

# MEMO ON MEMBERS

How many of the members remember Major Art Lowe, from Corvallis, Oregon? Art visited Australia in the early part of May. He did not get to Melbourne, but visited Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane and Rockhampton. He rented a car in Sydney and drove up to Brisbane and Rocky. Spent about 30 days in Aussie.

Member Frank Hollister, from Perth, tells us that Jack Crawford came over from the U.S. and spent some time in Australia. A couple of weeks in Perth; some time in Melbourne and Sydney; a few weeks in Queensland. He was particularly mystified by the high cost of living and price "Down Under," as compared to the U.S. these days.

So Wilbur Benson will be making a trip to the U.S. and he intends to check whether it is cheaper to live "over there" than it is here. Don't ask us, we don't know.

A rumour came in by the Blinker System that Wally Dey travelled all the way to Canberra to compete in a golf tournament. There is no verification of the rumour, so no one will take the case to court.

Speaking about Frank Hollister above, he is intending to start a one-man membership drive in Perth, so that a Western Australian or Perth Branch can get started.

And speaking of getting branches established, the National President is now back at work after being off with a rough bout of pneumonia and pleurisy for several weeks. He was invalided on June 9 and returned to work on July 3. As this goes to press, he is still not fully recovered.

Getting wised up in his young 60s is older John Charleson. Come winter time, the Charlesons get out the gasoline buggy and turn the bumper bar toward the warmer climes. They were talking about driving around Australia. Wonder if they are doing it!

Here's one to believe it or not! Both Tag Sar. (Chas. Taggart) and Tag Jnr. (Roger) were hospitalised. Both had operations, and both happened very close to the same time. However, it's too late to send "Get Well" Cards.

A note from the Ettingers in Brisbane, Queensland, report that several American ex-Servicemen living in that part of the world wish to thank the "G.I." for its wide coverage of V.A. benefits. The editorial staff hopes that they "cash-in" on the information.

He hasn't been around for some time, but David Cameron was at the special meeting held on June 23. So election night will be the meeting on the last Friday in July, if unknown forces do not intervene.

Here's good news for those thinking of going to the World Assembly of War Veterans, to be held in Sydney between August 11 and 16, 1975. Ansett Airlines is the official airline for the Assembly and, to assist all potential delegates, are offering a special discount on their air fares.

Ken Baumgardner and Eddie Williams have been selected to be members of the Building Committee to give the N.P. a helping hand with any problems that may arise.

If there is any basis to a local newspaper article, it is a strong condemnation of the indifference of society, when a U.S. Consul-General cannot make a speech at a university without suffering some type of indignity or intimidation.

People can criticise what is known as the "Victorian Era," but in those days university students were gentlemen and scholars.

Many people do not know this, but Eddie Williams gives a great deal of time during the week-ends in working with the Boy Scouts.

The Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women officially opened their new quarters at 166 Albert Road, South Melbourne, on July 4. Years ago the Legion allowed the Association to use its offices on Bourke Street in which to hold meetings. Many an exciting discussion poured forth from these hallowed doors.

Speaking of these old Legion quarters, one incident (you might call it humorous) comes into mind. One member who had a habit of being always in some kind of financial distress, asked the club for a loan. While the committee was getting ready to approve, one of the members spoke up: "How much do you need?" The requester — we shall term him as "X" — told the amount needed. "Oh, no need of asking the club for that amount, here I'll lend it to you." (We'll call this gentleman "Charity") A couple of weeks later the President met "X" and asked: "How's everything? Did what 'Charity' gave you, solve the problem?" "He didn't give me anything." "G'wan, I saw him give it to you with my own eyes." "Oh, yes, he gave it to me in the meeting room, but after the meeting he asked me

why I needed the loan. When I told him, he said that he couldn't lend money for something like that, and maybe I had better give him the money back." "Wal, now, I just do declare!"

Wonder how many old-time members remember that night? Neither parties are in Australia now.

In the last issue of the "G.I." it was mentioned that the Repatriation Minister had contacted the National Office in regard to certain benefits to Allied veterans. Another letter came from the same source:

"Senator Wheeldon has received your letter and has asked me to thank you for the information you have provided. You will appreciate that it may be some time before a decision is made on this matter. (Sgd.) Ken Erwood, Senior Adviser."

Latest rumour has it that Paul Beyers, pianist superbe, is coming back to Melbourne to live, and when he gets settled will look up the club.

For years Dick Helmer has been a sick man, and now his back is causing him no little amount of pain. "Slipped disk, Richard!"

First Life Member, Don McLeod, is living the life of a retired millionaire. Trips overseas and around Australia are commonplace for him.

Another person who is out of Melbourne a good deal of the time is Charles Jefferson. His profession makes it necessary to travel to different offices.

It's really most edifying to note that the Adelaide Branch is not letting important American holidays be forgotten. The Melbourne Branch might be well advised to follow suit.

New Stove thanks Bob Hakainsson and Alan Bloom.

"SNAFU"

## AMERICAN EX-SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Monthly Meeting

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American Ex-Servicemen's Clubrooms

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# STOVEVITUS DANCE.

Folks have probably heard acres and acres of this and that about all sorts of queer sounding epidemics — even heaps connected with queer sounding dances, but this stovevitus has to be seen to be believed. One thing about it, though, is that it is symbolic of just about everything connected with the historical progress of the club.

In the last issue of the "G.I." it was mentioned that there were problems in the kitchen concerning a gas stove, and this was the signal that threw a monkey wrench into the smooth operation of tenant/landlord relationship which existed between the National President (who for years has guided all the destinies of the component parts of the Association's premises) and those who rent that part of the property known as the "Public Hall."

The plague made its entrance as early as last February (about a week or so before George Washington's Birthday) when the tenants complained that the chambers were filled with gas. Investigation showed that the gas stove, a caterer's dream about 40 years ago, and which was purchased from a second-hand store for the organisation back in 1958, had a faulty jet. Experts from the Gas Producing Corporations were called in, and then it was discovered that parts were unavailable, the stove was condemned and the gas sealed off at the source.

It was evident that a replacement had to be obtained, and this had to be done with as much haste as possible. Economy being an important factor, this became a bigger problem than was foreseen. Gas stoves similar to the one discarded, but brand new, were quoted at between \$1,200 and \$2,000. Frankly, this was too rich for the treasury blood, and too expensive a piece of equipment to be trusted to be left in the hands of our various clients, especially when the hall is rented out on the "honor system" — that means the tenant pays his fee, is given a key to get in, is shown how to operate all systems, and is told to leave everything in a reasonably good and clean condition, then return the key. There is no permanent caretaker to oversee all activities.

During the middle of checking out various second-hand stores, one of the tenants came up with the news that he had purchased a new kitchen gas stove, and that he would donate the old one, and all that would have to be paid for was the fee for connecting the gas to the stove — he would even deliver the goods. Sounded wonderful — not really what was wanted, but it would do until something better came along.

The gas range was modern enough — about five years old, and in workable condition, except that one of the control knobs was missing. Well, that was nothing — could be replaced for a couple of dollars — fair enough!

There was only one catch: The part was not obtainable unless, of course, one happened to find another such stove that had been thrown out, because the manufacturer did not have the parts, as this model had been superseded a couple of years back.

Yet, it worked reasonably well except for the one burner controlled by the missing knob, and the tenants, if not 100 per cent overjoyed, were at least satisfied. As time went by, it was hoped that the missing part might be located if one kept both the eyes and ears open.

But the pseudo-peaceful atmosphere was due to be shattered. Some "dumkoff" (spelling not guaranteed) started fooling around in the aperture left by the missing knob with a pair of pliers. Next came a telephone call from one of the tenants — the place was full of gas.

Over went the usual maintenance operator in such conditions, the N.P. He turned off the gas at the main, locked it shut, and contacted associate member

Continued overleaf

# The G.I.

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# "HALL FOR RENT" CONTACT CLUB

## STOVEITUS DANCE (Contd.)

Mr. X (see memo on members) to come over and give him a hand. Together they dismantled the stove, and discovered that the missing knob was connected to an indispensable mechanism, which turned out to be unobtainable, unless the seeker was just downright lucky.

The regular tenants could get along for a few weeks by using the club's small electric stove. This would give some shopping time and, maybe, just maybe, something would turn up. It was worth a try.

More second-hand stores and auction stores were visited. Some stores made a business of reconditioning gas stoves and selling them. Even these were worth several hundred dollars, but a very good unit turned up in an auction mart. Several burners, two ovens and equipped with new-fangled electrical attachments. Price was \$20, but no guarantee that it would work.

By this time it was the second week in May and, a week later, one of the customers, a caterer, was using the premises and a gas stove had to be gotten. But, the N.P. was on holidays, and could give the week to accomplishing the job. The secretary, Jim Dennis, offered to give up a few days of his time, as the team went to work.

A great deal had been learned, and it is mentioned here just in case somebody in the club may find themselves in the same position. When buying a second-hand gas range, check these points: (a) Is it a super-sealed model? If it is, even the manufacturer probably won't have the necessary parts if any are missing. A car manufacturer has to guarantee parts on every model for a number of years, but this is not so with stove factories. Of course, there will be plenty of parts around someplace, if they can be located — but that's the burr in the burner. (b) And this is a most important item — be sure that the kitchen cooker has been converted to natural gas. Stories are voluminous about the beautiful ranges that were purchased for a song, only to find by the time it has been altered, a reconditioned model would have been a big money-saver. Talk about buying the Brooklyn Bridge!

A caterer had booked the hall for Saturday, so the two men had from Monday to Sunday, the second week in May, to make all conditions go. Also, seeing the gas had been blocked at the main, the regular weekly tenants had been freezing for some time, as the hall's heating systems were non-operative. Talk about the "big freeze."

So, after discussing the pros and cons, it was decided to give the auction mart deal the super private-eye examination. It was gone over from top to bottom. Burners were in good condition—the ultra-electrical additions seemed to be in good condition, ovens in unbelievable top condition — the grill plate was missing, and although the

knobs were all there, one of them was broken, but could be repaired with a little Yankee ingenuity.

A trip to the factory to find a griddle plate, which was obtainable in a different shape and size, but of no value, except for discovering the idea of the general pattern, and the type of metal needed. So ended Monday. Was it worth 16 man-hours?

Tuesday, a trip to one of the biggest Gas Corporations service depots, where hundreds of men are employed, and service trucks go out to iron out many problems.

There was a meeting on, so no one could help us until the meeting was over, two hours later. Then no one was helpful but the parking attendant. Couldn't anyone of the experts tell us what to look for to conclude if the model had been converted to natural gas — not unless they saw it. If it was brought down to them, they might find someone who could give the right answer in a day or two. What would you feel like saying — yeh, we said it!

More discussion on planning ways and means. Then the N.P. remembered. Last year, when the club was preparing to put a heating system in the public hall, he had visited one of the gas showrooms, and had met a very obliging engineer that was really helpful. An hour later and the same person was again helpful. And, he had just reconditioned the same model to a bottle gas burner; furthermore, he had it on display — well polished with all the parts, it was "a thing of beauty" and, according to the professional, worth \$1,000 as it stood. And the appropriate griddle was there — now it was resolved that such could be made.

If we brought the burners down, the technician could tell us if they were suitable for natural gas. Back to the auction mart and, after making the necessary arrangements, the burners were taken down to the engineer. Yes, they were right, and practically new — but, that was not conclusive proof that the merchandise was usable — the jets were important. Did he have the different type of jets handy, so he could demonstrate how to determine a stove's workable condition. Yes, he had the jets, and explained fully how to evaluate. Another sun goes down, on the horizon of frustration.

As soon as the auction mart opened next morning two Ex-G.I.'s were at the door. Could they put the burners back and have another look? Of course they could, but there had been an auction yesterday and the commodity in question was buried under mountains of goods waiting to be delivered.

After two hours of replacing stock, the stove was cleared and ready for inspection. Another hour of probing, following instructions to the letter, produced the fact that everything should be in working order

when connected, the stove should work. The purchase was made.

A trailer would be obtained, but the car with the trailer hitch proved to be miles away — two more hours wasted. Back to the auction mart, they had to deliver their sales. Yes, the truck was out then but would be back in a half hour. Yes, the driver would deliver, providing he was helped in packing all the goods in his truck, and was helped to unload the range at the club-rooms. So, after getting the truck loaded with all the goods, a rush to the club to arrange a suitable place in the kitchen. It was two hours later before the truck arrived, but it took that time to make preparations. Another two hours wasted in getting a qualified person there the next day to install. Another day gone, and nothing fully completed.

The plumber didn't know what time he would arrive. He had to finish a nearby job first, then he would be over, and if he could be assisted the price would be much cheaper. So, while waiting for the pipe bender to arrive, it was decided to clean the ton of rubbish out of the incinerators and, as the trash collectors would not handle this type of rubbish, it had to be privately taken to the tip. A few hours later the ton of rubbish was on the trailer and the plumber arrived. The stove was connected and worked like a charm. The plumber advised that the electrical appliances be made non-available, as a defence measure to protect property. By the time the journey to the refuse dump was finished, the sun had already disappeared.

Nothing much to do the next day except get a piece of cast aluminium and make the griddle plate, plus fixing the knob. A couple of hours at the most, but how "the plans of mice and men, aft gang a-gley." It took three quarters of a day to get the material, and even this could not have been done except through the timely assistance of an associate member, who gave us the right name at the right time. A bit of travelling involved and, before midnight, two parts were ready for delivery.

So it was Saturday. The caterer was already at the hall making preparations, as the knob and griddle plate were attached, but the stove was already blazing away. Being a cold day, the heaters had to be turned on. Another problem arose that took a few hours to fix. The heaters had been off for about a year, and dust, etc., must have gotten into the operative mechanism. Anyway, all was well that ended well. 100 donated man-hours — total cost, about \$36.

Why was this symbolic? Because every-time something is done, economy is most important. Secondly, time is wasted, because most problems have never been experienced and education takes time. Thirdly, the vast savings are due to the toil and sweat of one or two members.

## —THE ADELAIDE BRANCH

—By John Walker

The group from the Stevens River State send their "Wes" wishes to the National President, Reg Marks (the S.A. gang, and is glad to say that he has returned to work.

George Washington's Birthday was celebrated with a real old-time, hoe-down, Square Dance. A price of \$26 was made, but the most important thing was that both the U.S. Vets and their Aussie friends had a whale of a good time.

In early June the steaks sizzled at a barbecue held at the home of Reg Marks. A Cabaret Night to celebrate the Fourth of July was held at the Plympton R.S.L. It had been sold out for weeks ahead of time. The bunch just refuse to forget an American Holiday, and join with the Diggers in making their commemorative events something really special.

The officers for the coming year are as follows: President, George Clausen; Senior Vice-President, Reg Marks; Junior Vice-President, Eddie Hazel; Secretary, John Fry; Asst. Secretary-Treasurer, John Walker; Executive Committee, R. Bradtke, J. Thorson, K. Harbert and W. Sherman.

Anzac Day was a red letter day for the club. Fifteen members turned up to march with the Diggers, and afterwards they joined their wives and friends at a dinner at the Walker Arms Hotel. About 50 people dined and wined. The tables were a bevy of small American and Australian Flags. After dinner the merry-makers spent the rest of the day at the Plympton R.S.L. The barrels were getting dry about midnight.

American veterans from the American Coral Sea Association were given the red-carpet treatment by Aussie Naval Associations, the Australian/American Association, R.S.L. members and the Adelaide Branch of the A.E.S.A.A. G.M.H. Holden treated all to a Dinner on the Monday night. The next day the visitors were taken on a trip up the Barossa Valley, where the wineries are thicker than wild daisies in the spring. A vicious rumour was circulated that the most sober man on the bus was the driver, and he didn't exactly go on a "Thirst Strike." Several ex-Aussie Naval men from Melbourne were also on hand.

As the American contingent left for home one of them was hatless. Later it was observed that Johnny Fry was wearing an American-made golf cap. All-in-all, the boys had a time they won't forget in a hurry.

Trevor Dew, one of our honorary members and liaison officer between the Club and the R.S.L., is going to be accompanied by E. Hazel and Reg Marks, Jr., to Sydney in August for the World Veterans' Convention. The branch has managed to subsidise part of their expenses. R.S.L. headquarters is thrilled that we are sending a delegation.

Gener Cluver and wife Sue are expecting a little Cluver on July 4. John and Fay

Fry will be a grandpappy and grandmammy in January next year.

Wes Whately is very much improved. He has graduated to a wheel chair and is getting around much more. "Well done, Wes. Keep up the good work!"

Keith Harbert's wife, Doris, was in a car accident, but has fully recovered. However, she hasn't gotten the car back yet. Ray Bradtke has been on the sick list, but is slowly recovering. Reg Marks, Jr., has retired from the interstate truck driving and is now spending a great deal more time with the Club.

It looks as if Fred Mack, manager of "Brown Equipment Co. of Australia," located in Berri, S.A., an ex-G.I., may soon be wearing the Club badge. And, speaking of badges, more are in demand. (They will soon be on the way, with more membership cards.)

The Club has made a new banner which is really a mammoth enlargement of the badge. It was carried for the first time in the Anzac March, and was guarded by George Clausen, Bernie Eackinrode, Wilbur Sherman, John Walker, Reg Marks, Gene Cluver, John Fry, Ed Hazel, John Thoreson, Ray Bradtke, Jim Struthers and Keith Harbert.

And the writer, Johnny Walker, is in the Sick Bay.

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## NATIONAL OFFICERS, 1975-1976

The Branches have approved the following as National Officers for the coming year:—

President: Joe Bradshaw, Melbourne.  
Vice-President: John Walker, Adelaide.  
Secretary: Jesse Wilkins, Jr., Seattle, Washington.  
Treasurer: Charles Jefferson, Melbourne.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Richard Ettinger, Brisbane; Chas. Bacon, Sydney; Jim Dennis, Melbourne; John Fry, Adelaide; Ted Senf, Seattle; Frank Holtstret, Western Australia, reputed to have a drive like a man?

## NATIONAL OFFICERS, 1975-76

Secretary: Jesse Wilkins, Jr., Seattle, Washington.  
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## —SEATTLE BRANCH NEWS

Most of the Seattle members have just returned from San Francisco, where the National Reunion of the Famous Forty-First Infantry Division was being held. They rode the cable cars, danced at the world-famous Garden Court, lunched at Fisherman's Wharf, and spent a heap of time in the Sheraton Palace. No bars were purposely missed.

The latest request to the Seattle group from a Mr. Simmers, of Melbourne:

Mr. Simmers is an officer of a rifle club and is trying to get a dozen or so of the U.S. Infantry crossed rifles brass badges. All members are on the beat chasing these up, because it is realised that although it might be very small, it is a significant step in building up goodwill between the Aussies and the Yanks.

The Picnic and Get-Together will be held this year on Sunday, July 20, on the Lions Club property on Cedar River, in Maple Valley. This is one of the scenic wonders. There is plenty of good fishing in the river, and a lovely golf course nearby.

Monthly meetings are held at the K. of C. Hall, on 91st Street.

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