

Served Hostel which gave us "Jedda" the Film Star

The Church Army in Australia is a society within the Church of England, which trains men and women for evangelistic work.

Staff Sister E. N. Bacon at the Church Army's training college at Croydon, near Sydney, has kindly obtained for *Dawn* personal stories from five Aborigines who have been trained to the rank of Commissioned officers.

The first story is from Captain Alan Polgen, a North Queenslander who has worked all over Australia for the Church Army.

In a Christmas message to *Dawn* he says: "In time to come I hope our black and white people will get to know each other better and that the friendship of our peoples in Australia will be an example to all the world."

Captain Polgen's personal story is—

I was born on the cane-fields at a little township of Gordonvale fourteen miles south of Cairns. When we were old enough it was our father's idea to be sent off to school so that at least we did have some education. At first I thought he was rather tough on us but now, looking back over the years, I think he did the right thing.

When I reached the age of eleven we went to live on Palm Island which is a Government native reserve off the coast of Queensland. The island itself lies within the Great Barrier Reef and is twenty miles to the nearest point of the mainland and forty-five miles north-east from Townsville which is the main port of call.

It was here that I became interested in Church work which was to me something new. After two years at the mission school, our Parish Priest, the late Canon E. R. B. Gribble and staff (a Church Army Sister) thought I was good enough to go away to a boarding school. It was my great privilege to spend four years at All Souls School, Charters Towers.

After leaving school I joined the Church Army in early January, 1946. I did my training at the College in Stockton, near Newcastle, N.S.W. for two years and in November, 1947 I received my commission as an officer of the Church Army. Whilst in the Church Army I have been engaged in a variety of work which took me into all states of the Commonwealth except Tasmania which I hope to visit one day in the near future. My first adventure in the Society was in a Boys' Home in New South Wales helping another officer and his wife in caring for thirty boys for three months. After my commission my first two years was spent on a Mission Caravan in Queensland, in the Diocese of Brisbane. Then I was transferred to the Mobile Cinema Unit in Adelaide in South Australia. From South Australia we moved into Victoria visiting nearly all the towns

in that state. A few years later I was back in Victoria on a Mission Caravan. From the beginning of 1954 to October, 1958 I was stationed at Yarrabah Mission working on the Mission launch. The following year it was my privilege to be sent to Alice Springs in the Northern Territory to work at the Children's Hostel, first in the hostel in town for the children coming in for school from outlying cattle stations and towns, and the last six months at St. Mary's Hostel for native children out of town situated on the bank of the Todd River. St. Mary's Hostel is proud of itself in that it was able to produce a film star in the person who acted as Jedda in the film of the same name.

At the present time I am in Narrogin in Western Australia in the large area which is known as the Great Southern. Narrogin itself is the headquarters of the Native Welfare Department within the Great Southern area. It has the largest and most settled native population in and around Narrogin. My work in the parish is of a dual purpose, such as helping in the parish, taking services in and around the parish as well as Religious Instruction in school and also our Sunday School. It has been my privilege to visit all our native people on the reserve and those living in town and also to visit some of our white people. From time to time I have been to visit other native reserves especially those within a radius of thirty miles, such as Williams, Quandanning, Pingelly, Wagin and Katanning sixty miles away. My tour last year of the Bunbury Diocese was not only to find out where all our native people were living but also to create friendship and understanding among our white brethren. It has been proved before that once you have made friends with anybody it is also important to find out why they do this or that and in so doing you are creating an interest between you and your friend which in the end will end in a lifelong friendship. In time to come I hope that our black and white people will get to know each other and the friendship of our peoples in Australia will be the example to all the world.

Brief Story of my Calling to the Service of God

Our second story "My Calling to the Service of God" is by another North Queenslander, Sister Muriel Stanley, who has this to say:—

I was born and bred on the Yarrabah Mission of wonderful Christian parents. During my early 'teens there was a very deep desire to do Christian service amongst my own people, however just after my 18th birthday my father died after a somewhat long illness. Still there was this burning desire deep down within me, so two years later I had to do something about it and it was then I applied to the Church Army offering myself for training within their ranks.