



Una Voce News Letter

RETIRED OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA
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Dear Member --

The season of good cheer is once again with us, so let me first extend on behalf of your executive and Committee our very best wishes for a joyful Christmas and healthy and happy 1984. May only nice things happen over the next few weeks! At the same time, while those with families gather together please think of those of our Members who for one reason or another may be less fortunate - what about calling to see them or at least phoning to let them know they're not forgotten?

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Gabriel Keleny, our hard working Treasurer, has returned from a rush trip overseas, and wishes to remind everyone that 1984 subscriptions are due. In fact, I think he has already indicated in red ink in the appropriate place if you already "are in the red".

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Does anyone know the present address of Ruth Graham - 'Speed's widow, who lived at 503 Old Cleveland Road, Camp Hill, Queensland 4152?

When Ivan Champion took the 'Laurabada' on her rescue mission from Moresby to Palmal in April 1942 'Speed' was one of the army Bren gunners aboard and we want to find the name of the other gunner. As a matter of interest, 'Laurabada' had a complement of 23 and rescued 194 civilians and troops who had earlier escaped from Rabaul. The Japanese were in force at Rabaul and at Gasmata and 'Laurabada' had to "run the gauntlet" to get the survivors out and then complete the hazardous return to Moresby. A story which has not been nearly as well publicised as it should have been. Among those rescued were our President, Bill Seale, Vic Pennyfather, Jack Allen and Ken Ryall - the majority were from 2/22 Battalion under Major Bill Owen who had walked from Rabaul.

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Our peripatetic Secretary, Harry West, has also returned to work after six weeks in Thailand, India and Nepal. Ex-Kiap and Lands Titles Commissioner Bill Kelly went along to keep an eye on Harry. Publicly they say that the trek in Nepal was mostly reasonable - but privately they each tell me that it was damned hard! Personally, I think that there's nothing wrong with the trek - the problem is that they are both getting too old!

I've also heard a story that in Bangkok a couple of touts approached Bill with an offer of a blonde, brunette or redhead. Bill said he wasn't interested but that he had a friend - indicating Harry who was coming along behind him - who would be very interested. They immediately descended on poor Harry who was unaware of what had been said. It took Harry ten minutes to get away, while Bill was watching from around the corner, laughing!

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Many thanks to the 96 members and friends who turned up to our Christmas luncheon - thus making it a record (Gold Coast and Manly please note -- you cant have all the records !) Sir Horrie Niall spoke about the interesting events in the Mai Mai area pre-war. Among the new faces were Len Bailey, Neil Grant and his wife, Harry Redmond, Jim Barrie, Bob and Barbara Bell, John Wakeford, Alan and Joan Jeffries, Chris Downie, Joan Hay and Tom Jackson and Neil Desailly. Also the de Grafs from Canberra, Erin Moroney from Queensland and Mrs. Ashworth from S.A. Our next function is the Annual General Meeting and luncheon, early in April.

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Now for the bad news: You will remember we have been trying to get an ex gratia payment of pensions for widows of our Papua Fund members. The request was made many months ago and the present Minister for Finance has now advised as follows:

"I have carefully examined the matter but am unable to agree to your request.

I am advised that in 1966, the then Treasurer offered an arrangement whereby Papua Scheme pensioners were invited to accept the lower New Guinea Scheme scale of pensions in return for an entitlement to widow's pensions but that your Association, after canvassing the Papua Scheme pensioners concerned, reluctantly agreed that the matter be closed. In view of the rejection of this, in my view, generous offer, and the fact that since 1966, pensioners under the Papua Scheme have continued to receive pensions at the higher rate, I do not believe I would be justified in now approving act of grace pensions to the surviving widows of Papuan service officers. "

I'm very sorry ladies, but I don't think we can do any more.

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On the other hand, we understand from the Superannuated Commonwealth Officers Association that they have been officially advised that the Commonwealth wage pause legislation did not amend the superannuation legislation to change the arrangements for the annual indexation of pensions under the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme. Also there is no proposal before the Government for a change in those arrangements. This means that there should be no change to our legislation either.

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The Association was represented at Newport, when Australia II won the America's Cup -- that well-known sailor Des Ashton (former District Commissioner) and wife Jeanne were there to add their applause. Some people have all the luck !!

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Friends of Campbell and Ene Fleay will be happy to learn that Campbell is back home from hospital, and started on the long road to recovery.

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Because we wanted to get this Newsletter out before Christmas we have not included our popular "Have you heard....." segment -- meanwhile items of gossip that are not too scurrilous will be welcomed for possible publication in our next issue.

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As well as vistas of red and gold tinsel, and cards depicting snow-capped mountains, while strains of "White Christmas" abound - how about considering this -

"And the bush has friends to meet him, and their kindly voices greet him,
In the murmur of the breezes and the river on its bars,
And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended,
And at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars"

(A.B. Patterson)

May we all realise our "vision splendid" in the times to come !

Happy Christmas!

Fred Kaad

PRANCER - YOU LONG LONG -
MI TOK SINDOWN LONG
HAUS SCHMIDT !



V A L E

It is with sincere regret that we record the passing of these Members and friends, and to their families we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

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| Gordon Dun | 18 October. | Formerly entomologist with DASF. Spent many years at Keravat Ag. Research Station and well known for his research on cocoa. |
| Mrs. Lilian Hardy | 21 October | Widow of former Registrar-General Bert Hardy |
| James Wright | 20 October | Well liked Post & Telegraphs technician who retired in '72 to live in Brisbane. |
| Mrs. Muriel Pickwell | 2 Sept. | Widow of Ron Pickwell - former senior medical assistant. |
| Mrs. Iris Goetze | | Widow of Blaxland Goetze, former native labour inspector. |
| Mrs. Sylvia Aitcheson | | Popular wife of the Association's long time Honorary Auditor, T.G. (Tommy) Aitcheson. |