



2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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Frank "Curly" O'Neill, who passed away recently, was a journalist by profession and a good one at that. Here is an extract from a letter he wrote to Colin Doig in April 1996.

Curly On Comradeship.

From quiet homes and small beginnings

Out to the undiscovered ends

There's nothing worth the wear of winning

Save laughter and the love of friends.

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

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

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

Consider too, some of the lesser legacies still with us... rhetoric, tub-thumping, and the memoirs of generals and other leaders of both sides. A critical look at some of those memoirs indicates that their authors would have been flat out running a chook raffle. So our love and laughter sounds better every day.

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

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

It is exemplified by the Safaris held every few years when members come from all over Australia simply to remember and renew their Friendship.

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

I never met any I would have preferred to have with me on those patrols through mountains and flatlands. I don't think they would have gone real well in mud baths like the Usini track.

I have heard academics decrying mateship, claiming there was something odd about it. I suspect that those critical academics had never known comrades. Still, every cobbler to his own last.

Curly O'Neill.

Vale Frank (Curly) O'Neill. NX50133.

Frank O'Neill. Born August 24th 1922, St. Margaret's Hospital, Sydney. Died Narrabeen, Sydney, July 27th 2002.

Frank's primary school education was at Narrabeen Primary School. His secondary education Christian Brothers St. Mary's Cathedral School, Sydney.

He grew up in pre-war Narrabeen, the ocean, the lakes, and the tree covered hills his playground, a carefree, not densely populated area in the 1920s and 30s. An excellent surfer, he was a junior lifesaver. He was also, despite his long lean under nourished appearance, a pretty good boxer. Frank's build gave no physical indication of his endurance, stamina and toughness. He was a knowledgeable follower of all sports.

Apart from being a soldier in World War II, the only vocation Curly followed was journalism. He served his cadetship on the Sydney "Truth" and "Mirror" under some very hard taskmasters, editors and sub-editors of the old school, accuracy and verity, had to be grammatically written and all punctuation strictly adhered to.

Curly was sent overseas on many assignments. He was based in London and over a period of years took him as far afield as Leningrad, and many European capitals as well as Indonesia, New Guinea and Indo China and in the era of French rule in what is now Vietnam, and Cambodia. Curly certainly knew his way around the newspaper world.

He served on the Sydney "Truth" and Sportsman's evening paper "The Mirror". He served Packer's print empire on the "Sydney Daily" and "Sunday Telegraph" and finally under Murdoch in England and Australia.

In October 1861, John McDouall Stuart departed from Adelaide to cross Australia from south to north. He succeeded, reaching the sea 65km east of the Adelaide River at Chambers Bay on 27th July 1862 and then making the return trip to Adelaide arriving there in December 1862.

Curly O'Neill re-enacted the return trip 100

years later in 1962 while working for News Ltd. leaving Chambers Bay in April 1962 on his horse "Big Wink" Curly followed Stuart's return route. He was feted and cheered as he passed through every outback hamlet and settlement. At Dunmarra, with a population of 2, he was given "The Freedom of the City" which no doubt Curly would have loved. He reached Adelaide on 11th August 1962 after covering 3300 km on horseback. Not a bad effort for a city slicker! A crowd estimated at 200,000 gave him a great welcome and children from all over the country wrote in acclaiming him "A Great Australian hero". It would have been like water on a duck's back to Curly.

In 1963 we attended a farewell to Curly and his wife Betty before their departure for London and Fleet Street.

Curly O'Neill was a first class journalist. However, it has always been my belief that Curly, had he so desired, achieved much more in his profession. There was an extremely high level of idealism in Curly's make-up, which made him disdain in the cynical pursuit of fame. I saw much of him over the years particularly after his wife Betty died in 1984. He had a sardonic approach to fame and wealth. Often he would remark "Paddy, they are chasing shadows, no matter how famous and powerful, death is the great equaliser, and puts us on the same footing as the destitute and unknown". That was Curly!

He joined the AIF in 1941 and was recruited from Tamworth camp for the Independent Companies. He would have been an original for No. 4 Company, but with fifty other O.R.s was sent as a reinforcement to No. 2 Company, then in Portuguese Timor. He sailed on the W.A. Stateship, the M.V. Koolama from Darwin on January 16th 1942 arriving in Dili on 20th January 1942. He, as all that party, became part of Company HQ at Railaco. When the Japanese landed in February he was moved here and there, finishing up with Lieut. Garnett at Remexio very early April 1942. He and his childhood mate Merv Clarke (then known as Johnson)

took over the Qantas transmitting set from some Deportados on the outskirts of Dili and took it to Same.

He and "Squirt" Johnson were also part of Lieut. Garnett's diversion party in the Dili raid in May 1942. Two days after that raid was the last I saw of him in Timor. He was with Lieut. Johnny Rose when he was ordered to go to Mape, August 12th 1942 and salvage or destroy any equipment abandoned by Force HQ when it vacated Mape about the 10th August leaving everything behind.

Curly was up around the Same Saddle in September, Mindelo and Turuscai in November when George Thomas and Andy Smeaton were killed in November 1942. After Timor he went on to serve with "A" Platoon in New Guinea and New Britain. He was discharged from the AIF in 1946.

Curly had many friends from many walks of life. He was an avid reader, well-versed in politics and the industrial field. He loved classical music and would spend hours listening to it. I argued with him and enjoyed every minute of it. To Varena, his partner, to his sisters, nephews and nieces we extend our sympathies on your sad loss. Curly, as you wrote on the passing of our good friend, Alfredo da Santos, "Vaya Con Dios".

Paddy Kenneally.

NB A nice tribute was paid to Curly by the "Sydney Morning Herald" Wed. 14/8/02 under the heading "Who's Mad Enough?" O'Neill, along with a photo of Curly and his horse. It made good reading. Ed.

Vale John (Danny) Daniels NX95464.

Danny was born in Cape Town, South Africa on the 26th November 1919. His parents, who were theatrical people, moved to Sydney when Dan was only a few months old, settling in at Coogee. Growing up in what was a tough area Dan soon learnt how to look after himself which proved to be a big help in his later years. He moved to Melbourne and was working as a textile technician when World War II started. Classed as a reserved occupation this prevented Dan from joining up. After a number

of tries he finally took off, returned to Sydney changing his surname to Thomas, and enlisted in the 2nd AIF.

Dan along with Bob Smyth, Mick Devlin and others joined the 2/2nd in New Guinea in mid 1943 and while awaiting for a posting this small group filled in their time in Port Moresby flying with the yanks on bombing raids over Wewak and Rabaul, a risk which they enjoyed.

Dan went on to serve in New Guinea and New Britain and loved the army life. Known as "combined ops" because of a striking tattoo across his chest, he became a leading member of the Unit's boxing troupe, which comprised some very handy fighters. When the war ended Dan headed for Japan and remained with B.C.O.F. until he was discharged in June 1948. While with BCOF Dan became the middleweight champion with the force - no mean feat indeed!

He married his wife Sunny in January 1947 while on leave and on return to civvy st. worked for the customs department. After a time he rejoined the army going on to serve in Korea and Malaysia before his final discharge in 1970. The old warhorse then joined the staff at the Duntroon Military College, Canberra and moved from there to the College of Advanced Education until his retirement in 1980 at the age of 61. A community minded couple Sunny and Danny devoted their retirement years to helping others. A moving eulogy from his loving daughter Donna, which follows this vale, is as fitting tribute to a fine Australian.

Dan was a loyal supporter of the Association and was made a life member in 1986. He along with the late Jim Fenwick and Ron Morris, was responsible for two excellent safaris the Association had in Canberra in 1986 & 1998. Dan was also a great R. & S. League man.

Life was not kind to Dan in his latter years and after a serious illness he passed away on Tuesday 6th August 2002.

Joan Fenwick, Ron Morris and Paddy Kenneally represented the Association at his

Requiem Mass at St. Matthews, Canberra and his interment in Canberra's Gungahlin Cemetery on Monday 12th August.

To Sunny, Donna, Andrew and their families the Association extends its deepest sympathy on their sad loss. Lest We Forget.

P. Kenneally.

From the Heart!

Dan Daniels was my Dad.

I like to think all kids think their Dad is special. I know my Dad was special. He was unique. Definitely one of a kind. Everyone knew Dan Daniels, he was always doing things. He was a "doer". He was always involved, usually at the helm. Police Boys Club, Sea Scouts, Marching Girls, and Junior Rangers. He coordinated the Kids Christmas Parties every year at Duntroon. He ran the P. & C. at my high school. Organised fetes and carnivals and when he retired he slowed down to running the Senior Citizens Club at Belconnen for about fifteen years and going to community meetings and being involved in the Hawker shops redevelopment and cleaning up graffiti in the underpasses and talking to scout groups about ANZAC Day and going to meetings of the Kindred organisation with the two Ronnies (even though they were RAAF).

My Dad was always very sporty - he'd been a competitive cyclist, gymnast, runner, boxer, and footballer - most things except golf! He'd always be getting my brother and I involved in some sport. This has had a bad effect on my brother who now jumps out of perfectly good airplanes and holds hands (and feet) with other blokes before opening their parachutes. Genetics is a strong force.

Dad was an army man. We grew up at Duntroon. I enjoyed it. Dad was such a maverick it's hard to understand how he loved the military. Genetics again - now my brother is the same.

Dad was always a generous person. He accepted everyone and he wasn't "put on" at all. What you saw is what you got. If something had to be done he'd jump up and

do it. He never said, "that's not my job". Even when he left Duntroon and went to the CCAE (now University of Canberra) he always jumped in and did things. It was a new establishment and I believe Dad really helped set it up.

When he retired and was running the Senior's Club, it was "his" club. He loved it. He was always there and always doing things. He was very proud of the fact it was self-sufficient. They even had money in the bank. He was just as well known for his scones as other work there. Most people don't care how a club runs as long as it's there and hey, the scones are great!

I find it amazing to think he was so generous and caring when he was an only child who grew up around King's cross and Coogee area in Sydney. A tough area. I know his army mates were very special and there are plenty of good tales, so maybe that band of mateship through terrible times is a defining factor. Something we can only look in on and admire. We went to the last ANZAC Day marches in Canberra to watch Dad march. The place was packed. The pride and determination of men and women in the march is something to behold and the admiration and respect from the vast crowd is great too. That day was sad too because you lost Harry Phillips. Mum and Dad were so upset. Dad wasn't well then but he still carried the flag. Same with Mr Phillips, he musn't have felt well, but he marched.

My Dad happened to be born in South Africa to theatrical parents. He liked to say he was part Zulu warrior. Well he wasn't 8 ft tall with a great tan but he most certainly was an old warrior, and for a tough old bastard he was also a great guy and we loved him and we'll miss him. R.I.P. Dad.

Donna.

Vale Syd McKinley

The following vale was kindly provided by his loving daughter, Lindy.

As you know Dad was very much a loner and as you are aware, we were apart for so many years. He was a wonderful father just the

same and no amount of miles lessened the bond between us. I am very proud of who he was as a man, soldier and father.

Sydney Albert McKinley was born in Perth, 19th April 1923, the third of five boys. Being the depression years, work was hard to come by and so Syd's father moved his family north to the goldfields in the hope of a better life. Eventually, as a young teenager, Syd returned to Perth to find work where he did a variety of jobs.

At the age of 18 Syd enlisted with the 2/2nd Australian Commando Squadron.

Post-war Syd joined the Shell Company driving fuel tankers around metro Perth. In 1952 he married June and they had two daughters, Kathleen and Lindy. Syd also adopted June's 3 sons from a previous marriage - Revel, Michael and David. In May 1954 he was posted to the Cocos Islands for 2¹/₂ years as aircraft refuelling supervisor, then returned to Perth until 1958 when he was once again posted to Cocos. He remained there for another 2¹/₂ years, returning to Perth in 1960 to begin a long period of service to Shell Depot in Fremantle.

Unfortunately in 1964 the marriage ended and June and the children moved to live in South Australia permanently. Syd was hard hit at the loss of his family. He continued to live and work in Perth and northern WA until 1974 when, as a result of Cyclone Tracey, moved to Darwin to take up the position of Airport supervisor in charge of refuelling. He remained there until his retirement in about 1981. He returned to the West, settling in Mandurah and enjoyed many years of prospecting in the winter months in the northern goldfields.

In all the years he was separated from his family he was always a loving and loved father to us. About 6 years ago, Dad's health began to falter, and as the last of his siblings had now passed away leaving him without family, he moved to live in SA to be with his children. By this time Dad had chronic emphysema which he coped with until 18 months ago when he developed pneumonia and pleurisy. After several episodes of hospitalisation, it

became evident that Dad would require constant care and in September 2001 moved into the War vets Home at Myrtle Bank. Dad was on oxygen constantly for the last 8 months and very sadly passed away on 9th July with his family beside him to the end. At no time did he lose his dignity or his inner strength - only leaving when he decided to go.

Dad was buried with a simple but very personal graveside service at the North Brighton Cemetery with his children and grandchildren attending.

Many thanks to you and all the members of the 2/2nd for your thoughts and wishes.

Sincerely Lindy McKinley.

Syd joined the Unit at Canungra early in 1943 and went on to serve in New Guinea and New Britain in No. 9 Section. Although small in stature, Syd could handle any situation well and was highly respected by his section members.

He took part in the ill-fated Kulau patrol, which cost Don Ramshaw and Laurie Maloney their lives. He had two good mates in Jack Wicks and Colin Hodson, a friendship that he treasured. A quiet man, Syd retired to Coodanup near Mandurah and as Lindy has mentioned looked forward to prospecting in the northern goldfields area every winter. Well equipped it became a ritual for Syd year after year. He took Colin Hodson with him one year. Although he never struck it rich he enjoyed the solitude and open spaces of the fields. Syd was a loyal and generous supporter of the Association to the very end and we mourn the passing of our old comrade.

The Association extends its sincere sympathy to the McKinley family. Lest we forget.

J. Carey.

Vale Gerald (Gerry) Slade. TX 12116.

Gerry passed away on the 25th July last after suffering a massive stroke a month after his 80th birthday.

Born in Tassie on 28th June 1922, Gerry spent his early boyhood on the family farm at Greta

and had two brothers Geoffrey and Max. When he was 13 the family moved to Glenorchy where they had racehorses. From there another move followed to North Hobart where his father ran the Sir William Don Hotel. Shortly after his mother's death when he was 17, the family moved to West Hobart.

Gerry served with the CMF from December 1941, transferring to the 2nd AIF on 3rd November 1942, going on to serve with a communications unit in New Guinea in 1943 & 1944. Early in 1945 he trained at Canungra; joining the 2/2nd in April 1945 and going on to serve in New Britain with the Unit.

Following his discharge in April 1946, Gerry took on a painting rehab course duly qualifying as a painter, a trade which he carried on with success throughout his working life. He met his beloved Nancy in May 1946 and they married in November 1947. Gerry and Nancy had a wonderful life together for almost 55 years and were blessed with four children, Sandra, Christine, Patricia, who passed away shortly after her birth, and Garth. Gerry, a devoted family man loved his children and six grandchildren. They were all very special to him and they thought the world of him.

Gerry enjoyed his sport, horseracing, football, golf and lawn bowls, and the social life that went with them. He became a great supporter of the Hobart Football Club and Nancy was on the social committee. Gerry was a top golfer with both the Claremont and the EZ Golf Club and with his son Garth won many trophies. Among other things he loved gardening and was a great cook.

Gerry and Nancy attended the Port Phillip Safari in 1988, catching up with his former army mates. He enjoyed the Courier and assisted Bert Price in the organising of the very successful Tassie Safari in March 2000. At the time Nancy was far from well which restricted their social life. They moved from their home in Lenah Valley to a new unit at Battery Point in August 2000.

An amiable man, always willing to help others, Gerry made a lot of good friends during a lifetime lived to the full and we mourn his

passing.

The Association extends its deepest sympathy to Nancy and family on their sad loss.

"Lest We Forget".

J. Carey.

Members will be saddened to hear of the passing of two of our lovely ladies in Betty Craig and Vida Turton. Betty passed away suddenly on the 18th June thus ending a full and active life, which inspired and influenced the lives of many of her friends. Members will have happy memories of good times spent at the home of Keith and Betty at Young. Betty an accomplished dancing teacher, played golf well, and along with Keith involved themselves in community activities to the full. The Association mourns the passing of a very special person and extends its deepest sympathy to Jan and all the Craig family.

W.A. members will remember with pleasure happy times had at Don & Vida's West Pingelly farm during our early years, when our hosts entertained children from Legacy and the Sister Kate's Home.

The outings held at Don & Vida's Keysbrook property which included our Timorese friends are also remembered with gratitude. Sadly Vida did not enjoy good health in her latter years, passing away peacefully in June of this year.

To Don and family the Association extends its sincere sympathy. J. Carey.

Members from the West in particular will be sorry to hear of the passing of Barbara Goddard, a former Victorian, who was a cousin of Joe Poynton and had lived in Mandurah for a number of years. Barbara took a keen interest in the Association and attended the Port Macquarie and Phillip Island Safaris. She was a lady with a wonderful sense of humour and zest for life, and great company. She will be sadly missed. Our deepest sympathy to her family and Joe and Helen.

Norma Hasson Day.

Our 15th Norma Hasson Social held at the Good Earth Hotel in Adelaide Terrace on Friday 5th July went off well and the attendance of 40 was good for the time of the year. The Hassons, Ken and Rhonda, Fred and Robyn, and Kaye were there in strength. Kaye, as radiant as ever, presented each lady with a lovely corsage, what a fine family they are!

Our long serving MC Len opened proceedings welcoming all and reading out the apologies. Missing this year were two of our regulars Barbara and Stan Payne. Stan is not enjoying the best of health. After a nice lunch, honorary life memberships were conferred on two of our loyal and devoted ladies in Mrs Val Hayes and Mrs Elsie Jordan. After Bernie Langridge and Jack Carey had spoken of the great contribution Val and Elsie had made to the Association over many years, President Ray Parry presented them with their life membership medallions. Pleasantly surprised Val and Elsie thanked the Association for the honour bestowed on them. It was a fitting reward for their service over a long period. Elsie then entertained us with some humorous incidents when she, Scotty and Jess Epps toured the British Isles back in the early 1970s. President Ray expressed his thanks to all present for coming and so ended a very pleasant day.

It was nice to see Mary King present. Arriving in a wheelchair under the care of her devoted son Paddy, Mary enjoyed the outing. What a lovely person she is. Bless you Mary.

Those attending were: - Ray Aitken, Tony Bowers, Len & Betty Bagley, Gavin & Pam Bagley (glad you could make it) Jack Carey, John & Olive Chalwell, Joy Chatfield, Dick Darrington, Jess Epps, Keith & Val Hayes, Mark & Elsie Jordan, Mary & Paddy King, Bernie & Baba Langridge and their Daughter Gem Mackenroth and their granddaughter (from Queensland), Jim Lines, Dot Maley, Nellie Mullins, Ray Parry, Vince Swann (from Esperance) Joe & Helen Poynton, Dusty Studdy, Bart & Loris Mavrick, Bob & Margaret Smyth, Doc. Wheatley and of course the 5

Hassons, Ken, Rhonda, Fred, Robyn and Kaye.

Our thanks to "The Good Earth" staff for looking after us so well, our MC Len, and Kaye for the flowers.

J. Carey.

S.A.S. Commemorative Service.

The Special Air Services Regiment (S.A.S.R.) was officially formed on the 25th July 1957 at Campbell Barracks, Swanbourne, W.A. with an establishment of 11 officers and 168 other ranks.

To mark the 45th Anniversary of the forming of the Regiment a commemorative and dedication service arranged by the Australian Special Air Service Associations National Executive, was held at St. George's Cathedral, Perth on Saturday 27th July 2002 at 11 am. The service was conducted by the Very Reverend Dr. John Shepherd, Dean of Perth.

A moving part of the service was a memorial tribute paid to the three men that remain missing in action - presumed dead during operational service with the Regiment

Lt. Kenneth Hudson and Pte. Robert Moncrieff went missing in Borneo on the 21st March 1966 and Pte. David Fisher in South Vietnam on the 27th September 1969. Their remains were never recovered.

After a welcome from the Very Reverend John Dr. Shepherd and an introduction by Lt. Col. David Lewis (ret'd) National Chairman of the Australian Air Service Association and prayers by Chaplain D. Cockram, the first reading was made by Lt. Col. Peter (Gus) Gilmore C.O. of the SAS Regiment. Also tributes to Ken, Robert and David were paid by the families and old army friends of the missing men. Prayers were then offered in their memory. The second reading was by Brig. B. Wade (ret'd), the homily by Chaplain Cockram and following more prayers and hymns the service closed with the blessing and dedication of the SAS Memorial Book by Maj./Gen. Michael Jeffrey (ret'd) Honorary Colonel of the SAS regiment. The book

records the names of SAS members killed on Service and will stand as a permanent memorial in the Soldier's Chapel in the cathedral.

So concluded a fitting and impressive ceremony held before a large and representative gathering of SAS Veterans, distinguished citizens and current members of the Regiment. President Ray Parry and State Secretary Jack Carey had the honour of representing the Association at the service. Well done S.A.S.R!

New South Wales News.

Dear Jack, Delys and Fellow Members, Once again the months have raced around and like many others we are scurrying around to meet the deadlines.

I had intended starting this two weeks ago but have spent many days in some stress as a result of a blood pressure surge to very high levels, and so the M.O. has shaken the stern finger and given orders "to take it easy". That's not so easy when you reach our archaic age and you have to depend on one another to get things done.

Ill as she has been, Edith responded really well as wives always do to the urgency and kept things on the move. Thankfully I'm on the mend but still need to keep in contact with the M.O. for regular checks. So far it seems to be adjusting but still some sight problems as you may gather by my writing and the tools.

We have had many phone calls over recent times both from people like us who were forced to pull out, or from those who were unable to make the trip.

The Safari reports in the June Courier showed that everyone attending had an enjoyable time but what a difference in the numbers to past years. True, the airlines collapse and resultant travel arrangements had much effect, but also how time has diminished our old friends.

We are all saddened by the recent reports of further losses over recent times.

I'm sure there will be valedictory reports from

those who were closer to them and knew them better than I.

The ones of which I have been advised were Betty Craig, Vida Turton, Frank O'Neill and Dan Thomas.

We extend our sincere condolences to their loved ones who mourn their passing. I can't let the occasion go by without a comment of praise for Betty who fought for so many years for justice for Keith against Veteran Affairs and still has not won! But Keith had one distinction; he was the only non-pensioner I've ever known who held a Gold Card! From whence it came we know not, and prefer it that way, but at least he enjoyed some of the benefits he had earned and deserved.

I enjoyed a talk last night 17/8 with Joan Fenwick and she has had a busy time in Queensland caring for sisters and friends. She has kept quiet about her own problems, which she keeps in the background.

Jack, I'm sorry but even several days on, I'm unable to continue any further.

No doubt Paddy, Harry and Hap will have their bit to say, so I am going to have to call it a day.

Our sincere thoughts to all those who have lost loved ones over this year and beyond.

God Bless and keep as well as you can.

Alan Luby. 20/8/02.

Northern NSW News.

The big news for the Courier is that your correspondent will have had a hip replacement by the time your readers get this Courier - enough of that.

Russ Blanch, after a trip to Sydney, now has to contemplate another early in October for an eye operation. It's a must according to his specialist. We all wish you well mate.

Ted Cholerton is home again and said a couple of days ago that he is feeling pretty well.

Eric and Lorraine Herd are both well and both still golfing so the Iluka air must have something going for it.

Ken Jones rang locally and was going to have a few days at Yamba. We were going to get together at Yamba but due to unforeseen circumstances we didn't so the next yarn was from Barraba where Ken was batching, having left Edith at Mackay with their daughter for a little while. They are both well.

Tom Yates is always well but Jean's arthritis is not getting any better. I know Jean; it's the reason for my hip job!

Jack and Beryl Steen came down to Ballina for a weeks fishing and had a lovely unit right on the river where I visited them. Jack is not 100% fit but is coping well. Beryl is a great backstop. Our blokes in the main have had great partners.

On my way home from the Mildura Safari I called in at the Ballina Ex Service Houses to see George Parker ex Col. In charge of Sigs. Seven Div. at the end of the War. Captain 2/40th Sigs on Timor. He is remarkably well and a delightful old gentleman to talk to. I have written to a chap called Wilbur Wright from Fairlight NSW who had a letter in the March Vet. Affairs paper about Winnie the War Winner Wireless Set. I gave him a couple of addresses but if anyone knows of any kin to John Donovan who also worked on the set I'd appreciate them letting me know their address.

For Del's benefit we've had 2¹/₂ inches of rain the last few days after a dry, with none for three months. Old bushies love to hear to hear about the weather! Beryl Cullen further inland at Kyogle hasn't had as much rain as here but it's looking a bit better than it was.

Regards to all, "Happy" Greenhalgh.

N.B. "Happy" is making good progress after his operation. We understand his phone bill will be more than his hospital bill! Ed.

Queensland News.

Our mid-year social was held at the Geebung Returned and Service league Club on Monday 22nd July. Seventeen attended the function and were well looked after by the club

who turned on a lovely lunch.

As we only see one another on a few occasions each year now it was nice to get together and catch up with the latest news.

Present were; George & Bettye Coulson, Ralph & Sheila Conley, Lois Davies, Jim Smith, Paddy Wilby, Fred Otway, Pat Barnier, Col & Jeanette Andrews, Jack & Beryl Steen and their good friends John & Margaret Allan, Lyn Love & Ron Archer.

It was a very happy occasion and our thanks go to Ralph for organising the day and Geebung Club for being great hosts.

Apologies were received from Margaret Hooper, who is recuperating after a recent operation and Tony & Iris Adams.

Ron Archer.

Geraldton News.

As PRO for Geraldton RSL it was my privilege to again submit the detailed information for the prestigious Colonel Collett Cup competition and it was a delight to get the good news from State Congress that Geraldton had won honours for the 28th time as the most efficient country sub-branch. Geraldton won the honours by one point from Mandurah, which had exceeded Geraldton by one point the previous year. Our Women's Auxiliary won the Country Cup for the 32nd time and we had a big celebration dinner at Birdwood House in the presence of Mrs Dorothy Shepherd of Northampton, Colonel Collett's granddaughter who provided a lot of his memorabilia for the occasion. He was a former Senator and WA RSL President, commanded the 28th Battalion at Gallipoli and won numerous honours.

I had the privilege of being on the Anzac Day saluting dais and it was a delight to thank the two students for their wonderful addresses which in army parlance showed that they had a true appreciation of the situation. My former ABC colleague Paul Thompson gave the main address, stating that he went to a school where fallen Old Boy soldiers were remembered every week, when the

headmaster would say: "They gave their bodies to the Commonwealth and received each for his own memory, praise that will never die and with it the noblest of all sepulchres, not that in which their mortal bones shall be laid but a home in the minds of men. For their story is not graven only on stone over their clay, but remains fresh to stir to speech or action as the occasion comes by." Paul said Anzac Day was one such occasion.

We have fortunate to have the presence this year of my brother, Monsignor John Barden of Como, during periods our wonderful Bishop Justin Bianchini has been away from Geraldton. John gave 41 years service to the Geraldton Diocese and will celebrate his ordination Golden Jubilee of half-a-century at Masses at Geraldton and Mullewa on December 8 and 15.

With God's help, my dear wife Joan and I have been privileged to celebrate our Diamond Wedding Anniversary of 60 years. The big day was June 27, which resulted in a lovely family dinner attended by special guests and a flood of best wishes from near and far.

Best wishes to you all, plus \$50 towards the Courier.

Peter Barden (and families).

Congratulations on your Diamond Wedding Anniversary Peter and Joan, from all the 2/2nd family. Ed.

Wendell Is Remembered.

Dedication of a Plaque and Flagpole Erected to the Memory of Royce Wilkerson at Wilkerson Park, Katrine on Sunday 9th June 2002.

Royce, better known as Wendell Wilkie (after the American Statesman) was an original member of 9 Section and served with that section throughout the duration of the war as a valued and respected soldier who was always willing to do his utmost.

Katrine is a small settlement midway between Toodyay and Northam in the Avon Valley. The original Anglican Church complete with graveyard is still attended on a monthly basis.

It was built in 1860 and is in excellent condition.

The attendance on the 9th June exceeded 130 people many of them Wilkersons. The Chairman of the Park Committee, Mr Doug Wilkerson, was in charge of proceedings and the Northam Shire President; Mr Bert Lewellyn made the introductory address. The 2/2nd Association was represented by Keith & Val Hayes and Harry Sproxtton, who spoke and paid tribute to Wendell and thanked his two sons, Royce and Gavin and their families for supplying and installing such a magnificent tribute to their late father and to the people of East Timor. This was followed by a short address from the President of the Northam R.S. L Mr Gerry Middleton, ex 2/7th Independent Co. who showed the gathering a newly planted small pine tree which was grown from a seed from the original tree at Lone Pine, Gallipoli. It was planted in memory of two Wilkerson boys, James (aged 18) and Sydney (aged 23) from Northam who gave their lives in World War I. There is a suitable plaque explaining the origin and the background to its planting.

Many more trees and shrubs were planted by Royce and Gavin's families and hopefully Wilkerson Park in the years ahead will become a place of beauty and tranquillity. Already it has great attractions as a pioneer and historical place of interest.

Sister Amelia concluded with a prayer and some humorous tales of bygone days of the area of which she has a vast knowledge.

Any members planning a trip to the hills in the coming spring would find it a good spot for a picnic and a browse around the church grounds, the resting-place of some of the old pioneers of the district.

Harry Sproxtton.

See photo on the back cover. Ed.

Link With the Past.

During the recent Mildura Safari I met up with Keith Bryant, a Mildura resident of long standing. Keith said his late father George Bryant spent most of his life in East Timor

and was a good friend of Dave Ross of whom an article appeared in our March Courier. On my return to Perth I sent Keith a copy of the March issue which he read with great interest. We understand George was the uncle of our late member Fred Bryant.

Writing to thank me he gave a brief report on his father's life. Keith writes: George Henry Bryant was born in Victoria in 1883. He was educated at the Maryborough State and Technical Schools and joined the railways becoming an engine driver. He worked at Mt. Lyle in Northern Tasmania for a time and in 1909 moved to Dili in East Timor getting a job with Timor Petroleum Concessions Ltd. In 1913 he returned to Australia and married Mabel Etty in the Methodist Church at Newton. Not long after he returned to his job in Timor the first oil showing was at a test well in Aliambata and also at Vessora. In 1927 George brought home 27 barrels of oil for exhibition at the Melbourne Royal Show. The search for oil continued until the end of 1936 when Timor Petroleum Concessions Ltd. called it a day, as operations were proving too costly. George was kept on as caretaker of the equipment.

He became very proficient in languages, learning to speak Tetum, Portuguese and Indonesian fluently. He also acquired a good knowledge of Japanese. George got on well with the Timorese (we all did) and travelled the island extensively.

When Dave Ross arrived in 1940 he met up with George and obtained permission from the External Affairs Dept. to employ him as an interpreter and also on minor commercial intelligence matters.

George was interned with Dave when the Japanese occupied the island in February 1942. Before Dave made his second trip out to our troops with another surrender message he told George he would not be coming back. This was in July 1942. George was held as prisoner until released in September 1945. He was in poor shape after 3½ years under the Japs weighing 6 stone (34kg). He was flown to Darwin and after a period in hospital returned to Victoria meeting up with his wife

and two sons.

He worked with Ansett for two years in the maintenance section retiring in 1948 at the age of 65.

Dave Ross came to see him many times after the war. Keith said his Dad thought Dave was a wonderful man. George Bryant passed away on 7th June 1961 aged 78.

Thank you Keith for a very interesting story. Keith's brother passed away in Mildura early this year.

J. Carey.

Memories of the Atemptly Area of the Jimmi River in Pygmy country - New Guinea.

A few weeks after we moved from Pt. Moresby to Garoka in July 1943, Pat Moodie and myself were drafted to escort a supply line of fifty cargo boys to an Operation Post overlooking the Jap lines north of the Jimmi River. We travelled along the Wahgi Valley until we reached Chimbu a few days later. From there we headed on towards Mt Hagen until we were about half way then turned north. At this point one of our cargo boys told us that a plane had crashed at Mt Hagan. His wife had told him by mental telepathy, which turned out to be correct: they were three days walk away from each other at the time! After another three days travel we crossed the Jimmi River which was very narrow at this point with two trees tied together and pulled across which made a pretty rough sort of a bridge. From there on we had trouble with our cargo boys as this wasn't their territory and they were frightened of the pygmy people. There was an Angau Lieut. in charge and he handled things pretty well as we had very little trouble after that.

By this time we were well and truly up in the Bismark Ranges which made progress very hard, as the cargo consisted of wireless batteries - the size of car batteries, oil, petrol and food, all very heavy to carry. We were then well into the pygmy country but we had made very little contact with them. It was a

different language and they didn't understand Pidgin English at all. They were very small people about 4'6" tall and all carried large bows and arrows which didn't make you too happy. All the time in their country we didn't see any of their women or marys as we called them. When about two days walk away from the OP we camped for the night and early the next morning about 3 am a cargo boy came and told us that the Japs had jumped the OP and for us not to come on. Pat and I just took it that he had been dreaming but the Lieut. who lived in New Guinea for many years believed him. We stayed there for a day and a half, when in the afternoon three of the lads staggered in and told us that two had been killed by the Japs. The native cargo boy who told us this described the white master who contacted him as tall dressed in a lap lap and had a large gold ring on his finger. The lads who got away said he was the Lieut. who was one that was killed. The natives still practice mental telepathy, which is something that we can't do or understand. We returned to Garoka leaving the cargo at Chimbu. It had been quite an experience!

Lionel Newton.

TRUST FUND NEWS.

FAX to Mr Mike Gallagher, 5/8/02.

N.T. Gov. Rep. East Timor.

Dear Mike, Canossian Sisters' East Timor.

We are most impressed with the possibility of an association with the above organisation and its potential in assisting us by widely distributing vegetable seeds to all villagers.

It may be possible for Sister Guilhermina to send us some detail about her group, which can be relayed to our members.

It is imperative that distribution by village headmen should not favour or reward and not hoarded.

Western Border Area.

4000 packets were distributed by Australian troops while patrolling Lospalos. In years 1998 to 2000 we sent \$15,200 of Symonds bulk vegetable seeds to Don Bosco Fuloro

for local distribution.

Each packet is stamped with our 2/2 Colour Patch and the words "F O (gift) "ITA LA HALUHA" - (We not forget).

To support funding for a plan to enlarge distribution over a considerably larger area, we would appreciate feedback of information on areas covered.

Thank you for your assistance,

Regards Bob Smyth, 2/2 Independent Trust Fund.

FAX to Ms Kirsty Sword Gusmao, 26/8/02.

P.O. Box 3 Dili

Timor Lorosa'e

Dear Kirsty, Keith Hayes completed packing and addressing to you each of the 30 cartons of gift goods as detailed on the list enclosed. Keith delivered them to the Lions International (George Garton) depot at Kwinana to wait transhipment of the container to Dili via Darwin.

There are also a large number of hospital beds, which could fill several containers so a movement date is currently unavailable. The additional 6 cartons, which followed, may be included.

Each and every carton is marked:

"Alola Foundation," Care Kirsty Sword Gusmao, Phone 451 851 7310

DILI, East Timor.

The Carton number shows on the top right hand corner. For added security - contents do not show on the outside.

Regarding medical equipment, endoscopes, and electrocardiograms, we have since been advised that these items would not have application in East Timor so they were returned.

Your ever-increasing daily activities must surely welcome less of this detail of gift shipments and arrangements. Accordingly could it help if you advised as alternative safe shipping address, contact phone number etc.

The 2/2nd families join in congratulations and

best wishes to you and Xanana following the arrival of a brother for Alexandre. Kirsty, we wish you all good health and happiness.

Sincerely, Bob Smyth, Independent Trust Fund.

NB. Cartons include kitchenware, computers, toys, typewriters, sewing machines, mattresses, stationery, sports gear, 1500 prs shorts & pyjamas (cut ready to sew) printers, sewing materials, cotton, needles, zippers etc.

The Alola Foundation for Women Survivors.

"Alola" is the nickname of 16 year old Juliana dos Santos of Suai, East Timor.

At the age of 15, Juliana was brutally kidnapped by militia leader, Igidio Manek, at the height of the violent campaign of murder and destruction, which followed east Timor's vote for Independence from Indonesia in August 1999.

On September 6 1999, the southern coast town of Suai was the site of an horrific massacre which claimed the lives of some 200 East Timorese, including priests and nuns. Amongst those murdered was Juliana dos Santos' younger brother, Carlos.

Juliana dos Santos gave birth to a son on 27th November 2000, and to this day remains in a state of virtual sexual slavery in West Timor. Her fate is shared by hundreds of other East Timorese women refugees who were forced across the border by the departing Indonesian military and the militia groups they created and continue to support. Whilst some women survivors of rape and other crimes of war have returned to East Timor, many others continue to suffer at the hands of their captors, and are denied access to the accurate, unbiased information they require in order to make an informed choice as to their future.

The greater freedom of expression and burgeoning of civil society organisations in today's East Timor, has meant that women survivors of rape have begun to speak out about their experiences with courage and dignity. A number of East Timorese Women's

groups have taken up their cause, not only for the purposes of ensuring that those responsible for the crimes committed against them are brought to justice, but also to assist them in the often difficult process of social reintegration and the building of their lives.

The ALOLA FOUNDATION is being established to internationalise the issue of East Timorese women victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence, to campaign for justice for individual survivors, to promote greater community recognition of the suffering of the survivors of gender based violence and to raise funds to support the work of indigenous women's NGOs whose mission is to restore dignity to the lives of East Timorese women.

The FOUNDATION will give priority to the support of:

- * Vocational/skills training programs for women
- Trauma counselling
- Small Loans schemes
- Short courses run for and by women
- Fun activities (i.e. community parties, self-defence, and creative movement classes) aimed at encouraging laughter, greater self-awareness, and self-confidence.

The FOUNDATION enjoys the patronage of UN Human rights Commissioner, Mrs Mary Robinson, and the support of a board of eminent women. It's Executive, consisting of Mrs Kirsty Sword Gusmao, Ms Milena Pires (Deputy Speaker of the National Council) and Ms Maria Dias, will assess applications for funds, make use of its extensive network of contacts to campaign on issues of concern to East Timorese women, oversee the application of grants and assist its partner organisations to acquit funds received in a manner deemed acceptable to donors.

Kirsty Sword Gusmao - E-mail: mukya@minihub.org

P.O. Box 3,
Dili, Timor Lorosae.

OFF AGAIN!

Our friends and Association members, Les and Verna (Annie) Cranfield, as volunteers to East Timor during the hazardous period of Indonesian influence, served up to 22 months of distinguished activity to benefit the indigenous people there.

For 14 years the International Volunteers Association of Japan has operated a non-profit vocational training centre at Vientiane Laos. They requested A.E.S.O.P. to locate a volunteer to train potential instructors in dressmaking skills and sewing machine maintenance.

AESOP to whom we are grateful for their funding of most of our volunteer East Timor activities are sponsoring Annie, a standout nominee and also Les who will accompany her.

Les will be doing carpentry and cabinet making classes. However one may surmise how long before Les's true value prevails by blanketing the nearest airfield with a rice or corn crop? (Onya Les!)

Annie and Les depart mid September with our best wishes. We admire, congratulate and respect them for their dedication to again achieving a better lifestyle for disadvantaged people.

Bob Smyth, Independent Trust Fund.

L. Cranfield, 6 Third Ave, Shoalwater. WA.

Dear Bob & Margaret, I thought you may be interested in this AESOP and this Japanese Volunteers request.

We should be leaving around the 14th Sept. for six months.

Annie will have a pretty big programme with her sewing etc. They want me to do carpentry and cabinet making classes. Life never seems to get dull lately for a couple of old birds like us.

Please find enclosed \$10 cheque for Courier, which we really enjoy, give our regards to all in case we can't contact some people before we leave. Time is going so quickly and there

is a lot to tidy up before hand.

Kind regards to all, Les and Annie.

Help for the "Angels".

Although it was not part of our New Guinea operations, I'm sure members who served in New Guinea will be pleased to hear that a move to establish "The Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel Foundation" is under way.

The Hon. Charlie Lynn MLC, Sydney is the driving force behind this worthy project.

The purpose of the foundation will be to support the Kioari and Orokaivean people who live in villages along the Kokoda track in the areas of health, education and sport. These objectives will be incorporated into the charter of the foundation.

The Sydney Swans have already given a five-year commitment to sponsor 20 Kioari and Orokaivean students to attend high school at either Sogeri or Popondetta. The aim is to obtain sufficient funds in the foundation to pay for their university education in Port Moresby when they graduate from high school.

The AFL and the Sydney Swans have also committed to conducting sporting clinics in Papua New Guinea. It is also intended to bring a National Aussie Rules under 16 team to play in the curtain raiser at Stadium Australia on 31st August of this year.

The CEO of the Sydney Swans, Mr Kelvin Templeton, has agreed to be a member of the six-member board foundation.

We can only wish those good people involved every success in the "Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel Foundation".

J. Carey.

A Correction and Apology.

In Peter Barden's "Memorial Mass With Ashes" an omission relating to Tom Foster's tribute to Eric Weller on page 6 of the March Courier changed the context of that part of Tom's tribute completely to what was intended. It appeared as: -

Where else would you expect to find the Eric

Weller that you all knew, at a time of national peril, other than to be out there confronting such an enemy, pulling his weight, as always, in changing what was regarded as "Australia's Finest Hour" whereas it should have read:

Where else would you expect to find the Eric Weller that we all knew, at a time of national peril, other than to be out there confronting such an enemy, pulling his weight, as always in changing what was regarded as "*Australia's Darkest Hour*" into what history later recorded as *Australia's Finest Hour*.

It was a serious omission on my part and I apologise to Peter, Tom, and the Weller family for the mistake. Peter's article was well written, as was Tom's tribute to Eric. Ed.

Mungo National Park.

Sunday 5th May was a free day on the Mildura Safari so Margo & George Shiels made the most of it by taking a tour to the Mungo National Park. This is Margo's account of that day. Ed.

We were picked up by the tours 4WD at 8.00am. A German family of 3 were the only other passengers. Our driver/host was Tom Evans who had conducted an outback safari programmes on TV a few years earlier.

The Murray River divides New South Wales from Victoria at Mildura, and the NSW Government has authority over the river. Without its water, Mildura would be the mallee desert country that it was. Once past the Mildura Irrigation Scheme, the country is dry and scrubby. ("*Mallee*" -

Aboriginal word for the spindly eucalypt trees that grew in the area).

Once off the bitumen heading north-east to Willandra Lakes, the only gravelly road was rough. We rattled, bounced, swayed from side to side, up and down, but managed to stay on the road. There was cleared and ploughed ground ready to plant with wheat as soon as there was enough rain, but sometimes it was a two year wait for a substantial rainfall.

We stopped at a dense mallee scrub where Tom gave us an interesting talk on the various

trees and shrubs and their uses. The seeds of the Emu-bush needed to go through the digestive system of the emu to be broken down enough to germinate. The salt bush and the blue bush were food for cattle and sheep. The onion weed was a pest, tainting the butchered meat of cattle and sheep. The country could survive in drought years on 1 sheep per 10 acres. With all the dams built on properties by the graziers, the kangaroo population has exploded over the past thirty years. Only kangaroo shooters with licences are allowed to kill a limited amount.

We reached the Mungo National Park. Mungo was named after a Scottish saint by the two Scottish settlers who farmed this district in the early 1800s. The Willandra Lakes System (a series of seven) was formed in the pre-historic times and the shores were inhabited by aboriginal tribes. The deep depressions are there, and the sand and clay walls surrounding two-thirds of the area are called "The Wall of China". They were formed by the winds in the Ice Age and the drying up of the lake beds.

The German tourists were disappointed they did not see kangaroos hopping everywhere. Tom mentioned that they were nocturnal and would be asleep under the low bushes, so he kept his finger on the horn of his car, and we were surprised how many kangaroos hopped up or even just put their heads above the low bushes. Even a flock of emus were startled into running across the road.

We travelled to the sandy-clay ridge called the Walls of China. In the early 1800s Chinese labourers were employed in building the MungoPark Woolshed in the park area which was a working sheep station, and they named it after the Great Wall of China in northern China. It was in these dunes that the skeletons of the Mungo man and woman were discovered, the former being thought to be over 60,000 years old. and the latter between 26,000 - 30,000 years.

We walked to the top of one section with its wind-sculptured forms, 300 metres across. Tom pointed out the damage to the environment done by too many tourists and

too little ranger control to this world heritage site. We drove back across the dry lakes to the Park Centre and inspected the unique original timber woolshed built by the Chinese labour in 1869. The slotted wood floor of this large shed was built to let the sheep droppings through. The walls were made from narrow tree trunks, placed between two posts, and tied together. The air space was irregular; so that circulated air came in irregular waves so as not to blow anything away, yet it kept the place cool. Even on the hottest day it stayed a cool shed. It was a working shed until the 1950s, when the government took it over as a heritage site. Unfortunately vandals are gradually damaging the place.

We ended the day with a BBQ dinner at the Grand Hotel. A pleasant time.

A Visit to Coober Pedy by John Burridge.

I thought readers of the Courier might be interested in a trip I did to Coober Pedy recently. A cobbler of mine, Max Mitchell-Burden, with whom I have done a bit of overseas travelling, was with me. Max and I are both widowers and we thought we'd have a look at Coober Pedy which is a bit off the usual run. Max was a Lieut. with 15th Regiment of the 4th Division Artillery. His brother lost his life with Z Force in an aircraft accident in Borneo when the plane was landing for a planned raid.

We flew to Adelaide, and had one night there and caught the Ghan the next night. There are only two Ghans per week. It does not call at Coober Pedy but leaves you at the so-called Manguri Siding - except there is no siding there - nothing at all. We were supposed to reach that spot on the line at 2.30 in the morning but the Ghan left Adelaide one hour late and we were dropped off at 3.30 in the freezing cold. A four by four from our hotel was waiting for us and 45 minutes later we were at the Desert Cave Hotel. Manguri is 45k west of Coober. The modern Ghan is very comfortable even though we were in sit-up seats and the journey takes 12 hours. They have a dining car and lounge and the tucker's not bad. The bloke who picked us up was

Peter Rowe, a long time resident of Coober, and has a finger in most pies in the district. He does the mail run to all the local stations, has an underground pottery shop, and organises the many tourist trips around the town and the general area.

We had 10 days in Coober Pedy, which most people thought was far too long, but we wanted to have a good look at the outback. Coober Pedy has a population of 3500 of which 350 are aboriginals. In strict translation from their lingo it means "uninitiated man's burrow" but is loosely translated as "white man digging holes".

The aborigines will not work underground as it is against their traditional beliefs of the sanctity of the earth. They are happy to work a winch for example on the ground but won't go down the mines and of course do not live underground as the bulk of the town's residents do. This living underground is very sensible, as the summer temperatures are frightening. The record heat was 52° C in the shade at 11 o'clock one morning. At this time of the year the days are pleasantly warm unless the winds start. These come from all quarters and when they start it is very very cold.

Living underground means that no matter how harsh the climate is outside the rooms maintain a temperature of between 23° C to 25° C day and night. We saw a great range of underground houses from small pretty rough "caves" to modern houses with all the luxuries required. Max and I had 6 days underground at the hotel and 4 days above ground. After 3 days underground we would have happily moved up but it could not be arranged, it was not that either of us is claustrophobic but just that you miss the sun coming through the widows.

There are 47 different nationalities in Coober. They stick to themselves in the main but there is no record of any strife between them. Most have their own clubs and gather together whenever possible. A good example is given by the Serbian Club. There are less than 50 Serbs in Coober but over four years these folk dug out and fashioned a most beautiful

church. If it were above ground it would be magnificent but hewn out of rock up to 20 feet deep it is truly inspirational.

We did every trip available and saw just about everything there was to see. The only one we didn't do was a light plane trip over Lake Eyre. Whereas last year there was plenty of water in it, today it is bone dry. We saw the outskirts of the lake on the "mail run". This takes you to all the neighbouring stations delivering and picking up mail. From Coober you drive east about 200k to William Creek on the edge of Lake Eyre. William has a population of 25 but boasts a pub! Of course we had a couple there. You then head northwest to Oodnadatta about 220k.

Oodnadatta is a sad place. Early last century it was a rollicking railhead thronged with drovers, cameleers, goldminers, and aborigines. Today there are barely 130 people living there of whom 70% are aboriginal.

In the truck I called out to Peter Rowe who was driving. "What does Oodnadatta mean?". He replied "I knew someone would ask me that. I haven't got a clue!"

He made amends when we got home and replied "It means the blossoming of the Mulga".

The last leg is from Oodna back to Coober Pedy, another 200k.

Other trips we did took in "noodling" for opals (we didn't get any), an underground Catholic Church, working opal mines, a visit to the "Old Timers Opal Mine", visits to a number of underground houses and a visit to "Crocodile Harry's joint". Harry is a 77 year old Latvian who came to Darwin hunting crocodiles before migrating down to Coober. He has quite an enormous mine of connecting horizontal shafts, many of them ornamented with rather rude carvings. Harry has two weaknesses - booze and women. He is a terrible drunkard and is currently blackballed from every licensed place in Coober (and there are many). In his heyday he used to shove handfuls of banknotes down every bosom who would let him. He was definitely not a nice character when on the booze. I sat

down and had ten minutes chat with the old bloke and it was rather sad. He is a bit crook at the moment and off the grog, but spoke wistfully about the old days. It was a bit pathetic.

I should have mentioned earlier that very few opals are found more than 25 metres under the ground. Anyone on paying a fee can get a license to dig over an area of 50 metres by 50 metres, or at the most 50 metres by 100 metres. These two limitations explain why there is no BHP or other big mining companies in Coober. Apart from that the Council is adamant that it will remain a mining area for the individual only.

The areas, which have been and are currently being mined, are like a moonscape. Thousands upon thousands of little mines cover the landscape with their respective mounds of excavated earth beside them. Miners do not have to fill back the excavation hole when leaving for two reasons. Firstly he might wish to recommence by digging out horizontal shafts in other directions. Secondly, if holes were filled up with loose earth when abandoned some poor chap 50 metres away might dig a shaft in that direction and get killed by the falling debris from the loose filled hole.

Everyone of course is warned to keep away from these areas at night. There are stories that a few skeletons can be found down certain holes.

Peter Rowe said to us one day "You blokes ought to go out to the rodeo at Mt. Barry Station, 120 k from Coober. They have cattle drafting, calf handling, buckjumping and plenty more." We said, "Sure, but how do we get there?" He said "I'll take you but I don't know how you'll get home. I'll be taking my swag and will have quite a few before turning in." Anyway we went there and it was perhaps our best day in Coober. All the cattle business was in the ways used long ago, but are preserved in these rodeos and it is really great fun. There was an enormous barbecue afterwards and luckily we met up with a teetotal couple who wanted to go back to Coober right after the barbecue.

Sadly there is talk that there will be no more

rodeos. Public liability insurance is killing them.

On another occasion we learned that the owners of Evelyn Downs Station west of Alice Springs main road were to start taking passengers on their mail run. Max and I were the first two customers. We caught the Alice Springs bus at Coober Pedy and got off at Cadney 160k north of Coober. Andrew Lockyer, son of the owner, picked us up and took us on his mail run and, most importantly, to see the Painted Desert. As part of the Lake Eyre basin, Evelyn Downs is traversed by countless creeks that have worn through weathered sediments forming deeply eroded cliffs and ridges whose layers of multicoloured rock have taken on the hues of white, yellow, brown, orange, red and purple. Painted Desert it is called and it is an incredible sight the like of which Max and I had never before seen.

Coober Pedy is an experience I won't ever forget. If an opportunity arises don't miss it. Max is 81 and I am 84. He has macular degeneration and doesn't see too well. I am half-deaf so we make a travelling team.

After our ten days in Coober we returned to Adelaide on the Ghan. We had three days there, visited Glenelg, Port Adelaide, and Victoria Harbour. On Sunday we watched Port Adelaide versus Adelaide. In South Australia they call it the "showdown" - not the "derby".

Then we missed by 24 hours the second Qantas strike in two weeks and landed happily back in Perth.

John Burridge.

"Smash" on Football.

Aussie rule followers may recall that Geelong won its last grand final back in 1963 defeating Hawthorn 15.19. to 8.12 before a crowd of 101,209.

"Smash" Hodson wrote an article that was published in the Courier in October espousing the footy skills of the great Polly Farmer. Here's how he put it: -

First of all about footy.

Once again we find ourselves beholden to the West. In yesterday's grand final Polly Farmer and Geelong won the premiership. I had read so much about him that I was looking forward to seeing him in action (purely through the TV medium as I never go to the matches).

As you know he took up the football running this season uncertainty of his actions following a knee injury. As most people understand it a really severe joint injury throws a big load on the conscious (and feel sure the subconscious) mind, so that one essays these severe tests on damaged joints, with that little in reserve, in short one consciously or subconsciously does not ask that weak or damaged joint to undergo that "to the limit" or "past the limit" strain of league football.

He got going, not alarming successful, but quietly effective and over the season he ran into really solidly effective form. So much so that many of our best known prophets here began to doubt the severity of that knee injury or they were about ready to accuse "Polly" of having that "mind over matter" mastery of the Hindu mystic.

Certain it is that he embarrassed we prophets. We tried to find him guilty of having the Yogi approach to the possibility of further injury, but couldn't make that stick because his mobility laughed us out of that one.

During a match against one of the top sides here this season, the TV cameras gave us (what I thought) possibly a lot of the answer. The camera "close shot" him and stayed that way for perhaps half a minute or a minute.

In that time the viewers got an insight into one of the best portraits of intense concentration that I think I have ever seen. From that match onwards I haven't stopped thinking, or talking, of that colossal faculty of Farmers, his intense concentration.

There are so many facets to this joker's football make-up. Except for a brief fractional flare-up yesterday he has been terrifically even tempered.

Compared to some of the downright thuggery

of the dingy cul-de-sac, which is often too evident here in footy, he is a thoroughgoing gentleman. The utter lack of the poseur or the actor, he demonstrated with great poise when he pulled down a beauty from a pack. Instead of stalking backwards in grandeur, and so give the crowd time to render him his well deserved accolade, he whipped the ball down to handball before his feet had cushioned from his leap. He fired the ball out to a fast moving team-mate on the open and Geelong steamed on again. This chap seems to have a stupefying effect on the opposing players of successfully bringing off the unexpected as well as the expected.

Can't quite define this chap. A cavalier perhaps? Can't call him that though. Cavaliers go about their vanquishing summat haughty disdainful like. He won't fit in that bracket. He's so busy in the midst of some constructive action or getting ready for one that he's too busy to be haughty or disdainful.

I can't call him great. Dammit, I'll just say he is tremendous!

Arch Campbell would have been in his joyful element here yesterday. A great day indeed for Geelong.

Edward "Smash" Hodson, a Victorian, and a sapper sergeant of note was one of the great characters in the old Unit. Built like a tank, his genial nature and whimsical form of expression made him a favourite with all who came to know him. "Smash" passed away on 20/4/80 at the age of 66. Lest We Forget.

Jack Carey.

Unit History.

It has been a case of "making haste slowly" as regards this important project. The committee has gathered a lot of information from members and other sources on the history of the Unit as well as having access to the books already written on the campaigns we were involved in. Putting it all together is another thing as the committee is starting to find out. We are keen to include events, which took place in those war years that have not previously written about. Even so, things

which took place in Timor for instance may never appear in print such being the unique nature of that campaign.

A number of members have advised us of their omission from Colin Doig's history. We thank them for that and can assure these members this oversight will be corrected in our new history.

As mentioned in our last Courier we appeal to New Guinea veterans in particular to write in and give us an account of any incidents they were involved in which they consider worthy of publication. The committee has decided to include a good range of photos in the book spread over three campaigns. So please bear with us as we plod along. Our aim is to have the history completed in 15 months from now for Christmas 2003, but don't bet on it!

J. Carey.

W.A. Safari 2003.

It was agreed at the general Meeting held during the Mildura Safari that our next and final Safari would be held in Western Australia in November 2003. A proviso insisted on by the W.A. members present was that unless WA received a firm commitment that at least 20 people would be attending from other states, the Safari would not be held. A deadline date of 30th June 2003 was set for the commitment.

As yet the WA committee has not discussed the Safari but will do so at their next meeting, but the December Courier will have more news on what is proposed.

The date of the Safari if held will be in mid November 2003 probably for a seven-day period.

So the ball is in the court of our Eastern State members. At this stage all we in WA can do is to guarantee you a good Safari if you come to the sunny West. So start saving now!

J. Carey.

Correspondence.**F. Geddes.****GPO Box 609, Darwin. NT.**

Dear Alan, (Luby) re Artie Cullen.

I have enclosed this cutting from the local paper that is self-explanatory.

I think it was you that attempted to see Arthur Cullen when you were in Darwin a few years ago.

He was a strange fellow; he mixed with no one and simply disappeared until we saw this notice in the paper.

Arthur Cullen would have been a 1939 enlistee; his service number was DX 66.

Regards Frank Geddes.

NB. The cutting is from the Public Trustees of Darwin on the estate of Arthur Henry Cullen late of the Terrace Gardens Aged Care Facility and formerly of 29 Tuckwell Court, Larrakeyah, N. T. We have been trying to find out Arties whereabouts for many years now and this notice confirms his passing, which I'm sure his old mates of 7 Section will be sorry to learn of.

"Lest We Forget".

Dear Jack, Please find enclosed cheque for \$50.00 to use where needed.

My admiration goes to your organisation for the wonderful work done in helping others and especially to all Timor friends.

Best wishes to all and Harry's mates he cared for so much.

Yours, Maisie Holder.

W. J. Connell, Manly. Qld.

Dear Jack, Surprise! After all these years I have finally found pen and paper. It's taken a lot of effort I can tell you. In case I forget, my birthdate is 12/3/23. That makes me 80 years next March.

Things have not changed that much since last time except that we are all older. Now regards the Mildura Safari, Mildura is my old home town. I was born in Lake Boga, up river from

Mildura and I spent the next thirty years in and around Mildura. I came from Mildura to Queensland in May 1953. I may have gone back long ago but I can't stand COLD weather!

Four years ago Irma (Erma) was diagnosed with incurable cancer and also inoperable. She went through "Chemo" but it didn't do any good (lumps still growing) so decided to stop treatment and the Doctors agreed. However she seems to be in remission this last two years. She went onto "Noni" juice, which is the juice of the noni-fruit, which grows in the Pacific Islands (and elsewhere). Maybe that's the cure, no one knows, but her lumps seem to have gone. Now her right hip is giving trouble and she finds it hard to walk.

For myself, I have a few things wrong, but skin cancers are at present giving trouble. I had a Melanoma removed 18 months ago and have had 18 cancers cut out since last February. I've been getting skin cancers since 1954 and they seem to be getting worse as I get older I saw my G.P. last Tuesday and he thinks I may have another "Melanoma".

About the photos in the last Courier, could you name the people from L to R, as I cannot put a name to any of them? I think Tony Bowers would be on the left (of bottom photo) as he is certainly the biggest there. I know the names are mentioned in text but that doesn't help me.

I'll send you a cheque, as you haven't had anything from me for years.

Excuse the writing, it doesn't get better as we grow older. All the best to all, Yours sincerely, Bill.

Ed: For you Bill, and anyone else who would like to check, here are the names of people in the back page photos in the June Courier. L. to R. Back row: Fred Broadhurst, George Shiels, Ed Bourke, Paddy Kenneally, just behind him, Tom Foster, John Chalwell, Bill Coker, Len Bagley, Kel Carthew, Keith Wilson and Ron Archer. Front Row: Bluey Bone, Bernie Langridge, Jack Carøy, Dick Darrington, George "Happy" Greenhalgh, Lionel Newton, Harry Handicott.

Bottom photo: Back Rpw: Tony Bowers, Ray Aitken, Keith Hayes, Jack Carey, Ray Perry, (Pres) Seated in front: Dick Darrington, Don Turton, Jack Fowler and Joe Poynton.

I always keep this copy and find solace each time I read same.

Bert King - I salute you.

I will leave you now, wishing you one and all every blessing, especially so, good health,
Sincerely Nina.

N. Grachan, Wheelers Hill, Vic.

Dear Mr President, Committee & Friends, I trust you are all well and those fortunate friends who participated in the Mildura Safari enjoyed themselves wholeheartedly, and warm memories will be a constant reminder - unfortunately it was not possible for me to attend but I can assure you I was with you in thought and heart.

I read with sadness the passing of so many loved ones - to all those devastated by so much sadness and heartache my prayers and sympathy reach out to you. Words are so inadequate in times such as these - only time will ease one's heartache.

I am reasonably well and count my blessings as each day dawns, a few hang-ups but few of us can claim to be perfect.

To all those widows who have lost loved ones, I enclose a poem written by the late Bert King in 1991 - hoping in some way it will ease one's pain.

'In 41 we stood and prayed that we would pass this test.

To stay down here amongst these hills to become the Army's best.

In 91 we stood again and saw you watching on,

And as we, you seemed to fade then each acquired a shade,

You'd hastened back along "Your men who'd missed parade",

There on that day in hallowed ground

You too were young and each a bride

With happy hearts and smiling

As your men folk glowed with pride

The scene then changed you became so few.

For your men had again "marched on "

But for a time they stood with pride

And for you they will linger on

You stood that day, and looked at us

As we too stood - and looked at you.

V. Hayes, Como. WA.

Dear Jack & Members of 2/2nd Assoc., As always when one is overwhelmed, words escape us. I failed to respond appropriately on receiving the Life Membership Badge of the 2/2nd Association. I feel it is a great honour and thank you all sincerely. The collecting and sorting of goods for East Timor is a pleasure and which we hope is helping them a little. Thanks again and my best wishes to all, Val Hayes.

C. West, Waterman. WA.

Thank you for the 2/2nd Courier, which arrived recently. You and your wife must be congratulated on the presentation of same.

As I was out of town on the date of the last social gathering at the Good Earth Hotel on the 5th. July please accept my apology for my absence.

However I do look forward to the Christmas gathering. Maybe I can look forward to retrieving my favourite sun hat that I left at the SAS Barracks! In the meantime please accept a donation to the Unit's worthy cause. Thanking you, Yours sincerely, Clare West.

P. & P. Campbell, Esperance, WA.

Dear Everybody, It seems such a long while since we wrote. Peter has been having his ups and downs. Sorry we didn't make it to Mildura. Only got as far as Exmouth and after our first fortnight Peter pulled the muscle of his shoulder blade and was flat on his back for a month on painkillers.

Coming home we passed through all farming country. It was a shame to see such beautiful country just dry, dry, dry! The same when we got home, but everyone still hoping for that big rain.

Our daughter Julie and her husband Ivan leave for Darwin and the Birdsville races in August so we are going up to look after their farm at Grass Patch - dog, chooks, sheep and cows etc. so will be kept busy.

Enjoyed the Courier when we got home, hope we can make next year in Perth.

Enclosed cheque for where most needed. Regards to all, Peter and Pat.

A. Mitchell, Caloundra, Qld.

Dear Jack & Delys, Received your letter last week and was sorry to hear that Syd passed on. I remember him quite well Jack. When you were crossing streams of any depth, at times you would not see Syd, only his head above the water line. We, as years go by, get different ailments such as myself, I have very little eyesight and if we did manage to get off the ground over to the last Safari, I couldn't do it on my own. I do not recognise people as well now, unless Joan would be able to go.

Will enclose a small donation towards the Courier. Jack please give all members my regards. No. 9 Section would not have too many old ones left as I joined the Unit at Canungra.

By all reports the Safari at Mildura went off smoothly, still well before that, that my eyes failed. Apart from my eyes all is fine that includes Joan, we are both well otherwise. Excuse writing and run off the lines. Joan and I send our love to you both, Allan.

R. Gregg, Beresfield, NSW.

Dear Editor, After reading about Major Spence's "exposure" in the previous issue, I was reminded of an irritating question asked by one of my pupils. It was about World War One; conditions in the trenches: "But Sir, where did they go? To the toilet?" my reply was "To the latrine" : "But where Sir?" And I didn't know, teachers don't like to be asked questions they can't answer.

So the question floated around in the back of my mind, your average school history book

is silent on such matters. Then, one day I was looking for something in my local University library and found the answer, unexpectedly. A student had written a thesis on "cushy" fatigues in World War One, most of which were "Cushy" away from the front line. Sanitary fatigue involved emptying half 44-gallon drums after dark, very quietly over the sandbags at the front of the trench into the shell holes. It had to be quiet because any noise might draw fire from German machine-guns. (What a way to go!!!) Of course, when the Germans shelled the frontline, the troops got their own back!!

The connection to Major Spence? Officers had their latrine in a more sheltered spot, screened from vulgar gaze by a framework with hessian draped on it. It was a great military crime to lose that piece of hessian, almost as bad as dropping the rum jar. Being a "sanitary" man was cushy only in a Base camp, where that job excused you from any other fatigue, though your friends may have been careful not to sit downwind from you.

Best wishes to all, Robert Gregg.

P.S. On mentioning the above to some "double diamonds" on the ferry, they told me the above "crime" would only have existed in the British Army!!

M. Broadhurst, Fairfield, Vic.

I hope everyone had a safe journey home from Mildura. It doesn't take long to get back to the old routine of dishes, beds and meals, the reunions really spoil us for the short time we're there. Fred and I enjoyed ourselves, meeting up with old friends again, all being well we will be in Perth next year.

Shortly after our return we received the sad news of the sudden death of David Brown, after a bad fall at his home. The funeral was well attended. Representing the 2/2nd were Leith Cooper, Ed Bourke, Fred and I.

I wondered if the Courier readers are aware that Margo Shiels has written a small book "Bends in the Road" on her interesting life. Margo was always telling her children of her experiences through life so they encouraged

her to write a book and share those experiences with others, and what an interesting life she has had. Her childhood in China, as a teenager a prisoner of the Japanese in the Philippines, then her life in Australia. I purchased a book from Margo at Mildura. Congratulations Margo, you have done a wonderful job. If anyone is interested this book is well worth reading.

Mavis Broadhurst.

Ed: I totally agree Mavis. I read Margo's book some time ago and have loaned it to several friends. It has been mentioned in the Courier before.

K. Johnston, Victorian Commando Assoc.

Dear Fred, As discussed last week I have received a letter from Jock Robertson (ex 9 Div. Artillery - El Alamein Veteran) who resides in Toowoomba at 6 Barry Street (4350 postcode)

Jock is a cousin of Alan Spence - original O.C. of 2nd Independent Company on Timor. I have received copies of the Courier from Jack Carey that were duly mailed to Jock Robertson, who in turn has forwarded the material to Bill Spence (Muttaborra, Qld) also a relative of Alan. I have no idea whether Bill and Alan are brothers or cousins.

However a recent letter from Jock Robertson made reference to Alan's widow having recently passed on that I thought would be of interest to Courier readers, particularly those who served under Alan Spence. Cheers for now, Keith Johnston. Vic. Commando Assoc.

The following is an excerpt from a letter sent to Keith Johnston from Jock Robertson.

No doubt receiving another letter from Toowoomba will come as a shock to the system, but I write to pass on some sad news about the passing of Dorothy Gibson - the widow of Alan Spence, the ex CO of the 2/2nd Commando Squadron.

In the Service of Thanksgiving brochure she is called Dorothy Emily Spence Gibson; you

may probably know she married "Goog" Gibson a couple of years after Alan's passing. This "Goog", a terrific fellow who belonged to the 2/1st Battalion, spent most of the war as a POW in Germany after having been taken prisoner in either Crete or Greece, I have forgotten which.

Dot was born on the 25th Nov. 1913 and died on the 26th May 2002, so she had had a good life but the dreaded breast cancer finally caught up with her. She was a wonderful lovely lady who will be missed by her family and many, many friends.

I only pass on this sad news for I know you and your Commando mates would want to know out of your respect for Alan. As expected, a large crowd attended the funeral service - for all I know some members of the Commando Association may have been present. Jack Robertson. Vic. Commando Assoc.

L. Poidevin, Burnside, SA.

The Secretary, 2/2nd Commando Courier, Thank you for keeping me on your list - I enjoy the Courier.

Please accept the enclosed cheque for sending copies.

I was not of your Unit - I took a detachment of 2/12 Field Artillery on the "Westralia" with Sparrow Force so didn't have a long association with your Unit which moved off to Dili shortly after landing.

Kindest regards, Yours sincerely, Leslie Poidevin.

M. Blomfield, Forster, NSW.

2/2nd Commando Courier, Enclosed please find a small cheque to help run the Courier.

I still like to read about your activities even though I don't know a soul. Yours sincerely, Margaret Blomfield.

D. Laing, Bruce, ACT.

Dear Jack, Please find enclosed cheque which I'm happy for you to allocate between

the Courier and Trust Fund as you see fit. In spite of all the frustration I applaud your continued efforts to improve the lot of the Timorese.

While it is always sad to read in each Courier of the passing of so many former 2/2nd men it is very heartening to learn of the many others who are taking part in all kinds of activities, many for the benefit of those less fortunate. The Courier provides a valuable link between them all and their families in many cases.

All good wishes for the work of the Association.

Yours sincerely Dawn Laing (nee Ryan).

J. Chatfield, Pinjarra, WA.

Dear Delys & Jack, Please find enclosed my donation. I would like to congratulate you for all the wonderful work you are both doing, such a lot of effort and work and of course time, you both surely make a lot of unit and friends happy. I find the Courier such a source of news and a lifeline for one of my main interests in life. I don't know what I would do without it. Thank you very much.

Joy Chatfield.

& H. Handicott, Hamilton, NSW.

Dear Jack & Delys, Greetings and all that, well that's not a bad start. I have changed typewriters; the old one was making too many mistakes!

Well the 30th June is hurrying towards us so I must get this done with the attached as you requested.

Firstly another good Safari has passed, I hope all are looking forward to November 03. I reckon Bluey and Eddie did a mighty job you might say by correspondence, they were so far away, it's hard enough when you are on the spot.

Alan Luby rang me on Saturday telling me of Dave Brown's passing, nice fella Dave. Then on Monday Joyce Smith rang about our dear Betty Craig and Don's wife. Our sympathy goes to their families.

I don't know about you folk in the West but by crikey it's been cold in NSW. It only seems a couple of months ago we were whingeing about the heat.

Do hope everything goes well for the 03 Safari, and we all keep well enough to travel. Thank you for ringing "Happy" and inquiring on my health. I consumed a good few Panadol at Mildura, saw the doctor when I got home so after a couple of x-rays he said I was getting over pneumonia, but I'm pretty right now.

Will attach the adjustment sheet for the book.

It was good seeing you all again, so till Nov. 03, cheerio to all. Regards, Amyce & Harry.

J. Smith, Ashmore, Qld.

Dear Delys, Just a short note to advise the above (No. 19) as my correct address, not 17.

Also in response to your request re birthdays - mine is 28th October, 82 this year. My, how time flies! Sincerely, Jim Smith.

F.C. & P. Lawrence.

To all the folks at the Courier, We hope that the Safari went well and everyone enjoyed themselves. Upon reading about the new book in the works, I thought it would be a good idea to go through our old photos and see if there was any that could be used in the publication.

We have included these two photos of J.B. Lawrence otherwise known as "Blossom". This secret was kept a complete secret from the family and myself until it came out at an army dinner. I don't think Barry was too pleased about it. I think the name came about because he was very young when he joined the Unit, "in the blossom of his youth".

There are many good memories I'm sure of Blossom, but to the family he was a man with a presence, who could charm the socks of anybody and enjoyed a good laugh, a husband, a father and a friend.

I am enclosing a small deposit to hold four books when they are completed. We all hope

that the putting together of the book goes well and gets a good response. Yours sincerely,
Faye, Chris and Penny.

DOB 4/2/1925 - 3/12/1978

WX11917 Corporal John Barrasford
Lawrence

"Z" Australian Special Unit.

28th April 1941 - 15th January 1946.

K. Carthew, Andrews Farm, SA.

Dear Jack, Enclosed an article I read in the Adelaide Advertiser yesterday. It could be of some interest to the 2/4th men in W.A., also to 2/2nd Coy. As Bloss Lawrence is mentioned.

Syd McKinley passed away on Tuesday 9th July and funeral on the Friday. Unfortunately his daughter Linda Buckley could not contact me, as she could not find my telephone number then she got the number from you in WA and I had other arrangements. I contacted a member of the CDO Assoc., Eddie Elston 2/9th to see if he could go. He and his wife made the trip to find the cemetery but got lost, as the map he was using did not show the one way streets and dead ends.

I sent Linda a sympathy card from the Commando Assoc. S.A. Branch and one also from all members in S.A. of the 2/2nd Assoc.

I was talking to Mark Jordan a couple of Sundays back, he seems to be going along okay also his wife, Elsie.

Well Jack, I will close now wishing you all in WA the best of anything you wish for. Kel Carthew.

Mrs S. Forsyth, Kenmore, Qld.

Dear Mr Carey, Enclosed small donation towards the expenses of producing and distributing the Courier.

If only I had been successful in last night's \$M25 Lotto draw, my contribution would have been much more generous!

I really enjoy receiving my copy of the Courier!
Yours sincerely, Sheila Forsyth.

(Former secretary to, and good friend of Tom Nisbet: former great friend of the late Col Doig!)

K.B. Sargeant, Gympie, Qld.

Dear Jack, I hope this epistle does not reach you too late but because of medical reasons I was unable to contact you before now.

Since reading your March Courier I noticed you wanted people to make corrections to errors made in various books written in the past.

You have named at least four authors and there has been quite a few more that have articles of your Unit.

I have not read them all but those I have read have never given the correct information as to who the Signaller was who was at the transmitter on the night of April 19th 1942 when Australia was contacted.

My late husband John Henry (Jack) Sargeant QX18071 was that signaller.

Now after 60 years I hope that will be corrected in the new book your Unit hopes to publish.

When the story of Timor was first published in the Australian Press in all states on the 31st December 1942 and January 1st 1943, two versions were given of the wireless section.

The main newspapers gave the correct names of my husband Jack Sargeant and his wife's name as "Kathleen" while some others wrote of a "fictitious Cpt Bill Jones" who is supposed to have sent the message to Australia and who, when asked, his wife's name "Joan". Of course those in the know, know there was never a Captain Bill Jones there. Several other men's names have also been mentioned wrongly with "Joan" also mentioned as their wives name.

Many years ago a chap named Barry Risely who lived in Tasmania, decided to make a replica of "Winnie" and he was given permission to view the archives at the War Memorial in Canberra. He wrote to me and

sent me photo copies of some of the things he thought would interest me although the archives had Jack's name correct it had his wife's name as "Joan".

It was after receiving this information I wrote to Canberra to tell them of the error. In my correspondence I was informed that after 25 years the archives couldn't be changed.

When the War Memorial refurbished the gallery with "Winnie the War Winner" I was invited to attend the opening. There I met among other folk, Dr Peter Stanley, head historian. They now know it was Jack who was the signaller that night and he gave his wife's name "Kathleen". This was later verified by George Parker who was the Captain when "Winnie" was built.

Recently I have had correspondence with Wilbur Wright, who has something to do with Army Signallers at Fairlight in New South Wales.

I understand they were interested in finding the next of kin of the four signallers who were connected with "Winnie the War Winner" namely Joe Loveless, Keith Richards, John Donovan, and Jack Sargeant. Sadly all four men are deceased but I think they have contacted relatives with a view to giving those men some recognition for the part they played re "Winnie" the wireless that saved the men of Timor. Up to date I've heard nothing further.

After 60 years I hope the right version will be given in your Units new book. After all it is history. Sincerely Kathleen B. Sargeant.

G. Marks, 2/28a Darling Pt. Rd, Darling Point. NSW.

Dear Editor, I am Howard Marks' youngest daughter and am writing to you in response to some of the entries in Volume 139 of the "Commando Courier", being the June 2002 edition.

In that Courier it was reported that my father was suffering from advanced alzheimers disease. I am happy to say it is not as grim as people may think and Dad still recognises all of his family and does have a very good

understanding of what is happening around him and when we speak to him. He has very clear memories of his life and has not lost any of the treasured memories of mateship and camaraderie in his time in the 2/2nd commandos. He does however suffer from not being able to communicate other than in very broken short sentences. He also suffers from a severe lack of mobility and although he can still stand and walk a few steps he is more or less confined to a wheel chair. He is a resident at the helping hand nursing Home in North Adelaide where is very well looked after.

Since dad spent most of his life in the country he looks forward very much to his "spin" around the parks of North Adelaide and is pleased to see his family, nieces and nephews. In addition to his 6 children he has 14 nieces and nephews and 3 great nephews!

I would be very pleased to receive the 2/2nd Commando Courier and would be happy to pay a subscription fee for that. It is interesting to read different people's experiences. In addition I have noticed that you refer to the unit history book and I wonder if I am able to obtain a copy of that book and indeed any other information about the 2/2nd Commando Squadron.

With kind regards, Gillian Marks.

J. Fenwick, Curtin, ACT.

Dear Jack, Trust cheque will help a little with Courier expenses, it's wonderful to keep in touch through the letters and other information, it's a credit to you Delys and all who have helped with gathering news and the publication over all these years. Enjoyed Margo's Mildura Safari.

Ron Morris, Paddy Kenneally and I attended the Mass at St. Matthews for Danny and spoke with Sunny and some of her family all trying so hard to be brave. Canberra put on a wet, cold day for Danny's funeral. Paddy very kindly drove me home to Curtin to allow Ron to go back to Calvery Hospital where Hazel was recovering from knee surgery. Shortage of beds and nursing staff caused Hazel to be

discharged Wednesday evening. I saw her on Thursday; she was in a lot of pain.

Great photos on back of the Courier. Wish all Unit members and wives all the best from yours truly, Joan Fenwick.

V. Jones, 85 Woorarra Ave, Elanora Hghts. NSW

Dear Jack, As you have no doubt heard by now, your mate Curly and my dear partner for the last 15 years, died on 27th July, just four weeks short of his 80th birthday. In early 1998 Frank was diagnosed with lung cancer and in April of that year had part of his right lung removed. The surgery and the subsequent radiation treatment nearly killed him. However with his usual fighting spirit he managed to recover and live for another four years in relative comfort, doing what he liked best, reading the newspaper and books, smoking and drinking beer (the latter he finally had to abandon, as it no longer tasted right). Frank asked me to send the Courier Association a cheque for \$2000 to be used for Timor and The Courier in the proportion you think right. I enclose the cheque herewith. Yours sincerely, Verena Jones.

Pars On People.

Dot Boyland who will be 91 on the 24th of this month has moved into the eldercare section of Trinity Village where she has lived for some years. Dot has always been a generous supporter of the Association.

Blue Pendergrast is battling along okay in his new unit at St. Lucy's Home in Victoria Park. Bad circulation in his left leg restricts his movements. Blue was saying he was a member of the Dongara Pistol Club and was a very good shot in his day. He enjoys watching the footy and would welcome a call or two from his old sapper mates. His phone number is (08) 9355.0707.

Tom Bateman is coming good slowly after a long spell in hospital. Tom is not allowed a beer, which he finds hard to accept. Keep your

chin up Tom; I'm sure the drought will break soon!

Our hard working pair in Keith & Val Hayes are off for a well-earned break in Esperance and Albany. We wish them well.

Les Halse is another who is battling along on his own in his Kalamunda home. Les has a sciatica nerve problem which has been giving him hell for a long time now and which makes driving a car a painful experience. Les never complains and lives one day at a time. We miss him on the committee.

Ron Archer dropped into see Peter Krause who moved earlier in the year to sunny Queensland. Ron said Peter, who lives with his daughter, is well set up and though Peter cannot get around too much he is content to fill in his time playing patience. Peter was a great mate of Colin Doig and they enjoyed meeting up at our Safaris.

Lionel and Elsie Newton, long time residents of Broken Hill, are off to Adelaide this month where Lionel will have a cataract removed. Both are well. Lionel said that Broken Hill, which at present only has one mine operating with a workforce of 400/500, is running short of water. At present water is pumped in from the Darling River some 112 k away. In its heyday Broken Hill had about 3000 men working in the mines. Lionel and Elsie still reckon it's a great place to live.

Congratulations to Paddy and Nora Kenneally who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on the 9th August last. They celebrated the occasion with the family at Canberra on Sunday 11th August. Paddy's mother gave some good advice to Nora on her wedding day, according to Paddy, saying to her "Sure don't take any notice of that mad so & so. He'll be taking you all over the country uninhabited or otherwise. He's spent his life up until now wanting to know what's over the mountain, take no notice of him." 50 years on, with a lovely family, Paddy and Nora are a devoted loving couple. May you both share many more years together.

Tony Bowers is looking forward to catching up with his old mate "Bulla" Tait who with Joan

his wife and lovely daughter Vicky, are visiting WA late September or early October. Tony, Bulla and Joe are certain to have a few sessions together. All are great blokes.

Hazel Morris is making good progress after a recent knee replacement. Ron and Hazel played an active part in the two great safaris we had at Canberra in 1986 and 1998. Ron who has had more than his share of health problems is well but is on the square and misses his good wines of which he is a connoisseur.

Don Turton dropped in to see Gwenda Kirkwood recently. Don was pleased to report that Gwenda was well and enjoying life. She watches cricket and footy on T.V. and is a pretty good judge of both sports. Gwenda has the honour of being the first person to contribute to our Trust Fund appeal. She is a lovely person.

Jean Holland has settled into her new unit in Booragoon. Jean has just returned from a holiday in Queensland and is looking forward to more trips. Good for you Jean.

Sick Parade.

Hazel Hollow reports that Alan has not been well. Acute Anaemia forced Alan to spend 10 days in hospital recently, which necessitated blood transfusions and blood tests on the old veteran. But as we all know Alan is tough and can take it. He is back home now being well cared for by Hazel. Alan sends his regards to Ray Aitken and all of his old mates of B Platoon who are still on deck.

Wilma Tobin, widow of Bert, has not enjoyed the best of health for some time now. Recently she collapsed in the kitchen and spent some time in the Box Hill Hospital.

We trust and pray that you will take a turn for the better and soon be home again Wilma. I'm sure our Victorian members will rally around her.

Wilf March who has been on chemo treatment for over 4 years is now on Interferon, which also has nauseous side effects. On top of this Wilf's two knees, both of which underwent

knee replacements 10 - 12 years ago are the worse for wear which means he has great difficulty moving about. Under the loving care of his wife Lorraine, who is a real angel, Wilf is coping well. He sends his regards to his sapper mates and all members of the Association.

Bluey Bone and Ed Bourke, who did such a terrific job organising the Mildura Safari, had their downs in the winter period. Blue had a bad attack of the flu (no orphan of course) which laid him up for over a month while Ed spent time in hospital for a hernia op. Both are okay now though. Blue is dead crooked Hawthorn failed to make the final eight!

No doubt there are many of our members and widows who qualify for a mention in our sick parade. There would be very few of us who are not putting up with an ache or pain of some description. The Gold Card certainly comes in handy at our stage of life - as does an occasional whisky! Good luck.

Views expressed below are not necessarily those of the editor!

(No responsibility taken.)

Married Bliss.

There was this couple who had been married for 50 years. They were sitting at the breakfast table one morning when the old gentleman said to his wife, "Just think honey, we've been married for 50 years".

"Yeah," she replied, "Just think, fifty years ago we were sitting here at this breakfast table together." "I know," the old man said, "We were probably sitting here naked as jaybirds fifty years ago". "Well", Granny snickered, "What do you say. Should we get naked?" where upon the two stripped to the buff and sat down at the table. "You know honey," the little old lady breathlessly replied, "My nipples are as hot for you today as they were fifty years ago." "I wouldn't be surprised," replied Gramps.

"One's in your coffee and the other is in your oatmeal!!!"

Birthday Boys.

Harry Handicott	July 4	80
George Greenhalgh	" 8	82
Alex Thompson	" 10	81
Peter Barden	" 11	81
Tom Foster	Aug. 1	82
Jack Hanson	" 9	81
Dusty Studdy	" 15	84
Andy Beveridge	" 15	86
Russ Blanch	" 23	81
Fred Otway	Sept. 3	82
Alan Luby	" 6	87
Bill Tomasetti	" 11	84
Bob Williamson	" 13	84
Tony Adams	" 18	84
Percy McPhee	" 23	84

We now have 80 names on the birthday list. If you would like to be included on the list you can ring me on 08 9332 7050. Ed.

New Address Book.

At our March A.G.M. the committee decided to have a new address book printed. This will definitely be our last address book.

It is planned to have the new book out early next year, probably by February 2003. There will be no charge to members or those on our Courier list. The closing date for notification of change of address for the new edition is the 31st December 2002.

We realise that change of addresses will continue with the Association eventually winds up but it will be nice to have a new book. Mine looks like a pakapoo ticket! Jack Carey.

Change of Address.

Mrs Anne Gooley
 10 South Parade, Seaton. SA 5023
 (Hazel Hollow's daughter)
 Ph. 08 8244.0162
 George & Dot Robinson

2 Constable Drive, Kilsyth. Vic. 3137
 03 9728.6992
 Stan & Barbara Payne
 55 Coronation St., Merredin WA 6415
 Ph. 08 9041.1202
 Mrs Jean Holland
 Unit 233 Parkland Villas
 510 Marmion St., Booragoon WA 6154
 Ph. 08 9317 6386
 Mrs V. Watson
 18 Hyden Loop, Dawesville,
 Mandurah. WA 6210
 Ph. 08 9582 3589

Courier Donations.

Tony & Iris Adams, R.S. Poidevin, Bill Connell, Ray Aitken, Tony Bowers, Joy Chatfield, Epps Family, Ken Hasson, Fred Hasson, Kaye Hanson, Keith & Val Hayes, Mark & Elsie Jordan, Joe & Helen Poynton, Vince Swann, Dusty Studdy, Bob & Margaret Smyth, Doc Wheatley, Nina Grachan, Harry & Amyce Handicott, Alan Mitchell, Margaret Blomfield, Dawn Laing, Maisy Holder, Clare West, Sheila Forsyth, Peter & Pat Campbell, Joan Fenwick, Peter & Joan Barden, Les & Verna Cranfield, Frank O'Neill, W.A. Marks.

Trust Fund Donations.

Alan Luby	\$20
Dawn Laing	\$50
Frank O'Neill	\$1000

Sincere thanks to all donors for your generous support. Ed.

Roll Call.

Known members as at 31/8/02:

Queensland	19
New South Wales	31
Victoria	20
South Australia.	9
Tasmania	2
United Kingdom.	1
Western Australia.	<u>45</u>
	<u>127</u>

H. Sproxton. Statistician.

Sound Advice:

Never be afraid to try something new.

Remember, amateurs built the Ark.

Professionals built the Titanic.

I always wanted to be a procrastinator;

I just never got around to it.

I plan on living forever. So far, so good.

I have kleptomania, but when it gets bad, I take something for it.

Time may be a great healer, but it is a lousy beautician.

You don't stop laughing because you grow old; you grow old because you stopped laughing.

Old Friends.

It's never too far to an old friends house

And the way is smooth and fine
The path bears many a telltale mark

Of footprints his and mine

Each hill and dale and winding curve

Its youthful fancies lend

And miles are short, when I go forth

To the house of an old, old friend

Time never drags at an old friend's house

And the hours are filled with joy,

He pictures me, and I picture him

As a carefree, laughing boy

Old faces beam with wrinkled smiles

And the long years brightly blend

In a wealth of treasured memories

At the house of an old, old friend.

Veterans Prayer.

So far today I've done alright.

I haven't gossiped and haven't lost my temper.

I haven't been grumpy, nasty, or selfish.

But in a few minutes God, I'm going to get out of bed and that's when I'm going to need a lot of help!

Senility Prayer.

God grant me the Senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones that I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference.

Now that I'm older here's what I have discovered:-

I started out with nothing and still have most of it.

My wild oats have turned into prunes and All Bran.

All reports are in; Life is now officially unfair.

Funny, I don't remember being absent minded.

I finally got my head together; now my body is falling apart.

If all is not lost, where is it?

It is easier to get older than it is to get wiser.

Some days you're the dog; some days you're the hydrant..

W.A. Members Please Note
53rd COMMEMORATION SERVICE
Lovekin Drive, King's Park.

Sunday 17th November 2002.
Service commences at 3 pm.
Members are asked to make a special effort
to attend this service.

“Lest We Forget”

Our Christmas Luncheon will be held at
“The Good Earth Hotel”

on

Friday 6th December 2002.

Refreshments from 11 am, Lunch at 12.30 pm.

Mark this date on your calendar,

It will be a great day!

New South Wales Xmas Lunch

2/2nd and Fellow Commando Members

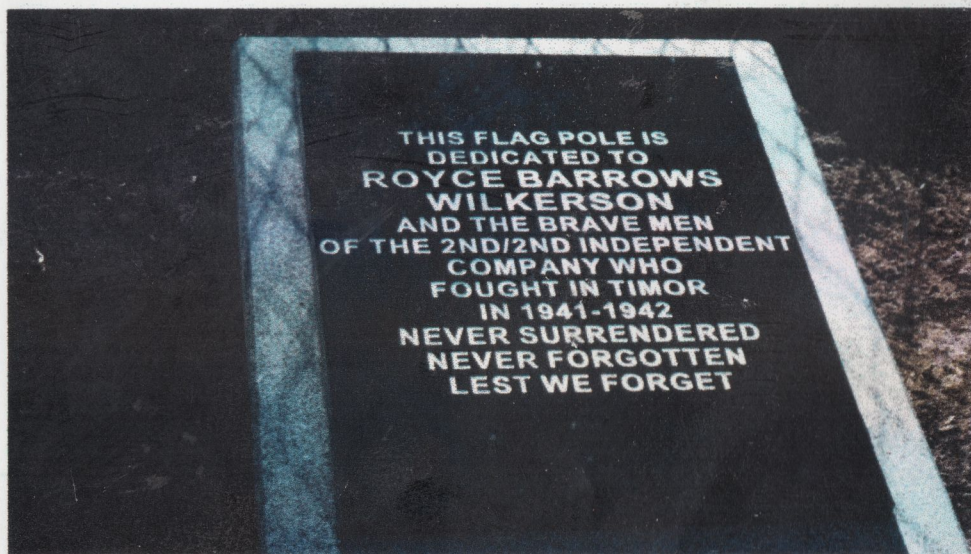
Our Xmas Social Luncheon will be held at
The Dee Why R & S League Club, Pittwater Rd

On

Saturday 7th December.

11.30 am drinks, lunch to follow.

Don't forget now, it will be a good show!



Top: Wendell Wilkerson Plaque at Katrine, W.A.

Bottom: Ladies at the Mildura Safari. Back Row: Mary Bone, down to Delys Carey, up to Miriam van Dyk, Pat Petersen, Mavis Broadhurst, Dorothy Bourke, Nellie Mullins. Middle Row: Nora Kenneally, Lyn Love, Jess Epps, Olive Chalwell Margo Shiels, Marj. Goodacre, Coral Coker, Elsie Newton, Mary Foster, Iris Rowan-Robertson, Pat Sullivan. Bottom Row: Betty Craig, Babs Langridge, Cath Roberts, Margaret Monk, Amyce Handicott, Betty Bagley.

