



2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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MARCH 2008

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

This is the first editorial issued in May 1951 of the 2/2nd Commando Courier.

"This first edition of Commando Courier marks the start of another period in the communications side of our Association.

The step towards making the Newsletter into a periodical has not been taken without due consideration and it is thought that it will be a forward movement in regard to news and its presentation to you the reader.

Rising costs have forced us to try and adopt some measures which will still give members the same or a better news medium at approximately the same cost as previously or possibly allow the Association to effect a saving. By the use of bulk postage and the elimination of costly and ever rising envelopes, it is hoped that the tide of inflation will be stemmed as far as our paper is concerned.

It is hoped also to add further features to this periodical and eventually to publish it on an Australian wide basis and so put all members irrespective of State in the one picture.

The editorial committee think that the present departure is a step in the right direction and another cog in the machine of progress. It is hoped that you the reader will be of the same opinion and that you will show added appreciation of the Associations efforts in this direction and send in better and greater contributions towards our newly embarked paper 'Commando Courier'.

The toast is "Gentlemen the Commando Courier" may you live long and honourably in the Service of the Association."

Colin Doig

Prior to this edition communication with members began early in 1947 in the form of a newsletter consisting of a single foolscap page printed on the front and back. Colin Doig was the editor assisted by Bill Epps and Keith Hayes, a committee of three in all. Despite the various shortcomings the newsletter was the catalyst that put the Association on the road to its great success. In all fifty newsletters were sent out at the rate of twelve per annum from 1947 and they were eagerly accepted all over Australia. Many and varied were the events recounted in these fifty editions but births were certainly the big news of those first four years as not many members were married before the return from Timor in 1943. Our boys were big providers' to the baby boom of the late 40's and early 50's.

It was Keith Hayes who provided the solution by creating a small periodical of 12 pages from folded foolscap, typed in columns. It was agreed it was to be named the "2/2nd Commando Courier". Initially it was duplicated by Keith at his work place and had to be posted in the normal way until it was accepted by the G.P.O. for transmission through the post as a periodical. To do this it was necessary to be printed by a firm of publishers such as a printing works and priced as for sale.

Bill Epps who was employed as a linotype operator at the Swan Express News printing works at Midland Junction took up the matter with the proprietor and an agreement was reached.

Bill asked for the copy to be double spaced so it could be rapidly read and the result was that the price for the newly vamped "2/2 Commando Courier"

worked out at ten pounds (\$20.00) per issue of 500 copies. The Courier was priced at one penny per copy and bulk postage for the Courier was seventeen shillings and sixpence (\$1.75) per issue. The wrappers were addressed by Colin Doig and the wrapping and posting done by Bill and Jess Epps. For many years twelve issues per year, varying in size from eight to sixteen pages were dispatched throughout Australia. Swan Express were our publishers from 1951 until well into the 1980's when they closed down. Bill Epps along with Jess contributed so much to the publication of the Courier. Bill suffered a severe stroke in December 1992 and passed away in 1994. Jess continued to be a wonderful supporter of the Association.

The newsletter Courier have proved most popular with the Unit Associations members and there is not the slightest doubt that they have been the means of the Association keeping together and expanding into the wonderful Association it has become.

During the Couriers 61 years of service (1947-2008) tributes should be paid to those members and their families, many who are no longer with us, who made their contributions to our Great Little Paper.

THEN AND NOW

With Anzac Day approaching the following report written by Colin Doig on Anzac Day 1951 in W.A. appeared in the first issue of the Courier.

"Anzac Day has come and gone and it must be recorded as being the most successful ever. The Dawn Service saw

the laying of the Association's wreath on the State War Memorial by Vice President Geo. Boyland.

The March was a record roll up of over 50 members of our Association and kindred Commando Squadrons. After the Service on the Esplanade refreshments were partaken of on the lower end of the Esplanade and by midnight 55 gallons had gone down the many gullets. It is admitted that only players and stayers saw out the midnight hours, but the form of those who stayed is considered to be well up to previous years."

This year we expect no more than 3 members will be fit to march while about 8 members will view the parade in the mini bus kindly provided by Peter Epps. Our numbers will be made respectable by the sons, daughters and grandchildren of former members many no longer with us. 57 years on, our drinking days have changed considerably at our get together after the service at the Goodearth – our beer consumption will be about 30 litres (6-1/2 gallons) and we'll all go home sober!! How times have changed.

LEST WE FORGET

One of the most difficult duties an officer is called upon to do is to write a Letter of Condolence to the loved ones on the death of one of his men while on service.

David Dexter had to do this when Corporal Jack Maley WX11498 was killed in action in New Guinea on the 12th August, 1943. David's letter to Mrs Maley appears below. Some may think that the letter should not appear in the Courier as it will only upset people, which it well may do. On the other hand it may also serve as a timely

reminder of the supreme sacrifice made by Jack nearly 65 years ago for his country. Jack was 33 at the time and so gave up 50 years of living, and now rests peacefully in the Lae Memorial Cemetery in New Guinea with other members of the 2/2nd.

"VX38890 Capt D Dexter

2/2 Aust Indep Coy 13th August 1943

Dear Mrs Maley

It is with the utmost regret and the deepest sympathy that I write to tell you of the death in action of your gallant son John. I know just how much his Mother meant to him and therefore how very hard the blow will be for you to bear. But mixed with your grief, I hope there will also be a deep pride, for Jack died as he had lived, nobly and resolutely and fiercely facing the enemy. He took part in a very gallant stand of a small number of men, who heroically repulsed a superior enemy force. I knew Jack better than anyone else in this unit knew him, for he and I had worked together since the unit was formed. As a fighting soldier, a leader and a Christian gentleman, he is a very great loss to this company and his country; but we, his mates, all draw inspiration from his sacrifice. A dear personal friend and a loyal brilliant NCO, he lies at rest where I buried him, near the scene of the victory which he helped to win. I made a cross for his grave, and can assure you, that when we placed the cross above him, there was within our hearts a deep grief but also a great pride and gratitude that such a man could be.

With my deepest sympathy, I remain yours very sincerely

David Dexter."

Jack or "Boong" as he was known even before joining the AIF early in 1941 grew up on the family farm at Wongoondy then a very small town about halfway between Mingenew and Mullewa some 500K's from Perth and 100K's east of Geraldton. His father Albert served as a Lieutenant in the Boer War and he had two brothers Bill and Larry now deceased.

An original, he served in Timor in No.1 Section under the late David Dexter. Jack, as hard as nails, was a first class soldier and grew a magnificent beard, one of the best of the many grown by the men who served with him. He is immortalized in the famous photo "A" Platoon after Timor taken at Larrimah NT on the 20th December, 1942; Jack being in the centre of the first row with his slouch hat with the Double Red Diamond perched on his head. You cannot miss him.

J. Carey

VALES

While our 70 members listed in the December Courier remained intact we regret to advise of the passing of three of our precious widows.

Mary King, the widow of Charlie who died in May 2002, passed away peacefully in mid December. A kind, gentle and loving lady Mary joined Charlie in the Lakes Cemetery following a mass in Mandurah. Helen Poynton and Julie Ann, Don and Ida Murray, Bart and Loris Mavricks, Elvie Howell, Dorothy Maley, Bernie and Babs Langridge, Len Bagley, Jim Lines and Jack Carey represented the Association at the service. Charlie and Mary were loyal and generous supporters of the Association and Mandurah's 2/2nd Branch for many years.

The Association extends its sincere condolences to Paddy, Victor, Stephen and all members of the family.

Joan Scott, the widow of Neil who died in September 1988, passed away recently. We only became aware of her death when the last Courier was returned marked deceased. Joan received the Courier for many years and she and Neil were good supporters of the Association in earlier times.

Harry Handicott kindly advised us of the passing of **Heather Beveridge** of Toronto, NSW in late December a year after losing Andy. The Celebration of her Life was held in the Lake Macquarie Memorial Chapel on 3rd January, 2008.

The Association extends its deepest sympathy to the Scott and Beveridge families.

May They Rest In Peace

The Association extends its sincere condolences to **Jess, Peter, Sue and Terry's** family on his sudden passing in Brisbane in January. **Terry** who was 62 died suddenly of a heart attack.

Peter said Terry was in good shape and his passing came as a great shock to the family.

LOOKING AHEAD

A meeting of the committee was held at the home of Don and Ida Murray in Mandurah in September last. Present were J. Carey, Dorothy Maley, Elvie Howell, Don Murray, Dick Darrington and Jim Lines.

An important item discussed at length was "how long should we endeavour to keep the Association going". The W.A.

branch, the only branch still active is a shadow of its former self. Many of those good men who worked hard and long over the years to maintain this fine Association are no longer with us. We are down to 25 members in W.A. with an average age of 87 and many of these, because of health problems are in no position to help out. The committee finally resolved to "endeavour to keep the Association going until December 2010 and then to call it a day". This means three more years of the Courier, 12 editions in all by which time the average age in W.A. will be 90 years. Note the word "endeavour". There is, of course, no guarantee we will last that long – three more years may be an optimistic figure but then again time does seem to pass quickly as one becomes older. Readers may care to write in and give their views on the committee's decision.

The committee also agreed that a Trusteeship should be set up to handle the Associations financial and general affairs such as protecting the copyright of our book should the need arise. It was decided to invite Mrs Jenny Beahan (Ray Aitken's daughter), John Burridge Jnr. and Peter Epps (Bill's son) to be trustees. The three have been contacted and have agreed to be trustees for the Association. All are capable people and have strong ties with the Association.

The committee realizes the importance of selling the remaining books and has plans to push sales along.

Our four yearly functions which are part and parcel of our Association viz: Anzac Day, Norma Hasson Day, the Commemoration Service and Xmas Social will continue. The support of our members, ladies and friends will be

needed more than ever and I'm confident they will be. With ordinary luck we should last another three years. The Association is now in its 63rd year something we should be all proud to be part of.

A thank you is extended to Ida, Don's wife who turned on a lovely light luncheon. Bless you Ida.

J. Carey

STATE REPORTS

QUEENSLAND NEWS

Dear Jack – Well its around to Queensland news time again so here goes:-

Jewell Soper – apart from a bit of routine maintenance she isn't too bad at 82. She lost her Soapey 16 years ago now and still misses him a lot. She also has a large family who have always been very helpful and of course **Townsville** has had a pretty big bucketful of rain during this rainy season!

Bulla Tait and Jean tells me that he has been a dementia case for five years and is presently in a local old peoples home with good 24 hour care available if need be. He has practically no movement now between the waist and his knees. She goes to see him every second day – sometimes he knows her and sometimes not but his mind is very wandering.

Col. Jeanette and Peter Andrew have sold their caravan park at Laidley and I understand they have moved back to Caloundra again but have been unable so far to contact them.

Gordon and Joan Stanley are still pretty well, but like all of us getting a bit older all the time. By the time you receive this Joan and their daughter Christine will have had a holiday at Bali.

Allan and Joan Mitchell, Caloundra

are getting along okay except that Allan still has hearing and eyesight problems – old Diggers problem, eh!! They spent Xmas with their family at Tamborine.

George and Margo Shiels, Bowen are both still leading very busy and active lives. The Don River which flows between the town and their property has broken its banks twice this wet season but their property was not affected but they were cut off from town for 3-4 days each time.

Ralph and Sheila Conley enjoyed their boat trip and caught up with Jack Carey in Perth. Sheila has given up bowls but Ralph is still very keen on his game. They are planning a trip to Walcha (where Ralph was born 89 years ago) then to Port Macquarie in April.

Beryl Steen at 84 is going along okay. Last year she visited her family at Townsville and expects to go again this year. She has very good neighbours Jack and Margaret Evans who we got to know when we had our barbeques.

AMETS – our scholarship holders at the Don Bosco Trade School, Comoro are all making good progress. In fact the government got so enthusiastic about training more tradesmen that they asked the school to train an extra 50 and the government would pay. Well, the school took in the extra students but to my knowledge the government hasn't paid as yet!! Typically Timor Leste? Their unstable government is having a tough time and it looks as if the UN will be helping them out for a long time.

Best wishes to all our mates and their families.

Ron and Lynn, Toowong 4066

VICTORIAN NEWS

Dear Jack and all 2/2 friends

– I am writing with the Victorian news. Most of us are doing reasonably well. I have had phone conversations with most folk recently.

Mavis Broadhurst rang to say she and Fred are going along quietly so that is good.

Harry Botterill is well and enjoyed a visit from his granddaughter Tanya and her husband and two little boys from Queensland a few weeks back.

Don and I were in Wangaratta over New Year and called on Dawn Claney at the nursing home there. She was very pleased to see us and we had a nice chat. Her daughter lives nearby and calls each day. Dawn is happy there and praised the staff – said they are all very kind and helpful.

I rang – **Mary Bone** at Lakes Entrance. She says she cannot do what she used to be able to do. It seems to apply to most folk of our age group.

Leith Cooper is managing quite well still. We haven't visited him since 20th November but hope to again soon. We talk on the phone in between visits

Ed and Dorothy Bourke and

John and Shirley Southwell are all keeping well – John and Shirley are both very keen bowlers and John was at the green when I talked with Shirley.

I also had a call from **Fay Campbell** at Benalla. She keeps busy in her lovely garden. Her sister Julie lives 10km out of town so they are able to call on each other quite often.

Craig Roberts is the next one on my list. I have had a long talk to him tonight and

he wished to send regards to all the 2/2nd family – Craig went across to Perth in December where he and twin Jane celebrated their 50th birthday.

Pat Petersen and sister **Miriam** are both well and busy – Pat said they really need some good rain – farmers are already feeding out hay. We had really good rains back in the spring and there was abundant growth and a lot more silage and hay than usual was made. It seems Australia certainly is a land of droughts and flooding rains. Some places get too much rain and others not nearly enough.

Don is still enjoying golf and plays regularly – I still judge at flower shows and find it very interesting. Our families are all well and busy. My eldest great grandee started school and is eagerly looking forward to the school sports next week.

All the Victorians send greetings to all 2/2nd everywhere and we hope 2008 is kind to all.

Bye for this time.

Margaret Monk

PS: Have been thinking of the people where floods have caused so much worry – when Bowen was on the news our thoughts went to – **Margot and George Shiels**.

NORTHERN NEW SOUTH WALES

Dear Jack – everybody still on deck in this country front of NSW. We've all had good rains and as can be seen on TV the country on a whole is looking good. Some parts have even had too much. Lismore and Kyogle in particular, although Lismore had no damage, Kyogle had a big number of homes inundated. Those of you who have

experienced flooding know what damage can be done although fire would be worse. At least in flood you still have your home.

Russ Blanch is having bad luck with his garden. I reported last Courier of his frosts and hailstones. Next he got the torrential rain that our north coast experienced. Before Xmas Russ contracted with a bloke to replace his front picket fence. The bloke broke his arm and the fence has not been replaced. Russ always grows the most beautiful garden in the street in front of said fence. Each year he receives plaudits from all and sundry. No fence, no garden but Russ is well – all is not lost.

Beryl Cullen is well. Her daughter **Catriona** is writing to you Jack with a report on her birthday party so I will leave that with her. Sincere congratulations Beryl from all of us.

Eric Herd and Lorraine from Iluka.

Both well and Eric's main exercise is walking his little dog. After a fairly long period of indifferent health Eric says he feels well. Mind you Lorraine looks after him very well.

Edith Jones is reporting in in good health and for this report I must say most of us are in good health this time around. Just caught Edith as she had been to Tamworth which is the centre for this district. Population about 40,000. Good rains in the Birroba area and everything looking well.

May Orr from South Grafton which is only 25 miles from me is well. We had a long chat and solved a lot of the world's problems. May told me of an incident that happened to her neighbour's two doors down. They had just worked hard to

renovate their older home and had taken a weekend break and upon their return someone had pushed a hose under the door and turned the tap on. Ruined all the carpets etc – to what purpose??

Beryl Walsh from Kempsey is under a fair amount of pressure at the moment. Her twin sister who lives next door is staying with Beryl for the moment as her husband had an aneurysm burst in the calf of his leg and is in hospital. Beryl's sister Dot suffers badly with arthritis so Beryl has her and also takes her to hospital daily to visit her husband. Luckily Beryl is one of those people always cheerful and looking on the bright side. We are all thinking of you Beryl and hope things improve for your sister Dot and her husband.

Nola Wilson of Gilgandra is reasonably well and is also one of the cheerful people. Nola is always helping others and a pleasure to talk to. Nola suffers from arthritis like a lot of us. It appears that sometime in the near future she will have to have knee replacements and of course getting plenty of advice of having one or both done at a time. She is putting it off for as long as possible. Will probably decide after conferring with the medico's. We will all be thinking of you Nola and good luck whatever you decide.

Beryl Steen is pleased to say she is feeling pretty well at present. She did sound well too and in good spirits. She sends her regards to all.

Tom and Jean Yates are very pleased that they were not in the flooded part of Kyogle which copped a belting recently. Beryl Cullen was in a safe area too. Tom as usual keeps good health but Jean is not getting much relief from her arthritis and a back problem. I know what that is

all about but fortunately medication is helping me cope. Jean is also having trouble with her eyes and last time I rang had just returned from seeing a specialist in Lismore. Our thoughts are with you Jean.

Dianne Cholerton from Evans Head is far from one hundred percent but continuing to plug on with the usual strong support from her daughter Julie. Evans Head is 30 miles or so up the coast from me and actually cops more rain than my area. Right now we would have liked to see a spell from the rain.

I finished up with about thirty inches this year so far and that's one of the lighter falls for the coast.

I forgot to wish you all the best for Xmas in the last Courier but I hope this note finds you all well.

Regards

'Happy' Greenhalgh, Maclean

UNIT HISTORY BOOK REPORT

At the end of our financial year on 31st January, 2008 the sale of books stood at 1,400 (70%) for gross takings of \$92,513.75; \$85,000. being actual book sales with the balance covering postage, packaging etc. Our outlay to produce the book was around \$100,000. mark which means we need to sell 250 of the 600 books remaining to break square. As stated in previous Couriers our biggest problem is the resistance of libraries throughout Australia, mainly run by women librarians to buy military books. The majority of their books are obtained from the bigger book suppliers and this is understandable. Associations producing their own books as is the case with us, find it very hard to compete

against these suppliers. Selling through them is not an option as they demand discounts of 30% or more to handle them which is far too high. In many cases librarians are prepared to pay \$30. or more to their regular suppliers than buying direct from us for \$30. less which is ridiculous.

At a committee meeting held in January it was decided to carry on with an objective to sell 250 books in the current year. We intend to keep tackling the main library centres throughout Australia in the hope they can be persuaded to buy direct from us at the cheaper price. "The Bulls Men" is a quality book and its value will hold or increase as time passes. Recently we donated a book to Legacy in Perth for an auction they were running. It was signed by Keith Hayes, Henry Sproxtton and myself and brought \$205. for which Legacy thanked us.

Those on our mailing list can also help out. As written previously if there is a library handy to you take your book along and try and talk the person in charge to buy one – it often works. Tom Foster has sold over 100 books in the Geraldton area by this method and Tom was a farmer not a salesman so more credit to him. The response to date by members and friends in buying books has been tremendous and we are grateful for your contribution.

J. Carey

INDEPENDENT TRUST FUND

The Hon. Alannah MacTiernan, MLA now Minister for Planning and Infrastructure was actively associated with the WA Aid to East Timor organisations at the time

of our Associations visit to East Timor following Independence (1999).

The minister included our President Jack Carey and myself in a reception at Parliament House to meet and converse with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste at Zacarias da Costa and his Ambassador to Australia.

Discussions with both gentlemen covered a brief description of our 2/2 activities and endeavours to assist the less fortunate villagers in East Timor also the occasional problems with border control. The seed programme was well received by various attendees.

Allanah MacTiernan's proposal to introduce limited numbers of East Timor trainees to alleviate some of the critical labour shortages in the Kimberley area of Australia is most commendable and should be supported.

Bob Smyth – 29.02.2008

VEGETABLE SEEDS FOR EAST TIMOR

Prior to Xmas our order for 4 x 5000 packets of seeds were packed for dispatch but delayed pending the return to Dili of UN personnel after post Xmas stand down.

A problem then arose whereby only half could be dispatched immediately. Simultaneously our Dili liaison representative had a non scheduled visit to Darwin Hospital (Mike is okay).

The rebel leader Alfredo Reinado then further complicated our arrangements by his plans to disable the East Timor Government by shooting and wounding the President and Ramos Horta whilst being killed himself.

Mike had arranged for our shipment to be held by the Dili DHL agent East Timor Administration then announced a further 30 days State of Emergency. Following an all clear and Mike's return to Dili the remaining two varieties will be shipped.

A further order is planned for mid year by which time calm conditions should have prevailed.

Best wishes to all from Bob, John and Bart.

Bob Smyth – 29.02.2008.

XMAS SOCIAL

Our Xmas social held at the Goodearth Hotel on Friday 7th December, with 29 attending, was a happy occasion.

Age is catching up with our group and though some of our regulars could not make it for health reasons, those who did thoroughly enjoyed the day. We can still raise a fair bit of noise for a bunch of oldies. Len Bagley though not as bubbly as he used to be did a good job as MC – we have lost count of the number of times Len has been in this role— thanks Len.

The staff at the Goodearth always make a special effort to see that we are well looked after which we all appreciate. An enjoyable luncheon with a minimum of speeches including President Jack wishing all the best for the festive season and one from Laurie Harrington who spoke with some feeling on what the Association has meant to him over the years. We all remember Reg and Dot and what wonderful members of the Association they were.

It was nice to see Peter and Pat Campbell up from Esperance – both looked well. Michael Press came down from Bakers Hill for the lunch while our

special visitor for the day was Karla, Bart Mavrick's sister. Karla from the USA was holidaying with Bart and Loris. Kaye Hanson, Fred and Robyn Hasson, Laurie, Sheryle and Donna Harrington all had plenty to talk about.

Bernie and Babs Langridge with friends Jess Pratt and Margaret Montgomery and regulars in Nellie Mullins, Clare West, Dick Darrington were all in good form. Olive Chalwell and daughter Margaret enjoyed the break with Barbara Anthony and Mandurah reliables in Jim Lines, Dorothy Maley, Helen Poynton and Julie Ann along with Anne Green (it was good to see you again Anne) made a happy group. Thank you all for your support. Ladies we depend on your presence at our functions more than ever. Hope to see you at our Anzac Day luncheon.

**God Bless
J. Carey**

RSIS COMMENTARIES

Assassination attempts in Timor Leste:
Tragedy of a Young Nation

Loro Horta

21 February 2008

On 11 February 200, renegade soldiers led by former army Major Alfredo Reinado attacked the presidential villa in Timor Leste in a pre-dawn attack. The president, Jose Ramos Horta, was seriously injured and hung on to dear life. An incredulous nation asks how things could have gone this far.

THE ATTEMPTS on the lives of Timor-Leste's top two leaders – President Jose

Ramos Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao— were shocking and tragic. For a young nation still struggling to stand on its feet, the attempted killings were the most serious manifestation of the Timorese leadership's failure in nation-building.

Sadly, the perpetrators – Major Alfredo Reinado and his group— are the result of the political infighting between Prime Minister Gusmao and Fretilin, the former party in power that characterized Timorese politics from the early days of its independence. Both Xanana and Fretilin created their own cadres of loyal supporters within the military and the police leading to the factionalisation of the security forces from the birth of the nation.

Hatred among brothers

This political infighting in turn has caused serious disillusionment among Timorese youths as once revered leaders such as Xanana lost their credibility and Fretilin, the only truly national party, falls victim to factionalism. Tribalism, in the form of the East-West divide within Timorese society has conveniently been used and abused by irresponsible leaders. A stagnant economy, unemployment raging at over 80 percent and a culture of violence resulting from 24 years of brutal Indonesian occupation did the rest. Reinado and his band are nothing more than the symptom of the serious social and political problems ravaging the country.

Had the Timorese leadership been united and able to control its thirst for power and petrodollars, Reinado may have never existed. Had the Timorese leadership shown the same sense of honour and

nationalism that it showed the world in its struggle against Indonesia, such a tragedy may have been averted. Reinado is a classic example of the Third World ruffian in uniform, who takes advantage of misery and desperation to thrive, just like countless other warlords. However, the behaviour of the Timorese elite has not been much better with many using Reinado when it was convenient.

After the 2006 crisis of leadership, Horta realized that without national unity, Timor-Leste, or East Timor, would never be able to stand on its feet, regardless of how great the support it may receive from the world. To this end he tried incessantly to reconcile Xanana and Fretilin while at the same time expressing his desire for a peaceful solution with the Reinado band. Indeed, a few days before he was attacked Horta had finally secured an agreement between Xanana and Fretilin for an end to their conflict.

An agreement granting amnesty and reintegration into the army for most of the rebel soldiers was also reported to have been reached between the President and the rebel soldiers, with 70 of them already cantoned in Dili for talks at the time of the attack.

The dominant view at the moment suggests that Reinado and some of his unknown political allies in government felt threatened by the President's success and so decided to strike before it was too late. However, things remain extremely confused and as the FBI team arrives in Dili to initiate investigations, they can expect a daunting task ahead.

Regardless of the details that may emerge from the FBI investigation, it seems likely that as long as Timor's

politicians continue to behave like warlords new warlords like Reinado will be born again and again. Poverty, corruption, loss of faith in once revered leaders have given birth to Reinado and his thugs and only a serious addressing of these issues will ensure that there are no more Reinados in the future.

Foreign Meddling

While the overwhelming responsibility for the tragedies that have ravaged Timor-Leste since its independence goes to its leadership, the unwise meddling in local politics by external powers has not been helpful at all. For instance, during the 2006 crisis it became clear that Canberra had no love lost for Alkatiri and was happy to see his back. Since the formative years of the country's security forces

Australia and to a lesser extent the United States favoured Xanana's armed factions while trying to contain Alkatiri and his Fretilin. Portugal and some Asian countries in turn tended to support Fretilin.

This was highly unwise for it only added fuel to the fire that is still ravaging. In the end both Australia and Portugal have all the interest in the stability of Timor-Leste and very little to gain from its collapse. Both nations are Western democracies that had deployed their sons to East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan and share close ties with the United States. Canberra and Lisbon must emphasise their common interest rather than squabble over trivial issues such as the status of the Portuguese language in the country or who should train the Timorese intelligence services.

No other nations have the same attachment for Timor as Portugal and Australia and no one else is willing to sacrifice as much as these two countries for Timor. Such an emotional attachment and feeling of responsibility to assist Timor in its hour of need was clearly demonstrated by their outpouring of sympathy after the assassination attempts.

Regardless of the problems in their relations, Timor more than ever needs its old friends. It is therefore imperative that Canberra and Lisbon make a serious effort to develop a common strategy rather than undermine each other. It is also very important, particularly for Australia as a most powerful actor that it conducts itself as a friend, even as an older and much richer friend who must remember that it is dealing with an independent state. For no matter how poor the nation is, Timor is a nation with its own pride.

Light at the end of the tunnel?

At the end of the dark tunnel in which the Timorese now walk may be a light – weak and fading it may be but a light nonetheless. Following the attacks there was unanimous condemnation from all sectors of Timorese society and support for President Horta, with once bitter enemies coming to show their determination to stand united in this hour of sorrow.

Since his election in May 2007, President Horta has made it his top priority to forge national reconciliation and fight poverty – the core problems that underline Timor's chronic instability. Hopefully the current wave of solidarity for President

Horta may translate itself into support for his vision of a united and wealthy country.

Horta certainly has a vision for his nation; it remains to be seen if his nation will be able to embrace it. Weak as it is, the light at the end of the tunnel can only be nurtured by a united nation.

Loro Horta is the son of President Ramos Horta and is an associate research fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is also a Visiting Scholar at the Centre for International Security Studies at Sydney University Australia.

"FRIENDS IN NEED"

FRIENDS OF ERMERA

Ermera is the name of a district in East Timor, and also of a town in that district. Like most other districts in East Timor it suffered terrible destruction of life, civic buildings and private property at the hands of the Indonesian army and militia at the time of the independence vote in August 1999.

Friends of Ermera began in June 2002 as a group of concerned citizens of the City of Casey in Victoria, and became an incorporated association in May 2003. Its first aim is to work for the benefit of the people of the district of Ermera: to help them to rebuild their lives and communities. It seeks to do this by raising funds, organizing the provision of goods, services and technical advice, and encouraging local Australian groups who are able to do so to assist in the process of recovery and reconstruction. In all this, its concern is to respond to the needs and priorities in Ermera as

they are indentified by the East Timorese themselves.

A first priority identified by the people of Ermera is education. Since other bodies are helping in the fields of school education, we have been asked especially to assist in the resuscitation of kindergarten education. Our present projects include:

Rehabilitation of seven kindergarten buildings throughout Ermera: resourcing and furnishing the buildings.

Supply of stationery and materials, musical instruments and sporting materials to kindergartens, primary and secondary schools.

Linking local Victorian schools with schools in the Ermera district. Many local schools have joined in this Friendship Schools Programme, and at least seven have made a long term commitment. In addition, one local kindergarten has a friendship link to a kindergarten in East Timor.

Organising scholarships provided by a generous donor for 10 girls from Ermera to attend high school, tertiary college or university.

Promoting Fair Trade in Coffee in Australia.

Emergency food relief. A programme aimed at creating self sufficiency for families requiring emergency relief.

Offering support for agricultural projects in Ermera. A restocking programme will aim to provide chickens, goats, pigs and quality seed, and support and advice.

Assisting small community business ventures; for example, helping the manufacture of clothing and weaving of

Timorese tails by supplying materials and sewing machines.

Working with other groups to explore how medical and dental health programmes can be expanded.

Continuing to lobby for equitable treatment of East Timor's entitlement to revenues from the offshore Timor Gap oil fields, and for the proper recognition of ownership of these fields.

Many East Timorese refugees have settled in the City of Casey, and contribute to our multiculturalism.

In these projects Friends of Ermera has worked closely in co-operation with various other like-minded groups and private benefactors, including Rotary, OXFAM Community Aid Abroad and Country Women's Association.

To support the projects, a vigorous programme of fundraising is in hand

For further Information or Contributions may be made to –

Friends of Ermera

PO Box 1052

NARRE WARREN VICTORIA 3805

DARE PROJECT NEWS

From Yvonne Walsh

All things considered the swings and roundabouts of my 3 months in Timor in 2007 were productive, my Tetum improved and relationships were consolidated. In August good fortune and effective lobbying produced 4 seats from Strategic Aviation for a Sydney-Dili-Sydney excursion, courtesy the Office of Minister of Defence.

Two scientists from Monash University plus one assistant joined me at Sydney airport, we overnighted at Darwin RAAF

base and took the 4 cases of ground-penetrating-radar-computer-equipment to Dili to geo-survey the Dare site. This was duly accomplished as a gift of expertise and time from the 2 scientists, true **Friends of Dare** indeed. Prof. Jim Cull's report was positive – construction on the site **is feasible**.

During 2007, differing points of view were communicated to me regarding development of the Memorial site and I'm aware of contesting opinions on the school-museum-café concept. However, the pressing need for 'a better school' predominates development of the project as a whole and consequently a re-orientation of the project took place and 'seed funding' secured in November.

The Dare Project 2008

Phase 1 early/mid year

- design and construct a new temporary school on site of filled-in pool
- source museum items, memorabilia for display
- liaise with 2/2 Commando Association re memorial
- café-museum set-up on existing school to trial training and commercial opportunities for local community

Phase 11 July...

- TL Education Ministry advises budget cycle for school development
- launch fundraising and sponsorship for revised museum development

The Fatunaba community endures the exigencies and challenges of

destabilizing events and expresses its identity through connection with the Australians' Memorial. Nahaek School began functioning with 120 primary students on 30 October 1999 in the violent context of the Referendum. By February 2000 numbers had grown to 175 and with help from The Men of the 2/2, 3 classrooms were constructed on the rock platform adjacent to the pool and shelter. Today, these 3 classrooms serve 280 children attending in 2 shifts. The memorial site is their playground.

Dare Memorial School and 'Mission Race against Time' are evolving entities and may yet change again in response to Timor Bizniz – even so, the plan above is underway.

My hope for **Mission Race** is that it should operate as a Timorese venture and that sponsorship or funding can be secured on that principle. There is scope for collaboration with the Dili Archive & Museum of Timorese Resistance. In fact, the scope for **Mission Race** is open for discussion: for example, I respectfully ask that our Surviving Men consider the filming of them telling their Timor stories. Also, I welcome from the 2/2 Community their ideas and suggestions or questions. Best Wishes to All for the coming year.

Regards, Yvonne Walsh. Co-ordinator-Liaison Dare Memorial Projects Sydney.

MY LIFE WITH THE 2/2ND COMMANDOS

When I was 19 I was invited on a picnic where I met a 21 year old soldier on leave who was on his way to "Somewhere". I was part way through my training at the Geraldton Hospital where his sister

asked me to write to him while he was away.

It was the "done" thing to write to a soldier at that time so I agreed and set aside Sundays as the letter writing day. 200+ letters later I married him in 1946.

Sometime in '43 the soldier turned up at Kalgoorlie Hospital on leave and asked me out to a barbecue where I met a lot of boys from the 2/2nd. I remember taking a bottle of milk to drink as I wasn't into alcohol and it caused a riot.

The next time I caught up with WX12124 was during leave in '44 when I was working at Narrogin Hospital. It is amazing how one can get to know someone well through the written word – still going well 62 years hence.

In Geraldton where we settled I was introduced to the local 2/2nd crowd Jack Denman, Nip Cunningham, Peter Barden, Bruss Fagg, Eric Weller; then in the early 50's we hosted the first country reunion and it was then that I realized what a lifelong relationship these boys would have. It was a hilarious week!!

I rise early (5am) and one of the boys used to come around at 5.30 to share a cup of tea and toast with me each morning.

Because of distance and my commitments at the maternity hospital we were unable to attend many of the activities but some stand out.

The Sydney/Melbourne reunion I will always remember and gave us the chance to catch up with some wonderful people with whom I still keep in touch. Little did I know that in 1994 we would host a large reunion in Busselton where we now lived. We had wonderful back up from Perth with a committee – Jack

and Delys Carey, Bernie and Babs Langridge, Ted Monk, Bill Howell, Grace and Clarrie Turner and Eric's sister who became an adoptee of the 2/2nd Commandos. It was a great get together.

We were very excited to be able to attend at Hobart and followed it up with an extra week travelling around with Tom and Mary Foster when it was over.

In 1983 with my brother and his wife we spent 12 months caravanning around Australia. We took the address book and were able to catch up with many of the 2/2nd families. The bond has never lessened over the years.

The last "do" in Perth and the activities that went with it was a fitting finale but it is wonderful to still have contact across Australia through the trusty little "Courier". Thanks Jack.

With ageing bones and slowing down in the latter part of 60+ years I realize how blessed I have been to marry a Commando and gathered to my self a host of wonderful friends.

Thank you, all of you for making my life all the richer for meeting you.

Twy Smyth – 1944-2008

JOHN ROSE

Happy Greenhalgh kindly loaned me "Sparrow Force" the war history of John Rose who was our Signals Officer on Timor. Extracts of his letter files make interesting reading.

My Dad and Mum were married immediately after the First World War in 1919 and moved to Sydney to Gunbar in western New South Wales.

My father managed a store and post office there. Two rooms at the back of the store were their home for a few years.

I was born in July 1920 at Wagga Wagga. Mother had to travel by horse and coach down to Carrathool where she caught a steam train to Wagga Wagga, the nearest maternity hospital.

In 1923 dad moved to Hillston, a small thriving town, north east of Gunbar, where he went into partnership with Mr. MacFarlane, the owner of Nall Jackson, a general store.

I grew up in Hillston and attended primary school there up to sixth class. I had a happy time childhood here, learning to swim in the local swimming hole in the Lachlan River and mud fights. I belonged to cubs and Boy Scouts which was held in a shed the Graham boys owned in Molesworth Street.

My friends and I belonged to the Bird's Guild and I had lots of bird's eggs! There was no secondary school in Hillston so I attended Hay War Memorial High School and boarded at one of the students' hostels in Hay.

After a time at Hay I was sent to boarding school, SCEGGS (Shore) in Sydney. I had three brothers, Cleve, Neville and Kevin.

My first job in Sydney was with a firm called Hoffnungs. I enjoyed being in retail very much and shared a common interest with dad. Some of the wholesale goods went to Hillston to Nall Jackson's Store.

Late 1938 I joined the militia and was trained at Centennial Park. When war was declared in 1939 with Germany I enlisted with the army.

In 1940 a British Mission was sent to Australia, (Mission 104) to train Australian and New Zealand Commando Companies, similar to their own and consisted of three officers and two warrant officers.

The training area selected was Tidal River on Wilson's Promontory, the southern most part of mainland Australia which runs into Bass Straight. About 32K long and 18 wide, the Promontory was an ideal commando training area, isolated and virtually uninhabited with a wide range of country including high mountains, dense bushland, open grasslands, swamps, beaches and sand dunes.

These companies were to be trained a bit different to the British ones, mainly to 'stay behind' parties and to carry out guerilla warfare against an attacking force.

In the words of Captain Spencer Chapman, in charge of field craft, "the role of the independent companies would then be to stay behind, live off the country, or be provisioned by air and be a 'thorn in the flesh' to the occupying enemy emerging in true guerilla style to attack vital points and then disappear again into the jungle"

And, so they planned to have about 273 officers and men with specialist sappers, engineers, signal officers and NCO's and men under their command and a medical officer.

The majority of the men who were to form the 2/2 Independent Company were West Australian and many were used to harsh and arid conditions from the inland areas of that state. These blokes were used to inhospitable country and could

'make do' with their own resources and were soon to find their initiative tested to the limit.

There was all sorts of training to live off the environment; map reading, memorizing routes, knowledge of the night sky; a new conception of fitness; the essentials to take and how to carry all this; what to wear: what to eat and how to cook it.

After two weeks leave the 2/2 left for Adelaide and spent weeks camped at the Wayville Showground's. We were entrained on the 19/10/1941 and headed north.

After a night's stay at Terowie remembered for the stolen sheep incident we entrained once more to Alice Springs. Then we were bundled into trucks and had a very uncomfortable ride to Katherine on 19/10/1941, to find the camp there had only just started. We were busy concreting floors, digging drains etc and after six weeks the huts were all completed. We were not 'happy campers' and glad when on 7/12/1941 we were given standing orders. Suddenly we were on our way to Darwin. Work parties had worked all night packing our stores and supplies and radio equipment. One of the work parties was sent to clean an open cattle train for transporting the troops that had recently had cattle in it. They had to clean it without water, so shoveled sand on most of the carriage floors. Some were not finished and the boys had to travel to Darwin sitting on cross bars of the trucks.

As soon as we arrived in Darwin we embarked on the ship "Zealandia", a first World War boat. There was not much room to move about. The 2/40 was

already on board. Our destination was Timor, arriving there on 12 December.

On 14th December we were told we would be heading for Portuguese East Timor to take over Dili and their aerodrome.

On the 17th December I was ordered with a few signalers to take over the radio station. It was quiet as we walked up to the station and the few people we saw appeared friendly. The rest of 2/2 company were able to hold the Dili Aerodrome while the town was to be guarded by the Dutch and Indonesian Forces.

We also found we were poorly equipped for war in the tropics. The Dutch had green tents and mosquito nets. Ours were white and hard to camouflage. Our shorts were useless in the long undergrowth.

As we settled in we prepared for the Japanese who we knew would come, our food became scarce. I took it on myself to acquire six chickens which were nearby to our section. It was a lovely Christmas treat!

We found out on 1st March, the only surviving radio was smashed so all communications with Australia was lost.

Brother Kevin tells how his brother John was affected on his return from Timor.

At Katherine Hospital, a mate and John went 'wako' and went bush to escape the Japanese. Years later a friend, Joe O'Conner was contract stripping our crop and his brother Cyril came to help. Cyril told me he and a dozen other troops had to go out and round John and his mate up. They were completely bare!

John was transferred to Adelaide but did not know anyone or anything as he was probably suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome. When mum and dad arrived he started to improve but it was a slow recovery.

In 1944 they made him captain and he began instructing and training other troops. They heard of the POW in Borneo and were preparing to rescue them as the war was progressing well for us. They practiced parachuting and were well trained for the rescue operation but Generals Blamey and MacArthur would not authorize planes even though there were plenty of spare 'Dakotas'. We never forgave them as these boys all died on the march across Borneo.

I was in Sydney doing a carpentry course in 1949-52. Dad told me to visit John and his wife Nancy who lived at Harbord. John could not get work due to his poor memory. Dad kept them with money and often paid the grocer "Singi" where Nancy shopped. Dad and Singi became good friends. It was a tough time for all John's family and children, John Jr, Tony and Karen. Eventually dad was able to persuade them to come to Hillston which made them a lot happier. Three times we tried to get a pension for John but all to no avail..

Those involved with him in these actions were always relieved to survive them. He was a good soldier and a fine Australian. How he came to be refused a disability pension is beyond belief and a great injustice.

John was married in Sydney in September 1943 to Nancy Elton and they had three children – John, Tony and

Karen. After the war he lived in Sydney for 15 years moving back to Hillston in 1961 to work for the family firm of J.G. Rose & Sons.

John took an active part in a number of worthwhile community projects forming a Boy Scouts and Cubs group which he virtually ran on his own for several years. He was Vice President of the RSL Branch for 12 years and also spent time raising funds for Legacy besides being an active member of the committee of the Ex Service Mens & Citizens' Club. A keen golfer he was President of the Hillston Golf Club for 3 years.

His great depth of charity and friendliness made for him a countless number of friends in all walks of life.

Worn out, he died on the 18th January, 1972 at the age of 51. His funeral was



John Rose

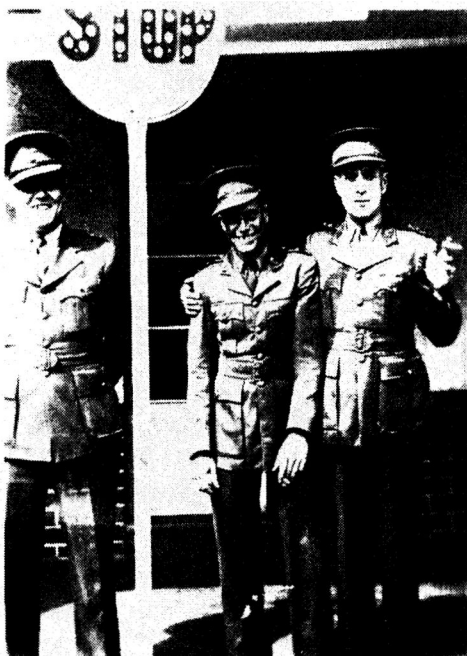
the biggest ever held at Hillston with 400 mourners paying their last respects to a war hero and a much loved citizen.

His youngest brother Kevin, better known as Joe is visiting Perth in April and will join with us on the Anzac Day Parade. We look forward to meeting up with him.

Lest We Forget

Letter written 11/6/42

Dear Dad, Mum, Nance and all at home,
Just a few lines to let you know I am okay and well. Our mail service will be infrequent so don't worry about not hearing from me for weeks. I can only write one letter per service, so will have to make it a community one. Hundreds of things have happened to me since I last wrote but suffice to say am still at large and fighting. From what we can hear things are happening in Aussie. We



*At Foster's Bus Stop
The Bull, Col Dolg, & Doc Dunkley
May 1941*

get the BBC news and an occasional paper. The people with whom we are living are natives and they have been wonderful to us. They are great friends of the Aussies and nearly all of us have a boy to carry our packs (wouldn't that) but joking aside, they are invaluable as guides, philosophers and friends here. My little boy has been in action with me and his name is Cris-a-mo, he reckons he will come back to Aussie with me after the war. We did not receive any letters or any parcels at all, the enemy got them.

Though this mess will drag on for a considerable time yet, we will clean the cows up, don't worry about that. Don't send any more parcels or cakes Mum as they cannot get here. Tell pop to keep out of the Army or Air Force, he will do a better job at home, they mess you about too much.

A few days ago we gave the Native Chiefs a feast with a buffalo we shot for them. They drank "Tuaca" a native plonk made from the juice of a tree. It tastes like ginger beer when fresh and rye whiskey after one hour. That night they had what they called a "Teebee" a dance and song which is wonderful to watch and hear. While they sing and dance they pound rice from the husks with their feet (some method) and do all night. Excuse pencil all that is available. Many happy returns to Cleve for his birthday.

Love from John.

Fearless in the field John took part in some daring escapades against the Japs which he seemed to thrive on

J.Carey

ANZAC DAY THOUGHTS

With Anzac Day approaching I thought it only fitting to repeat a poem written by Laraine Denman wife of John whose father, the late Jack Denman was our first President. Last Anzac Day John marched with his daughter Laraine and her young son Lachlan and they all enjoyed the experience. On returning to John's home Laraine asked Lachlan how he felt marching and he replied "Tall" whereupon Laraine put her thinking cap on and came up with this little gem.

SPIRIT

My Grandson marched this Anzac Day
With his Mother and his Pa
He's six years old and I wondered
Would the distance be too far

My Daughter marched this Anzac Day
With her Father and her Son
Emotional, but in control
Her love of family strong

My husband marched this Anzac Day
With his Daughter and Grandson
His Father's medals on his chest
So proud to put them on

And when the march was over
And we gathered one and all
I asked my Grandson how he felt
He said that he felt tall

Now I do believe that the spirit stays
When the physical body has gone
And the Great Grandfather would be touched
By the words of the Great Grandson
Laraine Denman 2007

No doubt John, Laraine and Lachlan will be marching again this year.

J Carey

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Hi Jack – Many thanks for the Xmas card and seasons greetings— I'm down to my last two books after the usual Xmas rush and will require another batch (8) when it is next convenient.

Katie's father-in-law passed away on December 20. She won't be doing regular trips to Rockingham in the future but assures me it will not be any trouble to do a pickup.

Herewith my cheque for the last batch plus a cheque for the Courier.

As I mentioned over the phone I have set on a programme of recycling myself 'to wit'. I have taken up dancing again as a form of exercise and social interaction'— I am also pleased to say that I've been re-absorbed into the social fabric of Geraldton where I spent a large part of my youth from 1927, but there is not many of the old faces around.

That's all for now – Best of luck old mate and be sure to have a better New Year.

Regards—**Tom Foster, Mount Tarcoola WA 6530**

Dear Jack – New Year greetings to you and your family.

The book sales, there is one library I missed telling you about. The Military Library, Keswick, Barracks. The man who is in charge is Mr. Orchard, one of the members of Z Force who has lunch with us told me they should have a book but if not, the address for the Keswick Barracks is Anzac Highway. The full address is Military Library, Army Barracks, Keswick, South Australia.

We have been having some very hot weather here of late about 42 degrees

and tomorrow is going to be about 39 degrees and is going to continue for 3 more days.

Jack I am enclosing a cheque for \$70.00 for another book "All the Bulls Men". I have mislaid the correct address for the book so I'll send it to you – I hope this is okay.

The cricketers are doing well. Watched Adam Gilchrist break Ian Healy's record of dismissals. What a great player he is.

Please excuse writing and spelling as I have acquired a new pen and it is supposed to last a lifetime so we will see how it goes.

Today 2/1/08 I visited the surgeon who operated on the prostate, he considers everything is okay but will take another couple of weeks to heal properly but the good thing about it is there was no sign of cancer.

Well Jack all the very best for 2008.

Kel Carthew, Andrews Farm, South Australia 5114

Dear Mr. Carey

– Enclosed is a cheque for \$200.00.

My eldest brother having served in the UK, RAAF, then the Malaya emergency was killed soon after returning from Antarctica. He left a widow and two children.

I have read that 2/2C had two members serve in Korea. May you please tell me their names. My second brother served in Korea, 3BN-D Coy, 52-53 and returned 1954.

With best wishes

Winnellie, NT 0821

Reg Wilson,

PS: I have had published a second paper on Timor ponies in the September '07 newsletter of Rare Breeds Trusts of Australia'— came out in October— I was late getting it in. Allan Adair, the editor of course had to reduce it to 1,000 words— he did this effectively.

Title was "The Origins of the Timor Pony". If you wish I could send you copies of both – as published. **Reg**

Dear Jack— Firstly a healthy 2008, that is all we need now. Amyce and I went over and saw Joyce Smith on Monday and her daughter Beryl was there. Joyce is about the same and she was going into respite yesterday for a couple of weeks (prison she calls it).

Speaking to Snow yesterday, he is about the same a few aches and I saw the attached notice in yesterdays paper about Heather but seeing there is no direct family we decided we would not go.

Spoke to Alan last night and he said Happy should be home this week. You've had terrible fires over there'— We are going with a bit of house help from DVA.

Use the cheque how you wish.

You do a great job on the Courier – thanks.

Keep well – cheers

**Harry Handicott, Hamilton, NSW.
2303**

Dear Jack – just a note to congratulate you upon the excellent job you do in producing the Courier. I know you couldn't do it unless members contribute letters etc but you do keep us all in touch with what is going on. Thanks a lot.

Barbara Payne, Merredin.

Dear Sir – Please find enclosed a cheque for the sum of \$70.00 being payment for your book—"All the Bull's Men" (includes postage and handling).

This book is of particular interest to my husband and me as Ernie Hoffman (affectionately know as Hoffy) was a very good friend of ours and used to stay with us when he came to Kalgoorlie from Yarri where he lived.

He used to call me Mother and his favourite saying was "everything in the garden is rosy".

We don't know what happened to cause the accident which killed him but his family came over from Adelaide and the wake was held at our house.

Hoffy never said much about his army days but I do know that you all were extremely brave and I thank you for what you did as I know it would have been horrendous.

I wish you well with your book and we will treasure it.

Yours faithfully

Bet Loxton, Kalgoorlie WA 6430

Dear Jack – another year has unfolded and we are back again to wish you a merry Christmas and a happy 2008. As usual it has been a good year for us. We are well and keep busy. George has been busy with his Masonic Lodge having been presented with his 60th year attendance medal. He keeps busy visiting his 12 Bowen Legacy widows and 6 Collinsville ones for their birthdays and Christmas or whenever they need assistance. I can find plenty to do myself.

In attending the christening of our first great-grandson Tom in Rockhampton,

and meeting our new great-granddaughter Georgia would be the highlight of our year. The commencement of a new generation is always a blessed experience.

The launch of Jan's book "From Mandarins to Mangoes" here in Bowen in May was an exciting time. In general this was the history of Bowen with strong emphasis in the history of farming, and especially of Inverdon where we live. Included were the histories of the core families here around the time of her childhood, all of which makes for easy reading.

Our mango crop is coming along. A bit late this year however we did lose our first two flower settings with rain and wind earlier. We shall have sufficient for our needs and friends. With the drought and lack of water in most of Australia we have done well. There is still surface water in our river that is most unusual. Our underground aquifer here is full.

Bowen is progressing well. With the coal boom up North money is more available so the price of houses have escalated. There is a lot of building going on especially units. With the talk of completing the "missing rail link" to connect Abbot Point to the new mines in the Bowen Basin coalfields and the expansion of Abbot Point coal handling facilities, Bowen must expect a large influx of workers and families.

Of course the biggest attraction this year to bring in thousands of visitors was the making of the film "Australia" with Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman in the leading roles. Hundreds of locals were roped in as extras. We look forward to the release of the film.

Again may you have a joyous Christmas and with all our best wishes and love,

Margo and George, Bowen

Dear Jack – Leith Cooper and myself have had a chat about our branch association and realize that our members have diminished so much that we realized it would be better to close our branch association bank account and withdraw the outstanding amount of \$140.28 and send it over to you to use as best you think. We manage to keep in touch by phone and will continue to do so. I enclose the cheque for \$140.28 use as you think and keep that wonderful branch of yours going and you do a wonderful job and it is better for you to have this and thank you all for the great job you are doing.

We send our regards to you all.

Harry Botterill, Victoria

Dear Jack – just a line to send you our love from the family at this time of the year.

Happy thoughts of loved ones. Christmas, especially the first one is very hard – but I can tell you it gets much easier. Anyway you are in our kindest thoughts.

I hope you are getting along okay and that you will be among your family and friends over the Christmas break.

Our year has been very tough with drought. Lately we've had some storms and pray that we have some follow up rains.

The horse influenza has been a financial blow – David hasn't had it yet – had 11

mares for the stud before the break out and they are still there. Had full books for the 3 stallions— so that will be a loss now for this season. He will not be able to get any compensation because he has some money in the bank.

Michael (Gunnedah) has had a flu break out there. He is a horse breeder and trainer for stock horses etc. He will be able to get a little help – due to his buying a property in the last year so has no liquid assets. They have handled it badly. Racing has been the big receivers – forget the rest. Sometimes things are not fair but we manage to carry on. Enough of the bad news - but forgot Michael had written to the local paper about the unfairness and position of other horse people so the ABC had him on Landline a few weeks back.

Well I hear from Happy sometimes and I keep in touch with Sprocky. He does have a battle, said he looks forward to your visits – Keith was so fond of you all.

I do appreciate the news even if I don't know so many of them. What a wonderful bunch. Well seasons greetings – wishing you all a happy time, God Bless

Regards **Nola Wilson, Gilgandra**

Dear Sirs at 2/2 Commando Association,

I would like to order All the Bull's Men, preferring a book with dust cover, but if not available, any one will be ok.

I have been studying history of Timor during WW11. My interest stems from my stay in East Timor from June 1996 to February 2003, since my first visit there in July - August 1991. Besides doing archival and literature research, I have interviewed some Timorese and

Japanese who experienced the war there.

We, the Research Forum for East Timor during the Japanese Occupation, will soon publish a bibliography on Timor during WWII, including a thorough list of books in English, Portuguese, Japanese and others, and archival sources guide.

I will visit East Timor again next month until September, for both work for NGO and further research of WWII and interviewing Timorese seniors.

Warm regards

Takahashi Shigehito, Tokyo, Japan.

Dear Jack

– To make decoding a little easier for you I have decided to double space. The years of the lord doth weigh heavily upon me, wrists and shoulders. Still mobile and zig zag my way around reasonably well.

My 92nd anniversary dawned wet and cool all of which I appreciated. We have had great rain and more to come. Naturally there are sufferers because of floods but the rain spread inland. The rivers got a good flush out. The Darling fed by the western flowing inland rivers looked great as flood waters raced down it to give the Murray a much needed drink. The Darling looked hideous prior to the rains, a dried out water course with a scattering of stagnant water holes. The fish are jumping for joy, a million or more frogs are croaking and the graziers are looking at paddocks that resemble lakes, open another stubbie and drink a toast to “Aqua-plurius” and so say all of us.

First visit on the 7th I went to mass, I didn't reach 92 on my own. Then went to Paddington RSL for a NSW Commando Association meeting. As the “Doig” would

say, "a telephone booth " would have sufficed for a meeting room, five of us were the quota and one was a rep from the 1st Commando Company. The 2/2nd supplied 50% of those present, the 2/7th and 2/9th donated the other two. Naturally all that happened was talk. Alan stressed that it was time something was achieved on the amalgamation of all Special Forces, past, present and to come be brought to fruition at the Federal level, thus all Special Forces would have a governing body to look after all their interests when dealing with the Federal Government which refuses to have any dealings or negotiations with individual unit associations.

Alan stressed all that has happened over the past 12 or 15 months is bickering as unit associations quibble about minor issues within their constitutions. Alan's inquiry is timely, as the NSW Association will be holding its AGM, February 28th. Incidentally, each individual unit association would be independent and still master of its own affairs.

Visited a 91 year old school friend of mine in a nursing home. He looks great but isn't. It is an excellent nursing home but he hates it and unfortunately for him there is no alternative choice. On every visit I look for the outgoing, laughing, joking boy and man I grew up and worked with on the Sydney waterfront, an occasional glimmer in the eye and a smile lights up his face to reveal a little of the man he was.

The only way to dodge old age is to die young and we have avoided that. Many are fortunate and get by reasonably well, others are hit with everything that is around. The amazing feature of it all is the courage, stoicism and cheerfulness

with which they deal with their misfortunes.

The NSW Commando Association held their AGM on February 28th and there were ten members present; that is what it is reduced to now. The warriors of World War 2 are not far removed from being a memory. We have had our run, honestly, all round it wasn't such a bad one. Anyone can make their own decision whether post World War 2 is the kind of world we envisaged it would be. Undoubtedly, in a material sense we are light years ahead of what existed prior. I think we have paid an enormous price for that and the paying is no where near completed yet. Quo Vadis!!!

Thank heavens the cricket season is over and we can settle down to enjoying whichever football code we follow. Of course, the tribal aspect of the game has disappeared long ago, the mighty dollar murdered that aspect. Nowadays we have a floating army of mercenaries selling their skills to the highest bidder. They are extremely fit and well drilled and certainly in most cases produce the goods but rarely are they the products of the district for which they play.

I reckon that is enough, our tribe are all well and I sincerely hope that applies to all our members and their families. May 2008 be a happy, trouble free year for all of us.

Paddy Kenneally, Yagoona

PS: I lauded the floods in the paddocks, unfortunately the flooding in many of the towns in North Queensland wreaked much damage and brought much hardship and misery to the inhabitants of those towns.

Paddy

Dear Jack, Just a few lines to bring you up to speed with happenings in Kyogle

and the addition of a new induction into **The 90's Club**. I'm sure this is nothing new given the vintage of many of your clientele, however, I thought I would share some of the highlights of Mum's 90th birthday (21st February), with the Courier team.

In amongst the severe flooding and seemingly endless rain which Kyogle recently endured, we were lucky to snatch some sunshine for the occasion, albeit hot, humid and somewhat tropical. In amongst the constant ringing of phones and birthday greetings from well wishers near and far, we were able to host a family reunion with members travelling from as far a field as Perth, Gladstone, Brisbane, Newcastle. A great day was had by all with much reminiscing and sharing. The sequel was an afternoon tea, the following day for many of Mum's (and Dad's) friends, a number of whom have shared a lifetime of Kyogle experiences and memories with them both over the years. Copious cups of tea and a few celebratory drinks made sure the afternoon was one to remember.

Numerous "**birthday**" phone calls from members of the Courier Family reinforced the special group of people you all are – Happy, Sprocko and Alan Luby among others, all touched base on the day to pass on their best wishes. It never ceases to amaze me how that special bond, forged over sixty odd years ago still holds firm and permeates both the years and generations creating such a rich tapestry of experiences and camaraderie.

Whilst this was a special milestone for Mum, I'm sure it will be memorable for us all regardless of our years. It was refreshing to see the bonds of friendship,

support, love, compassion and kindness so openly displayed and generously shared. Indeed, precious, timeless treasures and acknowledgement of a very successful and rewarding life.

Finally, thank you for providing a very special commitment to all members and their families..best wishes and good health to you all!

Kind regards

Catriona Moore, Kyogle (Jim and Beryl Cullen's daughter)

PARS ON PEOPLE

Pat Campbell had a nasty fall mid January and broke a hip which resulted in an 8 day stint in Hollywood followed by another week in her local Esperance Hospital. Pat is making a steady recovery. Peter was well looked after by his daughters in Pat's absence. They are a great couple.

Wilf March had a pretty tough 91st birthday on the 15th February. Lorraine suffered a heart attack early on the big day and finished up in Fremantle Hospital for the next 10 days. Worse was to follow. When Lorraine returned home Wilf's right knee collapsed on him and he could not stand up so off he went to Fremantle. Wilf had both his knees done several years ago. Lorraine is coping okay with the help of the family and Wilf is desperate to be home with her. Life can be cruel at times and Wilf and Lorraine who celebrate 64 years of marriage in May must wonder how long their run of outs can continue. God bless them.

Nancy Timms who is getting up in years is now in a nursing home but is coping

okay. She sold her Como home and Hazel Wicks who lives near by drops in for a chat every now and then.

Dick Darrington tried out the new train run to Mandurah recently and enjoyed the outing. Dick will no doubt take advantage of this excellent service to see his old mate Jim Lines more often. Both are former Fairbridge Farm boys and their friendship goes back over 70 years.

It was nice to catch up with **Joe and Colleen (Norm Thornton's daughter) Ward** at a reception for Dr Albano da Costa, East Timor's Minister for Foreign Affairs on 18th February. Joe looked well and Colleen looked terrific as do all our ladies.

Olive Chalwell and Margaret her daughter are still trying to get John back to the nursing home which is close and handy to them without success which is upsetting all the family. Keep trying Olive.

Bernie Langridge reached the grand age of 91 on 3rd March and celebrated the occasion with his family at home. Bernie kindly invited me along. It is always nice to meet nice people. Bernie is very frail and is taking it quietly but still has a good memory and enjoys company. Babs has shingles but says her doctor thinks it is at an early stage and Babs has a good chance of cleaning it up before it takes hold. Dusty Studdy suffered for many years with shingles and was often in considerable pain. Babs retains her cheerful nature and sees that Bernie is well cared for.

We in the West have quite a few walking wounded or should I say wounded and not walking. **Don Murray, John Burrige, Ted Monk and Henry Sproxton** (you name it and Henry's got it) are a number who come to mind. Even **Bob Smyth** our Trust

Chairman is feeling the pinch whereas many of our good ladies are going well. God Bless them.

Sue Epps is not likely to forget January and February, 2008 in a hurry. Following a major heart operation in mid December, early in January Sue experienced her first attack of heart fibrillations, a scary and most uncomfortable feeling which was treated at Joondalup Hospital. Three more followed in the next seven weeks. Her heart rhythm is now back to normal and Sue is starting to feel better thank goodness.

Jess Epps who will be 93 on Anzac Day is clinging on and she is having her good and bad days. Bless you Jess.

J. Carey

DONATIONS – COURIER

Len Bagley, Peter and Pat Campbell, Fred and Robyn Hasson, Jim Lines, Helen Poynton and Julie Ann, Clare West, Peter Bryant-Victorian Association, Blanche Sadler, Mavis Sadler, Robert Gregg, Alma Moore, Lynn Hunt, Tom Foster, Harry and Amyce Handicott, Yvonne Walsh, Twy Smyth, Margaret Monk.

TRUST FUND

Mavis Sadler	\$ 50.00
Robert Gregg	\$150.00
Alan Luby	\$100.00

Thank you for your continued support.

BIRTHDAY BOYS

Reg Tatum	3 rd	January	88
Allan Mitchell	4 th		84
Keith Hayes	15 th		87
Peter Campbell	18 th		87
Eric Herd	20 th		89
Ralph Conley	26 th		89
Bert Bache	29 th		87
Paddy Kenneally	7 th	February	92
Harry Sproxton	8 th		85
Ed Bourke	8 th		85
Wilf March	15 th		91
Bernie Langridge	3 rd	March	91
Bill Connell	12 th		85
Ted Monk	13 th		88
Alan Adams	18 th		89
Gordon Stanley	23 rd		87

A Happy Birthday to you all.

Minor Correction

Date of the Anniversary on Page 32 of the December Courier should have been 2006 not 2007 as shown

It only takes a minute to read this:

A neurologist says that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke....totally. He said the trick was getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed and then getting the patient medically cared for within 3 hours, which is tough.

RECOGNISING A STROKE

Thank God for the sense to remember the '3' steps, STR. Read and Learn!

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack

of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke.

Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

S = Ask the individual to SMILE

T = Ask the person to TALK and SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE (coherently) (ie: It is sunny out today.)

R = Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.

If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call 000 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

NEW SIGN OF A STROKE — — — —
Stick Out Your Tongue

NOTE: Another 'sign' of a stroke is this: Ask the person to 'stick' out his/her tongue. If the tongue is 'crooked', if it goes to one side or the other, that is also an indication of a stroke.

A SENIOR CITIZEN DEFINED

A senior Citizen is one who was here before The Pill, television, frozen food, credit cards and ball point pens. For us, time-sharing meant togetherness, not computers, and a chip meant a piece of wood.

Hardware meant hard wear, and softwear wasn't even a word. Teenagers never wore slacks.

We were before pantyhose, drip-dry clothes, dish washers, clothes dryers and electric blankets.

We got married first and then lived together. (How quaint can one be?). Girls wore Peter

Pan collars and thought "cleavage" was something butchers did.

We were before Batman, vitamin pills, disposable nappies, pizzas, instant coffee and even Chinese takeaways.

In our day, cigarette smoking was "fashionable", grass was for mowing, pot was something you cooked in. A gay person was the life of the party and nothing more, while Aids meant beauty lotions, or help for someone in trouble.

We are today's Senior Citizens, a hardy bunch when you think of how the world has changed and of the adjustments we have had to make.

JOKES

I went to buy some camouflage trousers the other day but I couldn't find any!!

Police arrested two kids yesterday, one was drinking battery acid and the other was eating fireworks.

They charged one and let the other one off!!

COURIER

As stated earlier in this Courier we intend to carry on until December 2010 – God willing. Of late, because of our diminishing numbers, news from members and their families is drying up. In January I received one letter in Box T1646. It may have been because of the Xmas/New Year activities but if it keeps up the Courier may not last anywhere near the proposed 3 years.

As Editor I appeal to all readers to contribute articles (they need not be long) of interest about events in their life. Twy Smyth's article "My Life with the 2/2nd Commandos" was very well done and is an example of what we are looking for. If the majority of readers contributed at least one article a year we would have no

problems filling a 32 page Courier. Our regular contributors Margaret Monk, Paddy Kenneally, Ron Archer, Happy Greenhalgh and Kel Carthew give us a firm base but we do need more copy.

Waiting to hear from you.

God Bless, J. Carey

An extract from Colin Doig's book – 'The Ramblings of a Rat Bag' is worth repeating:

"One of the chap's prime stories concerned him when he was the blacksmith, wheelwright and undertaker at Toodyay in the very early days. He said an old sandlewooder had died and his occupation had bent him kind of double, making a right angle of his body from his hips. Our mate said when they put the sandlewooder in the coffin he sat up and when they pushed his head down his feet came up. So they got some webbing and put it across the coffin to keep his legs down and another piece over his chest to keep his head down. Being an old-fashioned Catholic they held a Wake over him with the local Priest being in attendance and all of them consuming oceans of rum and other grog. There was a hell of a to-do going on and at midnight my old mate reckoned he had to get them out and screw down the lid. So he sneaked off and with his pocket knife he cut the webbing over the corpse's chest. With that the corpse sat up and pennies flew off his eyes and a yell went up from the mourners and they took off through the door with the Priest in the van, and my mate reckoned the Priest stumbled over the door jamb and sprained his ankle with the rest of the gang traipsing over him. He vouched for the truth of this tale, but it was a sprinkle of salt job but a good story well told.

W.A. MEMBERS – PLEASE NOTE

Anzac Day will soon be upon us. This year the parade will revert to those we had previously with the service to be held on the Esplanade. Members requiring transport, kindly provided again by Peter Epps are asked to ring J. Carey on 9332 7050 by no later than the 20th April. Ladies are welcome to come to the luncheon after the Service at the Goodearth Hotel from noon. Check in the West for details on the March. Don't forget now.

AN EARLY REMINDER

Our Norma Hasson Day will be held on Friday 4th July at the Goodearth Hotel.

FOR INFORMATION

Channel 2's film which appeared on Compass a few Sundays back "A Heroes' Journey featuring Xanana Gusmao was excellent and well worth seeing. Yvonne Walsh has DVD's available for \$25.00 including postage for those who may be interested. Her phone number is 02 9399 5998. I recommend it.

**Photos Taken at Cross Horse Training School of
"Shevalsky" or "T1" a Chesnut Timor Pony
Trained for Reg Wilson in December 2007**

The Timor Pony retains the significant genetic features of the original wild horses found in Eastern Europe 50 thousand years ago.

The Tarpan (a wild horse) became the chariot horse of eastern Europe. China used cavalry and their horse (now known as Pzewalski's horse) was combined with the Tarpan in 200BC creating the horse used by the Mongolian Empire in their conquests.

The Timor Pony bred from horses left behind after invasion.

These horses retain their genetic purity.

The Timor Pony's coat becomes woolly in summer in accordance with Northern polar climatic seasons showing genetic purity.

Reg Wilson, 23rd January, 2008

References:

1. A history of Horse Breeding, D.M. Goodall, 1977
2. Points of the Horse, M. Horace Hayes, 1904.



COMMEMORATION SERVICE 2007

Our 58th Commemoration service was held in Lovekin Drive, Kings Park on Sunday 18th November 2007



***Christmas Function
at the Goodearth Hotel in December 2007***

