

2/3 A.H.S. CENTAUR ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Secretary: Mrs Jan Thomas OAM
Treasurer: Mr Anthony P Bracken

www.centaur.org.au



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NEWSLETTER MAY 2018

75th ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL SERVICES

Brisbane, Qld.
Monday 14 May 2018,
10am for 10.30.

At St Andrew's Anglican Church Lutwyche. Refreshments will be served following the Service.

Tuesday 24 April, Nurses' Candlelight Vigil, Anzac Square.

Saturday 12 May, 75th Anniversary Memorial Dinner, United Services Club, Brisbane

Enquires: contact the Secretary, Ms Sue De Vries, PO Box 1233, Indooroopilly Qld 4068, or email: admin@centaurnursesfund.org.au

Caloundra, Qld.
Monday 14 May 2018 at 11am.

At the Memorial in Centaur Park. Anyone wishing to lay a wreath please see the Secretary, Dick Alchin, before the Service begins. Morning tea after the Service at Caloundra RSL. Enquiries: Caloundra RSL Centaur Commemoration Committee, telephone (07) 5438 5800.

Melbourne, Vic.
Sunday 20 May 2018 at 9.00am.

In the ANZAC Memorial Chapel, Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, 300 Waterdale Road, Heidelberg West. Entry via Gate 9. Enquiries: Robert Winther (03) 9496 2324, or robert.winther@austin.org.au Refreshments will be served at the Darebin RSL Sub-Branch at 402 Bell Street, Preston.

Point Danger, Qld.
Monday 14 May 2018 at 10am.

At the Memorial (weather permitting, otherwise in the assembly hall, Centaur Primary School, Eucalyptus Drive, Banora Point). The Service is conducted by the school students. Refreshments following the Service. Enquiries to Centaur Primary School (07) 5524 9655.

Concord, Sydney, NSW.
Friday 11 May 2018 at 10.30am.

In the 113 AGH Memorial Chapel, Concord Hospital, Hospital Rd, Concord. Refreshments will be available after the Service. RSVP to Melva Lindley at (02) 9767 5256 or melva.lindley@sswahs.nsw.gov.au

Free parking is available in Lovedale Paddock. The Courtesy Golf Cart will transport people to the Chapel.

If parking in the Hospital Carpark you can have your Parking Ticket replaced with a free ticket at morning tea.

Dapto, NSW.
Saturday 12 May 2018 at 2pm.

At the War Memorial in the small park adjacent to Dapto Railway Station. All welcome. Refreshments following the Service at Dapto RSL Hall opposite the park. For further information or directions contact Michael Johnston, Secretary, at

Dapto-Port-KemblaSB@rslnsw.org.au

Canberra, ACT.
Monday 14 May 2018 at 4.55pm.

The Centaur Last Post Ceremony at the AWM. Assemble in the Orientation Gallery with the Centaur Association Representative, by 4.30pm. The Representative will have poppies for those who wish to place a poppy on the Roll of Honour prior to the commencement of the ceremony. People laying wreaths or floral tributes are asked to meet with AWM staff also in the Orientation Gallery.

The Centaur casualty to be commemorated will be Pte Athol Povey, 2/12th Field Ambulance.

Macksville, NSW.
Saturday 12 May 2018 at 11am.

At the War Memorial on the riverbank. Participating in the ceremony will be the cadets of TS Culgoa ANC, the Naval & Mariners Association, and Readers from local schools. Poppies will be offered for placing on the communal wreath.

Enquiries: jthomas44@bigpond.com or telephone Jan Thomas at 02 6564 8400.

Special for 75th Anniversary
Bundaberg, Qld.
Monday 14 May 2018 at 9.30am

At the War Nurses Memorial Park, cnr Burbong & Takalvan Sts Bundaberg, opposite Bundaberg Base Hospital. If you wish to lay a wreath please advise details by 4 May. Bundaberg & District Ex - Servicewomen's Assn bundy.eswa@gmail.com PO Box 397 Bundaberg Qld 4570 Ph 07 4159 4134 (secretary) or 07 4157 4621 (president).

Remembering

Pte Leslie “Joe” Moss, NX72046, 2/12th Field Ambulance

“Uncle Les was banned from turning up to Parade because they couldn’t find any boots big enough to fit his feet,” writes Fiona Mount who shares his story with the Centaur Association.



Cpl Moss’ father was Louis Moss who was born in the New Hebrides and brought out as a sugar slave in the 1860s on the ship ‘Denise’. Les only ever had one sister, Patricia, who was a nurse in the army. Their mother left their father when the children were quite young, and moved back to Sydney to start a new life.

As my great-great-grandfather, Jonas Thomas Wogas, was South Sea Island heritage like Louis Moss, and around the same age, they became friends. Jonas’ eldest daughter, Ella helped raise Les and Patty (Patricia), as she had a child herself not that much older.

We’ve always grown up believing that Uncle Les and Auntie Patty were my grandmother’s half brother and sister, but after Auntie Patty died and subsequent family research, we discovered that they are not blood relatives at all. However, in South Sea Island culture they were ‘adopted’ into our family and to call them anything other than Uncle and Aunt just seems foreign.

I’ve listened to many a wonderful story about Uncle Les and remember my grandmother speaking very fondly, and sadly, of her ‘brother’ lost at sea. Even my father could remember the send-off for him at the local hall in Murwillumbah before Uncle Les caught the train to go to Sydney to board the *Centaur*. My father, who was only five at the time, said he couldn’t understand why his mother, Auntie Patty and his grandmother were all inconsolable, why the men were so quiet and serious and why they were calling this a ‘party’ when all they did was cry. Innocent memories of a child.

My father told me that after Les’s mother disappeared to Sydney and his grandmother Ella, took the kids on to help out there used to be some “issues” with this. Apparently Louis didn’t want any help raising his children so sometimes Ella had to wait until the middle of the night, walk to Kingscliff, walk the children back to her house, wash them, feed them, change them, put them to bed then Uncle Louis would turn up and take them back, making them walk back in the middle of the night to Kingscliff.

My grandmother Phoebe, her sister Beverley and Auntie Pat all grew up quite close so this situation must have torn at their hearts as the children wouldn’t have wanted to leave Phoebe, Beverley and their mother Ella, but then they would have loved their father too.

Uncle Les used to play the ukulele, even on board the *Centaur*, and he had a very good singing voice too, and was fond of yodelling.

He was a bit of a joker. We have a photo somewhere of him playing the ukulele and wearing only a grass skirt made out of banana leaves!

He was obviously very family-orientated too. Many letters sent home to Uncle Louis Moss have been archived and displayed at the Tweed Museum. I believe that Auntie Pat donated them when Uncle Louis passed away.

One thing that really stands out is the number of letters and cards of condolence Uncle Louis received from such a diverse group of people when Uncle Les died on the *Centaur*. Auntie Pat must have kept those because there were ones from crew mates, patients, high ranking officers, local government representatives, local store keepers, friends of Uncle Les who had never met Uncle Louis, friends and commanders from different locations where Uncle Les had served or trained. It was just amazing to read them all. All of these people spoke of his love of family, always talking to everyone about his father and sisters, his humour - a little politically incorrect by today’s standards, his gentleness, his calm and caring nature, his love for the Tweed / Chinderah area, his love of singing and music and discharging his duties with respect, humour and efficiency.

On the wall in her lounge room my grandmother had the big beautiful portrait of Uncle Les (above), the one now hanging in the Centaur Primary School foyer. My mother used to comment on how handsome he was and she asked my grandmother, Phoebe, Les’s unofficially adopted sister, who it was. My grandmother always used to say in a very sad voice that it was her brother Les.



Young Les and Patty Moss

I remember the portrait and I remember asking her myself but she never answered and neither did Auntie Pat. My father told me some years later but I don’t think it was something that they wanted to discuss - it was too painful.

A funny aside - Auntie Pat taught me to pick little things up with my toes.

Apparently this was a skill that Uncle Louis taught them both when they went pipping as children.

Big-hearted Joe met a Watery Grave

By: H.C. Baker

From an article published at the time in the Sydney Morning Herald sent in by Fiona Mount.

Nobody will ever know how Big 'Joe' Moss died, for nobody in his portion of the ship lived to tell about it.

But nobody who knew the gigantic New Hebridean would dispute the words of the Darwin Digger who said, "One thing is for sure; if Joe was able to barely crawl after the explosion he would have been doing just one thing – trying to help the injured."

February 19, 1942: Japanese bombers destroyed most of the shipping in Darwin Harbour, smashed the wharves, bombed the RAAF and damaged almost every building in the area.

The raid had a demoralising effect on the service personnel as well as the civilian population. Most of the latter left for the safety of the south or were ordered to evacuate.

The servicemen – and women – remained to await – further raids? Enemy landings? Who knew?

A group of AIF officers organized an impromptu concert to boost morale.

The hit of the show was Corporal Les 'Joe' Moss, a young giant of a man carrying a guitar.

He shuffled his big, bare feet to the edge of the stage – and grinned. It was the widest most good-natured grin ever seen, and it won the crowd instantly.

By some amazing talent the dark-skinned man appeared to be able to sing and still retain his watermelon grin.

Joe became one of the most well-known identities in the camp. At every concert he was requested to give an item – and was always enthusiastically applauded.

However, it was in his capacity as medical orderly at the RAP (Regimental Aid Post) that Joe made his most sincere friends.

He became known as "the Gentle Giant." Joe could lift the heaviest man in and out of bed as easily as an ordinary man would pick up a four-year-old.

Yet no mother ever handled her baby more gently or tended the mite with more kindness.

One of Joe's patients once said, "The very sight of him made you feel more cheerful. He'd come into the ward – and it was like seeing a huge white smile with a dark face somewhere in the background.

"Then he'd chuckle, 'And how are my little white boys today?' he'd say, and go through the actions of counting us off on his fingers.

"Then he'd laugh – the most infectious booming laugh I ever heard in my life."

Standing Orders proclaimed that there would be a battalion parade. Every man would turn out – and be correctly dressed in every detail, even to having bootlaces tied in the correct military fashion.

It was doubtful whether Joe had ever worn footwear in his life. The biggest boots in Darwin would not have gone on his proportionally large feet.

"You'd need the boxes they come in Joe," grinned the QM Sergeant.

Joe did the only thing he could do – he turned up on parade in bare feet. The CO almost had a stroke at the sight, but short of ordering an amputation there was nothing he could do. Joe was not only excused from turning out on parade, he was emphatically forbidden to do so.

Towards the end of 1942 Joe's Unit was transferred to Corrimal while waiting to embark on the *Centaur*. He was missed. His was a 'hard act to follow' even in the RAR.

Wartime censorship held back most war news but rumours spread. One of the grimmest to reach Darwin was that the Australian Hospital Ship *Centaur* had been torpedoed off Moreton Island Queensland, with appalling loss of life. When a newspaper with the story in it eventually reached Darwin the troops read that the rumour was true.

Shocked as the troops were there was one paragraph which struck them with the impact of a personal tragedy. It described an interview with a survivor, Able Seaman Alfred Ramage.

The seaman mourned for a medical orderly named Corporal Les 'Joe' Moss, a native of the New Hebrides who had been caught below decks when the explosion occurred.

He was, said Ramage, "the very soul of kindness to every sick soldier he attended." Scores of servicemen would agree.

Fiona continues her story:

I am President and Secretary of our local branch of the Australian South Sea Islander Association. As there are family members older than I am to represent my great-great-grandfather Jonas Wogas and ensure he is not forgotten, I always move to the side of Moss to ensure that little family of three lives on as neither Aunty Patty nor Uncle Les ever married or had any children.

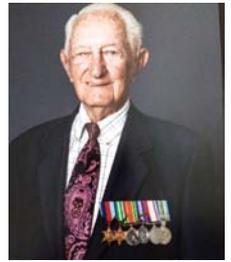
*Moss House (Red House)
at Centaur Primary School is a living
memorial to Cpl Leslie "Joe" Moss.*



Continuing the story of

Ex-Cpl Athol (Tom) Pledger, NX47190 2/12th Field Ambulance

Survivor of Ambon



From the previous episode:

I was replaced and sent to Gloucester. I stayed at Penfolds Boarding House. It was a mixture of boys and girls and we had some great times.

One of the chaps liked a few beers and this particular Saturday night came home full and went to bed only minus his shoes. Now next door was a vacant corner block and one side was the footpath leading up to the Roman Catholic Church. Years before they had horsedrawn hearses, but as the motor had taken over this old hearse had been placed on this block next to the footpath. So all the boys just lifted up his mattress with Jack dead to the world and carried him out and placed him in the old hearse. Next morning being Sunday and a lot of good people going to church were astounded to see Jack sound asleep in the hearse. He would have killed us if he had found out which of us did it.

Another night we had the daughter of the local storekeeper boarding with us and this night she went off all dressed up to a local Ball. While she was away the local butcher who also stayed with us brought home a bullock's skull, a dried out one. So we stripped her bed and put the skull in it and arranged an electric light in it and remade the bed. She came home tired out, got ready for bed, put the light out and pulled the bed clothes back and here was this bullock's skull with a light in it looking at her. She screamed and screamed and then fainted, so we never did that joke again.

I had a few too many on Christmas Eve so the boys took me down to the train and put me on it and told the conductor, who knew me to put me off at Sawtell. I arrived there in sandals, shorts and shirt and no money, but a good friend, "Dagger" Ross lent me some money and put me up for 2 days before I went back to Gloucester. The chap sent to do my job at Sawtell got it all mixed up so I was sent back to sort it out and was there for 6 months.

In the meantime I had sat for the Clerical Exam and passed it and was offered the job as Junior Clerk at Taree Goods Shed, which I took. It was a good job and my boss was Jack Wilson. My job was to accept all the goods being sent away by goods train and deliver and collect freight on goods received at Taree.

I joined the Surf Club while at Taree and received my instructor's certificate. With Gordon Riley I also formed the first hockey team in the district, but as we were the only team at the time, we had to play the girls. There are now about a dozen teams in Taree.

I boarded at "Ma" Vials boarding house in Manning Street, and diagonally across the street was the Mayo Hospital where Jess Gollan was nursing. I saw her down the street one Friday night with her mother and asked who she was and was told. A few weeks later I went by bus to Wingham to a dance in the Memorial Hall and who should be there but Jess, so I danced with her and took her home and so started our life together. She used to do a lot of shift work and didn't finish till about 9pm so I could see the window of her room in the nurses' quarters so when she finished she would sneak out with a rug and we would go down to the oval or park. She would have got the sack if Matron had found out, but luckily she never did.



On 23 May 1939 Jess turned 21 so her family and I decided to give her a surprise party at the farm. Her mother cooked cakes etc and hid it around the place, as it was Jess's day off and she had gone home for the day, so I said I would come out after work and bring her back into the hospital. I had to go to the hospital and between Matron and myself we sorted out the clothes she would want for the night and I would take them out with me. I had developed a bad dose of the flu and was feeling terrible so when I arrived out at the farm with Jess's clothes she found out what we had done and blamed me and it was to be all off between us, but next day she took pity on me and we made up. It was a good party as our friend Sid Fallowfield had a dance orchestra so we cleared the verandah which went round two sides of the house and had dancing and car loads of friends kept coming down the track into the farm.

Pop and Nanna Gollan were great and joined in the fun once they were sure there was enough food and drink.

Early 1939 I was shifted to West Maitland and I had turned 21 and was now a senior. I was in the Booking Office doing 3 different shifts as it was open 24 hours per day. I was there when the war broke out on 3 September 1939. It became very hectic as there were army camps at Greta and Rutherford and we used to get all the soldiers going on weekend leave. It was while I was at Maitland that I wrote to Pop Gollan asking to become engaged to Jessie and he said OK so Jess came to Maitland and we went to Newcastle and bought the engagement ring, which by the way took me nearly a year to save up for.

It was only a couple of months after this that I decided to join the A.I.F. I was called up on the 25th August 1940 to Broadmeadow and passed the Medical and was now in the Army.

I was drafted for training to Tamworth to the camp at Manilla Road, where myself and Jack Bruce were placed in charge of the Regimental Aid Post, but didn't last long as they called for volunteers for the Medical Corp and Jack and I volunteered and were sent to the Showground in Sydney, where the 2/12 Field Ambulance was formed under Colonel Nat Barton.

It was a free and easy life while the unit was being formed but on Boxing Day 1940 we were sent to Cowra, where we trained for 3 months. While home on leave from Cowra, Jess and I decided to put off our marriage till after the war.

In April 1941 we embarked on a troop train at Cowra and as we had been issued with tropical outfits we thought we were on our way to the Middle East, but our train went to Melbourne and kept on going to Adelaide and then to Terowie, where we were put in tents in the showground, the place was all red dust and we became covered in it and then it rained and we were then covered in red mud. We had a week there and then set off by train in little old box carriages for Alice Springs. On the way we stopped at Quorn for a meal. The local townspeople were there and we were marched over to a pavilion in the showground to one of the best meals I had during my whole Army career. I particularly remember hot plum pudding covered with lots of hot custard. The people did this for every troop train which came through Quorn. They were marvellous folk.

On arrival at the Fink River we were delayed for 24 hours as the Fink was in flood. The only inhabitants were the policeman and his wife and a couple of railway fitters.

The policeman's wife had a piano so the C.O. asked if we looked after it could we carry it outside into the open countryside and hold a concert. She agreed and we had a marvellous night, the train driver and guard joined in and sang some songs. The policeman's wife also ran the post office and she sent more telegrams that day than she had in years.

Next day we got across the river and on to Alice Springs where we were put in tents on the bank of the dry Todd River. The scorpions were very bad and you would wake up in the morning and pick up your groundsheet on which you had slept and it was nothing to find 5 or 6 under it, where they had crawled for warmth as the nights were cold. Only one chap I know of was bitten, he put his boot on and it had a scorpion in it. In the daytime the little flies nearly drove us mad, especially at meal time. Many is the time I ate my meal under the fly veil we wore on our hats.

After a few days at Alice we were loaded into 30 ton trucks, just sitting on mats and set off on the 600 miles trip to Birdum (N.T.) I got as far as Tea Tree Wells when I developed dysentery so was left there in the hospital tent and after a week recovered and joined another convoy to Birdum.

At Birdum we were loaded into cattle trucks and set off by train for Darwin. Our convoy was the first to travel overland to Darwin and there was no road from Alice Springs to Birdum so you can imagine what it was like in the back of those 30 ton trucks, bouncing all over the place. When I arrived at Darwin, I found my unit settling in at Winnelli about 4 miles south of Darwin. First we had to clear the 6ft tall elephant grass and then pitch our tents, build kitchen, toilets and showers. The toilets consisted of a hole about 10ft deep and 30ft long and covered with planks. We hunched on a long pole to use the toilet. Lime was added each day.

The showers were great as the water supply for Darwin ran past our camp above ground so we tapped into it and had hot showers as the water in the pipe was heated by the sun on its long trip to Darwin. Our tents were cool as we had the flaps up and a breeze flowed through. Later on they gave us four Sydney William huts which we had to erect ourselves. My job was to take 4 chaps and put the roof on, the hut is 60 feet long and as none of us had any experience of roofing, when we came to the end of the roof the top was about one foot longer than the bottom, so we put another sheet on to cover the hole, no-one ever noticed it.

While in Darwin we learnt to do theatre work at Bagot Hospital. I passed out in the first operation I was witnessing but got used to it. While in Darwin we did a lot of manual work, erecting barbed wire barriers around the beaches, digging trenches and an underground casualty clearing station, plus many forced marches and stretcher work. We only worked in hat, shorts and boots and were in wonderful nick. In the camp next to us were the engineers from Queensland and the 2/21st Battalion from Victoria. We were there when the riot occurred in Darwin between the A.I.F and the Darwin Infantry Battalion. I wasn't in town that day, but Stan Maybury from our tent, landed back with a shirt full of Tally Ho cigarette papers, which the mob had thrown out of Lorna Lim's shop and he collected them; so we didn't have to buy cigarette papers for a few months.

By this time I had been made a Corporal and one day was sent in charge of a party to collect stores from Darwin. The store was next to the Botanical Gardens and in the gardens were mango trees loaded with mangoes so we drove in under the trees and filled about ½ dozen sand bags with lovely juicy mangoes and were just about to drive out when the curator appeared, took our names etc plus the bags of mangoes and said he was going to report us to the C.O. but we never heard any more about it.

To be continued

Centaur Primary School



From the Captain's Log

Mrs Phyll Butcher



*Phyll with her niece
Leone Bade at
Point Danger 2016*

One of our "Centaur Family", Mrs Phyl Butcher from Murwillumbah passed away on Saturday 10 February aged 92 years. Mrs Butcher was aged 17 when her brother Private Bill Lawson was killed by the sinking of the Centaur 75 years ago. Our Lawson sporting house is named after Private Lawson as he was from the Tweed area. Mrs Butcher was a great supporter of our school, regularly attending Centaur Day at Point Danger and generously donating to our school.

Community Spirit

Last year Delta and Rosalie exceeded the expectations of the term 'giving back' at Christmas. During the senior school 'Community and Development' subject, the girls decided to give back to the community by making handmade Christmas cards for the children in the Paediatric ward at Lady Cilento Children's Hospital. Delta and Rosalie created cards that were unique, compassionate and inspirational. Centaur PS is very proud of the initiative and thoughtfulness of these two girls and we will strive to repeat this act of kindness this Christmas.



Centaur Primary School - providing opportunities for youth in the name of the Centaur.

Last Post



Alice Thompson, 13 /11/2017 aged 99.
Centaur supporter since the 1950s and long term member of the Caloundra Centaur family. See story above right.

Kathleen Lyn Belford, widow of Capt. Stephen Foley, 2/12th, aged 98, 1 October 2017.

Fred Millar, son of Pte Fred Millar 2/12th FA, survivor, deceased.

Doug Bentley, husband of Yvonne goddaughter of Sr Helen (Cynthia) Haultain, 3 November 2017.

Alexander Malcolm Leask, eldest nephew of Ptes Alexander, Harold and Henry Leask 2/12th FA. Born three months after the loss of his uncles on the Centaur, 19 January 2018.

Phyll Butcher, sister of Pte Bill Lawson, 2/12th FA, regular attender at Point Danger, 10 February 2018.
See story above under Centaur Primary School.

Rosemary Buttenshaw, sister of Capt. Lincoln Bedkober, 2/12th FA, 11 March 2018.

Caloundra

Caloundra also recently lost a very dear and long-standing member of the Centaur family.

Keith Clegg writes:

Alice Thompson, a loyal supporter of the Centaur at Caloundra, passed away 13th November 2017, at 99 years old. Her husband Hedley Thompson was a stretcher bearer in the Field Ambulance.

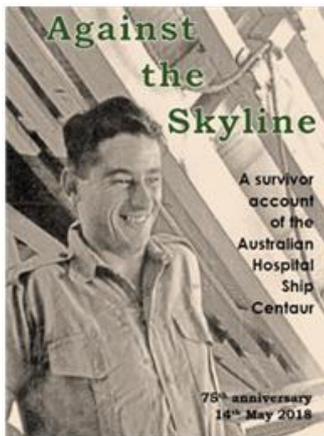
My association with the Thompsons was our annual meeting at the Brisbane Memorial Services organised by Vince McCosker in the 1950s and 1960s. Vince was a Centaur survivor.

Alice attended the unveiling of the Caloundra Memorial on 15th September 1968, and attended the annual Memorial Services at Caloundra up until 2012 when failing health prevented her attendance.

Alice was very committed to keeping alive her husband's memory and remembering Centaur.

In 2010 at the age of 96 Alice was one of the group who gathered at Centaur Park to wave to those of us on board HMAS Manoora as we sailed past on our way to the Centaur site for the at-sea Service.

AGAINST THE SKYLINE



Published to coincide with the 75th anniversary is *Against the Skyline*, the story of the sinking of the Centaur seen through the eyes of Pte Frederick Chidgey of the Ship's Medical Staff, and includes poetry written about this significant event in Australian war history.

\$30 plus \$10 Postage and handling within Australia.

Payment Options

Cheque payable to Leanne Wicks

Please include your name and address

Direct Deposit: A/c name: Leanne Wicks

BSB 882-000 A/c No: 100111537

Please add your name in the reference and email your address to Leanne.

Contact:

Leanne Wicks PO Box 510, Mudgee, NSW, 2850, or email: leannewicks.poet@gmail.com or via Facebook *Against the Skyline*.

Leanne is generously donating profits to the Centaur Association.

Remembering



Stanley Louis Strack, MNP, Second Cook

Stan Strack survived the bombing of the Koolama off the West Australian coast in 1942, only to lose his life on the Centaur.

"You'll be all right this time, Stan, you're on a hospital ship."

from his niece, Eileen Horvath.

Though both Stan's parents came from the East Coast – his mother Clarice Hilda was born in Lambton, NSW and his father George Henry Strack was born in Daylesford, Victoria, they married on the West Australian goldfields and set up house in that state.

Stan was the second oldest of seven children, and was born in 1908. My father, David was the oldest, then came Stan, Albert, Edna, Dulcie, Mena and Olga. The family lived for a number of years in Glyde Street, Buckland Hill, which is now known as Mosman Park.

I don't know when they moved to Subiaco but my Aunt Edna, Stan's sister, told me she started school there. About this time, somewhere in the mid 1920's Stan's father George cleared off and my Nana, Stan's mother Clarice, was left to raise seven children alone.

My Nana, was a very strong woman and put her last £10 down on a house in Waverley St, Subiaco and said to them all: "if you have nothing else you have a roof over your heads." She made all their clothes, even the boys' trousers. Possibly that's why Stan joined the Merchant Navy - to lighten the load on his mother. Somehow Stan learnt the cooking trade, whether he went to Tech., or learnt it at sea on the job I don't know.

He married Florence Cairns in Perth in 1933 when he was 25, and they went to live in Claremont. They had three children, Stan, Shirley and Nola.

I know he liked a game of tennis because my Mum and Dad and Stan and Aunt Florrie (as we used to call her) on more than one occasion played on the courts at the South Perth Zoo near where we lived. I don't know how often, possibly when Stan's ship was docked in Fremantle.

Stan was on the 'Koolama' approx. 150 kms west of Wyndham when it was bombed by the Japanese in February 1942. It was the first of 22 aerial attacks by the Japanese in the Kimberley region of WA between 1942 and 1944. Some survivors were rescued by a sea plane and the Pago Mission lugger, but Stan was amongst the 93 survivors who walked the 80 kms to Pago Mission guided by the Kwini people. Their presence overstretched the Mission resources and they walked a further 30 kms to the airstrip at Kalumburu Mission for evacuation.

Most of the passengers and crew arrived at Fremantle on 8 April, 47 days after the initial attack.

Stan was now effectively out of a job, and possibly needed time to recuperate before finding another ship. It was probably during this time that a white feather was put in their letterbox.

I don't know when he joined the Centaur. This time he was not so lucky.

I remember Uncle Stan well. He was a very nice man.



Eileen's cousin Stan with a photo of his father, Stanley Louis Strack.

Blue Funnel Line Ships

Voyages of the Centaur, Charon and Gorgon.



Dr Alston Kennerly, of the School of Engineering, Plymouth University U.K. is currently transcribing the record cards of the voyages of the various Blue Funnel Line ships. Dr

Kennerly's interest is his father's service on Centaur's sister ship Charon. He has sent us his transcription of the voyages of the Charon, and is currently working on those of the Centaur.

We are particularly interested, of course, in the Centaur, but also in her running mates Charon and Gorgon. Those three smaller ships were all engaged on the Australian coast. Mostly they plied their trade on the western coastline, but as the situation in NG worsened and supplies were needed there, they all three worked the easter seaboard.

Alfred Holt named all his ships from Greek mythology.



MV Charon, 1936. Note the distinctive funnel which was blue with a black top, as was Centaur's before her conversion.

The printed edition of this Newsletter has been generously donated by Macksville (NSW) Public School as a community service. Captain Hindmarsh (lost) and the family of Pte Eric Taylor (saved) were residents of Macksville at the time of the sinking.

TS Centaur Australian Navy Cadets, Maleny Qld.



Flag Raising, Citizenship Ceremony & Hinterland EXPO

*LEUT Eddie Vann ANC.
Training Officer, TS Centaur*



TS Centaur has been chosen to undertake the Official Sunshine Coast Hinterland Flag Raising Ceremony, on Australia Day, for the next 3 years i.e. 2018, 2019 & 2020.

Australia Day - what a fitting way to commence the New Cadet Year with some pomp and ceremony!

This involved APEX providing an early morning Bush Style Breakfast and a 0730 start for the Cadets undertaking the "Colours" Ceremony to commence the day. The Cadets were marched on and then the folded Australian National Flag was slow marched to the beat of a single drum to the mast where it was secured to the halyard. The "Colours" Ceremony was signified by the ringing of "8 Bells", the piping of the "Still" and Staff and Colour Party Commander saluting, whilst the local Maleny Singers sang the National Anthem and the Australian National Flag was raised at the Gaff. The Ceremony was finalised by the raising of flag hoists that spelled out "AUSTRALIA".

On completion, there was a Citizenship Ceremony that saw 20 new Australians presented with their Citizenship Certificate and TS Centaur Officers gave an Australian Flag lapel pin to all participants, and to those in the audience who desired one.



Marching on the Colours

Everyone then moved to the Main Showground Oval where about 70 Sporting, Recreational, Youth and Service Clubs had set up marquees to show their organisation to the approximately 1000 people who had turned out for the Day.

TS Centaur had set up a Recruiting & Information Stall and the Cadets were also responsible for organising the "Sports" component of the EXPO; this included Gum Boot Throwing, Thong Relay Races, Obstacle Course, Billy Cart Races, Tug of Four, Sack Races and more.

The event concluded about 1200 hours so all could then have time for an afternoon's relaxation and enjoyment with family and friends.

This was the fourth year of the EXPO, which is proving to be the major Australia Day Event in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland. Naturally TS Centaur looks forward to participating for many years to come.



TS Centaur ACN - providing opportunities for youth in the name of the Centaur.

Correction

In the story about Concord in our last newsletter the caption under the photo said that the Rover Crew came from Maroubra. In fact it is the **Coogee Rover Crew** that is the custodian of the 2/12th FA banner. They keep it with an honour roll of those 2/12th FA personnel who lost their lives, and bring the banner to the Centaur Commemorations at Concord each year.

Disclaimer:-

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OUR RATIONALE

To honour those who gave their lives on 2/3 AHS Centaur.

To provide a means of communication for Survivors, Descendants, Relatives, Friends & Organizations interested in 2/3 AHS Centaur

To help the healing process which for many still continues.

To ensure that the memory never fades, and the facts are not forgotten by succeeding generations.

To turn a tragedy into a triumph, and to foster a peaceful and forward-looking attitude.

Let us remember the Centaur - a vessel of mercy on the turbulent waters of a world at war.