

# PETE'S

# PAGE

Dear Kids,

I am sure you will all be interested in news of Neville Thorne, the former Walgett boy now at Armidale High School.

Neville has kindly written his experiences away from home for our page under the title "My First Year at St. John's Hostel and Armidale High" and we are indeed glad to publish it.

Here it is:—

"When I first arrived in Armidale early this year, I knew there would be many surprises awaiting me. I was met at the railway station by Mrs. Passey, a member of the Assimilation Association for Aborigines. Mrs. Passey's husband is a lecturer at the University of New England. I was taken to the hostel by Mrs. Passey, introduced to Mr. Peters and was shown my living quarters.

"The following Monday, I spent my first day at Armidale High School and was enrolled in fourth year, my first lesson being woodwork. Armidale High School is situated on a small hill next to the New England Highway. In 1961, I believe, the school had witnessed many major changes in its appearance. At the back of

**Our writer, Neville Thorne, pictured on the extreme left of the back row was a prominent member of Walgett Central School's Tennis team before going to Armidale. Others in the group are, back row from the left, Phillip Hall, Tony Azevedo, B. Hardy, J. Andrews and Mr. David Tribe (coach); front row, Beryl Gribble, Pam Lucas, Gararda Roggeveen and Valerie Donnelly**



the older buildings, there are eleven new rooms plus the new Assembly and Dance Hall. A new oval and shower rooms have been built in front of the main buildings.

"I played cricket at the beginning of the year as a summer sport then football in the winter. At present I am playing basketball. I have represented the school in the first XV Rugby Union team, swimming and athletics.

At the high school, there are about eight or nine other aborigines, two of them are girls. Two, in particular, are doing quite well. They are Ray Beale in fifth year and Terry Widders in third year. Both of them board at the hostel.

However, back at the hostel where I spend most of my time, it is like another home to me. We are well looked after by the Matron and Mr. Peters in many ways. At first I lived in Dorm. One, but later I was moved to Dorm. Four and Five which are the Fourth and Fifth Year dormitories. There are many sporting activities going on at the hostel almost every afternoon. We acquaint ourselves with tennis (there are two tennis courts), touch football, soccer, table tennis and cricket.

"On the academic side, we have two hours set aside every school night for study, revision and homework. Third, fourth and fifth years may come back after showers at a quarter to nine and do extra work if they wish.

"Since I have arrived, I have made many new friends and I have been going regularly to school socials. I am proud to be an example to my race and to those aborigines who seek the honour of gaining a higher education. I will be continuing my studies and finally hope to be a schoolteacher.

"In concluding my account I wish to express my utmost and deepest gratitude to Mr. J. Taaffe, Mr. D. Tribe and the staff of Walgett Central School for their help and encouragement in assisting me to be where I am to-day."

Thanks Neville and keep up the good work.

Your sincere Pal,