road at that time I have no idea.

Three weeks later I travelled west from Dili to Atamboea and noticed nothing out of the ordinary. I was in Babonaro in the mountains, Zumalai on the south coast both in western areas, no talk of pro integration militia and no sign of them, all the talk was a referendum and independence. I am sure at that time East Timor could have moved to independence trouble free. The army bided its time, after the attack on the military in the Alas area it moved quickly, isolated the area, mounted a military sweep, killed prominent local Timorese, armed their so called integration militia supporters, and terrorised the villagers over a wide area from Suai in the south west to Maubara on the north coast. The Indonesian military could disarm those people immediately if it so desired. Now the only solution to East Timor's problems is a U.N. Peace Force and a U.N. supervised referendum and the withdrawal of the Indonesian military. In fact that has always been the solution. This time it may happen.

(D) The Australian government has poured millions of dollars into aid for East Timor, unfortunately the money was granted to the Indonesian government to carry out the work. I was told that educational bodies did receive aid from and through the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, but that was on an unofficial basis. The Indonesians could have used Australian grants for Timor in roadworks and bridge building. They also have built hospitals and schools, the buildings being merely show pieces with little in the way of equipment and staff.

In 1992 I was informed that an American organisation was offering the Salesian missionaries in Timor two million American dollars to finance clinics and treatment for T.B. and Leprosy. When the Indonesian authorities heard about it they said their health department would co-operate with the Salesians in the project. The Salesians declined the offer and

told the organisation they would leave it to the Indonesian Health Department. My informant told me the money would be frittered away by Indonesian authorities with only an empty building to show for it. The Americans withdrew the offer when the Salesians pulled out. The Australian government has funded aid to Timor through AESOP and much valuable work has resulted. I know of agricultural, carpentry, joinery and welding projects all Australian government funded, which have been most successful and beneficial. The West Australian branch of the 2/2nd Commando Association, funded by 2/2nd Independent Company men who served in East Timor in 1942 has sent tents, footballs, sporting equipment, electric sewing machines, typewriters, 140 cartons of text books, medical supplies to the Salesian missionaries in East Timor, plus about \$6000 worth of seed to be used in their agricultural project at Fuilero in the Los Palos region. The Josephite nuns in Sydney have supplied school books in the Tetun language to schools in East Timor. They have also set up a medical clinic in Monteil Dili.

(E) The Timor Gap (zone of co-operation treaty) It covers an area of 64,000 sq. kilometres. It has been the guiding beacon of all Australian governments dealings with the Republic of Indonesia on the question of East Timor. It was on this quest that Whitlam set out to achieve when he met with President Suharto at Wonosabo in September 1974. Part of that treaty states Indonesia and Australia will take joint military action against any acts of terrorism within that area.

Timor lies within that area but that has not worried any Australian government, they or it achieved its ends – a share in the oil and gas deposits to which it has no moral claim. Australia has nothing to be proud of in its pursuit of that treaty. Our country, rich in resources, condoned and defended Indonesian atrocities in East Timor. Our governments, Labor or Coalition, greedily pursued that treaty and after wading through a mure of deceit and lies attained its object. Gareth Evans must have been supremely proud as he flew with Ali Alatas, Indonesian Foreign Minister, high above the Timor sea and toasted each other's country in pink champagne. It could have been more appropriately done in the blood of innocent slaughtered Timorese.

(F) The sorriest and most disgraceful aspect in the East Timor situation apart from the brutality of the Indonesian army, has been the attitude of the Australian Prime Ministers, their governments and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The following litany of shame will say it all.

September 6th, 1974. Prime Minister Whitlam meets President Suharto in Sonosabo Java

and informs him East Timor would not be a viable state and a cause of instability within the region, the best solution would be integration into Indonesia 'if that was the wish of the Timorese people.' Despite that statement Whitlam ignored the Indonesian military operations in the Maliana, Balibo, Butugade area in October, 1975.

December 7th. Full scale invasion of East Timor by Indonesian Forces, Australian, American and British governments all aware of impending invasion, did or said nothing.

December 22nd, 1975. M.N. Security Council calls on Indonesia to withdraw its armed forces from East Timor. The above mentioned governments did or said nothing.

January 20th, 1979. The Fraser Government gives de facto recognition to Indonesia's occupation of East Timor, this was later upgraded to de jure recognition.

December 4th, 1980. A set of secret documents of Australian Foreign Policy on East Timor during the 1970's is published in the Melbourne 'Age.' The documents show that the government had an extensive knowledge and acquiesced in events prior to the invasion.

November 1982. Ex-Prime Minister Whitlam addressed the U.N. Fourth Committee. Question of East Timor, and by brilliant use of language selection of words and half truths painted a glowing picture of Indonesian achievement in East Timor in the sphere of development, education and health, all based on a conducted helicopter tour of East Timor in March 1982, I saw nothing like it in 1990.

March 1983. Labor, led by Bob Hawke won the federal election, a plank in the Labor election policy was self determination for East Timor.

June 1983. Prime Minister Hawke and Foreign Affairs Minister Hayden met President Suharto in Jakarta and assured President Suharto that the Labor government's policy on East Timor would be no different than the policy of Fraser's coalition government.

1985. Prime Minister Hawke recognises Indonesia's claim to East Timor as the 27th Province of Indonesia.

December 11th, 1989. Australia and Indonesia sign the Gap Treaty.

November 12th, 1991. The Dili massacre takes place, a deliberate act by the Indonesian army white washed by the Djalloni inquiry in December 1991, accepted by the Australian government and condemned round the world for what it was, a face saver for the Indonesian government. Keating followed Hawke as Prime Minister, paid his respects to President Suharto and ignored the Indonesian question in East Timor.

1996 the Coalition won government. John Howard the new Prime Minister made the pilgrimage to Jakarta, he assured President Suharto that his government had a sympathetic understanding of the President's problems in East Timor. All Australian governments have paid lip service to Timorese self determination and given full support to Indonesian actions in Timor. The present government is running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. It lacks the moral courage to take a stand on the question.

I served in Timor in 1942, I saw what the Timorese suffered for the help they rendered to the Australians fighting there. In the Nindelo area in September 1942 dead Timorese, men, women and children littered the tracks, their villages burned, crops destroyed and livestock driven off during the Japanese August Offensive against the Australians.

May god help the Timorese and may your inquiry right wrong successive Australian governments have inflicted on the people of East Timor from Whitlam at Wonosabo in 1974 to John Howard in 1999. If the current government is sincere in its desire to help East Timor in this current crisis, Prime Minister Howard should write once more to President Habibie exhorting him to order the Indonesian military to cease arming their so-called allies, the Pro integration Timorese supporters, disarm them and disband them. He can inform the President, the Australian government intends to call on the U.N. sponsored referendum and should the Timorese people opt for independence the Australian government is prepared to render all possible aid to the new nation in its formative years.

**John Patrick Kenneally**

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*Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee, Canberra ACT*

## **ENQUIRY INTO EAST TIMOR**

Public Notices last December advised of a wide ranging enquiry and called for submissions from overseas as well as in Australia.

Included were the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal, East Timorese leaders, Xanana Gusmao, Jose Ramos Horta, and Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo.

Our 2/2nd Association collective submission of 31 pages forwarded 25/3/1999 comprised :

Ray Aitken, John Burrridge, The Independent Trust Fund, Jack Carey, Les Cranfield (Volunteer).

The committee subsequently invited us to

attend a Public hearing of the committee in Perth on 20/7/99 to present a summary of our views, followed by a question period. Other speakers included Woodside Energy/ Friends of East Timor, Murdoch and W.A. Universities, 'Pos Kupang' journalist and others.

We have recently received, proof read, and returned the Hansard report (16 pages) of our evidence to the Public hearing.

Emboldened with the prospect of success on 30th August, our speakers presented more forceful criticism of Indonesian rule over East Timor with emphasis on the Army's appalling record of intimidation and abuse. Recommendations followed. It is to be hoped that our Government's future policies affecting the safety of the remaining Independence voting people of East Timor will endorse the protection measures recommended by U.S.A.

The following report comprised part of our association's submission to the Senate Enquiry by Jack Carey.

It prefaced a report on the Independent Trust which appeared in the WA R and S L Journal 'Listening Post' Although Jack's name was clearly shown it was omitted by a sub editor leaving only my name which reported on the Independent Trust. As 2/2nd I did not serve on Timor.

#### **Bob Smyth**

The men of the No.2 Australian Independent Company have always been conscious of the debt they owe to the people of East Timor in the campaign of 1942 and acknowledge that without their help they would not have made it back to Australia. There were other factors contributing to the success of this small but epic campaign, including the resourcefulness of the men themselves, the timely assistance of the gallant RAN, a determined RAAF, the mountainous terrain ideally suited for guerrilla warfare and, finally, an element of luck. However, it was mainly due to the East Timorese people who enabled the company to keep going and survive. It would not have been the same in West Timor.

There were casualties among the Timorese during the 12-month period the 2nd Company – and later the 4th Company – was on the island but a figure of 40,000 dead, as quoted, is false. Between 2000 to 2500 Timorese and a number of Portuguese citizens, lost their lives between February 1942 and January 1943 by which time both companies had left the island. Most of the Timorese deaths came about in a tribal war in September and October 1942. At all times the men did what they could to see that the Timorese, including the young credos who moved with them, were not exposed to undue danger.

The Timorese were not armed and were never asked or expected to fight alongside us as some armchair historians have claimed. As interpreters, along with their ability to provide reliable information on the whereabouts and movements of the enemy, their contribution was invaluable. The two main questions asked during the campaign as the men moved around the countryside were "Japanese besik?" (close?) or "dook?" pronounced doc (some way off?). More often than not it was besik.

Many thousands of East Timorese and some Portuguese died between the years 1943 to 1945. The majority died from starvation and disease through lack of medical attention and the the harsh treatment under the Japanese.

Early in 1941 the British, Netherlands and Australian war cabinets decided, in the event of a war with Japan, to occupy Portuguese East Timor. As a result, a small force of Dutch and Javanese troops along with the 300-strong 2nd Independent Company landed at Dili on 17 December. Their involvement was to bring nothing but suffering and death to the people of what was, up until then, a tranquil little island. It was one of the tragedies of the Pacific War, considering that Portugal was a neutral country. Had the Allies kept out of East Timor so may have the Japanese. It remains a contentious issue.

On its withdrawal from East Timor in December 1942, the Company was re-formed as the 2/2nd Commando Squadron and was back in action in New Guinea six months later.

In a 16 month campaign the unit occupied a vast area of the Bismark Range and Ramu Valley over a 90 mile front, so denying the Japanese entry to the Hagen Valley.

At the end of the war the squadron was in New Britain. It was disbanded in Rabaul in December 1945. In the meantime it had been decided to form an association to preserve the great comradeship which developed the war years and the 2/2nd Commando Association of Australia was formed in February 1946. Fifty-two years on, it is still active.

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#### ***Fax to Fr. Rolando, Don Bosco Comoro DILI 13.8.99***

A close friend of ours named Colleen Thornton Ward and her brother Murray Thornton are accredited as International Volunteer observers A.E.T.I.V.P. They will be arriving in Dili from Denpassar on 16/8/99. They will be travelling to the Lospalos area in connection with their duties and wish to make the acquaintance of Fr Jose Vattaparambil. Also while in Dili they would like to greet Dr. Bowo and on our behalf discuss the status of his interest in doing a visit

to Royal Perth Hospital to update his specialist procedures. Colleen has had most comprehensive experience as a senior nursing assistant to several prominent Perth medical specialists.

Although self sufficient with basic camping gear etc. they would appreciate any available family accommodation facilities mentioned by you. Both travelled around East Timor 4 years ago and are reasonably fluent in Indonesian to be understood.

Many thanks and with our best wishes.

**Bob Smyth**

We congratulate Colleen and Murray for their interest and enterprise and wish them a most rewarding and satisfying experience. They return to Darwin on Saturday, 4/9.

**Bob Smyth**

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## INDEPENDENT TRUST

**SEEDS, SEWING MACHINES,  
TYPEWRITERS DRESS MATERIALS etc.**

The last shipment while in Darwin was included in one of 5 containers of Agricultural machinery and silos funded by U.S. AID.

The shipment was landed in Dili the first week of July 1999. The 5 containers (4 plus 1 crate) are still in the wharf storage area according to Fr. Jose. Fr. Jose desperately requires Les Cranfield to supervise and organise the opening of the boxes and transport to Fuiloro. Les is the only person familiar with the machinery and knowledge to handle it without damage.

No available truck could negotiate the Dili to Fuiloro road with a 20' container, even if lifting equipment was available at Fuiloro.

Though Les had hoped to meet the shipment in Dili, a VISA has been the problem. AESOP had applied but been rejected by the Indonesian embassy via our Foreign Affairs Dept. claiming that security conditions in Dili are too dangerous. The earliest date projected is 15th September.

It is unfortunate that the impetus of the agricultural programme has been so checked. Meanwhile Fr. Jose is concerned that demurrage charges could be a problem. The day following 30th August should however bring a result to overshadow those problems in a more favourable positive form.

Fellow Trustees John Burrige and Keith Hayes join me in thanking all donors who are acknowledged by Treasurer Ted Monk elsewhere in this Courier. The Trust Fund bank balance was reported last month - \$5663.

**Bob Smyth**

## Pars on People

Mrs Dorothy Lewis, George's widow, has moved from her Armadale home and is now in the Fremantle Nursing Home at 162 Holland Street, Fremantle. A grand lady, 92 years young, Dorothy has all her faculties and would love to meet up again with some of George's old mates or anyone in the 2/2nd. She is also partial to a chocolate or two.

Congratulations to Bert and Billie Price who recently celebrated their Emerald (55 years) marriage anniversary. This should be worth a drink or two at the Hobart Safari in March which Bert and Billie are busy organising.

Doc Wheatley is in good form lately. He was noticed after George Timm's funeral having a chat with Sir Charles Court. Doc was no doubt telling Sir Charles what son Richard, the Premier, was doing wrong. The latter is going through a torrid time at the moment.

The Lubys went on a relaxing cruise in late August to dodge the Sydney weather. The trip commenced at Darwin, then east to Milne Bay, stopping at the main Queensland ports on the way back to Sydney early in September. Edith, who does not enjoy the best of health, should benefit considerably from the trip. A bon voyage to them both.

That happy wanderer, Jess Epps, is off again on an eastern states trip. There's never a dull moment when Jess is around.

Betty Hopkins, Irish's widow, celebrated her 80th birthday on the 27th August. The family gave her a surprise party at the Carlisle Bowling Club. Congratulations Betty.

Ron Morris is back home after undergoing a frightening experience when two blood vessels burst in his chest. He is on the square now for good, not that he ever drank much but he did enjoy a good wine. Ron would like to thank all those members who sent get well cards and especially Joan Fenwick for the help she gave Hazel during a difficult time.

Vale for Alan Dixon who passed away on 10th July after a long illness will appear in our next Courier. The Association offers its sincere condolences to the families of the deceased.

**Jack Carey**

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## Sick Parade

Jim McLaughlin is battling along at the Midland Nursing Home in John Street, Midland. Jim, though very thin, is eating and sleeping well but boredom is a problem. He looks forward to visits from his family and old mates.

Our President, Dick Darrington, is home recovering from his second hip replacement this year. The operation was a success and Dick is hoping to be mobile enough soon to resume attending the monthly committee meetings which he chairs.

Wilf March has completed his chemotherapy treatment and is feeling a lot better though still far from right. It was good to see Wilf and Lorraine enjoying themselves at our Norma Hasson Social.

Henry Sproxtton, Don Turton and Ray Aitken are making slow but steady progress. Don is a bit shaky at the driver's wheel and Ray enjoys his daily walks.

Mandurah may be a great place to live in the summer months but in the winter time its a different story judging by the way the 2/2nd have been knocked about this winter. Len and Betty Bagley with bronchitis, Gerry and Dot Maley with a severe virus, Don Murray with pneumonia, Tony Bowers and the Kings with influenza were among the casualties. We hope they are all soon well again.

Mick Morgan who turned 87 on 18th August is in pretty good shape and is always keen to meet up with his old 'B' Platoon mates.

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### **Trust Fund Donations**

J. H. Cory 2/4th \$300, Patricia Sinclair \$100, Jack Reid 2/4th \$20, Lois Davies \$25, Wilf and Lorraine March \$50, Ken and Rhonda Hasson \$50.

### **Courier Donations**

Yvonne Walsh, Bevan Peters, Lois Davies, Helen Cowie, Allan Mitchell, Colleen Strickland, Kay and Roy Hanson, Vince Swann, Tony Bowers, Bernie Langridge, Dick Darrington, Ted Monk, Don Murray, Jess Epps, Mark Jordan, Tom Foster, Wilf and Lorraine March, Ken and Rhonda Hasson, Fred and Robyn Hasson, Jack Fox, Reg. Griffith, Margaret Hooper, John Burrldge, George and Gloria Smith, Augusta O'Connor, Bruce Smith, Betty Hopkins.

---

**Address Changes:**

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RAAF Estate, Port Rush Road  
Meadow Springs 6210

Mr Jim McLaughlin  
Midland Nursing Home  
John Street  
Midland 6056

Mrs Eve Finkelstein  
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Dianella 6062

Mrs Colleen Strickland  
2A Myerson Crescent  
Maidavale 6057  
(08) 9454 9503

Roy and Kaye Hanson  
50 Bunya Street  
Noranda 6062

Mrs Dorothy Lewis  
Fremantle Nursing Home  
162 Holland Street  
Fremantle 6160

Mrs Hazel Wicks  
21/80 Henley Street  
Como 6152

Mrs Nancy Timms  
48 Lockhart Street  
Como 6152

Mrs Jean Holland  
2 Moat Street  
Mandurah 6210

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