

association update

Vale Dorothy Joan Dowson, MBE, OAM

Joan Dowson, a longstanding ADA Fellow and one of the original band of visionaries who founded the ADA in 1975, died in Perth on 11 October 2006 aged 88.

Joan was educated at the Perth Modern School and worked as a secretary at the Eagle Star Insurance Company while she studied ballet with the Royal Academy of Dancing, passing her Advanced Examination in 1939.

A VAD reservist since 1936, Joan served in World War II with the 2nd/7th Australian General Hospital (AGH) in the Middle East from late 1941 to early 1943, the 2nd/5th AGH in New Guinea throughout 1943 and early 1944, and with the Red Cross Field Force in Australia for the rest of the war and its aftermath. At the end of hostilities she was attached to the Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS *Formidable* to assist with the repatriation of allied Prisoners-of-War from SE Asia to Australia and India. In the Spring 2005 *Defender* she recounted these experiences, as one of the four distinguished veterans who recorded their thoughts and wishes on their first VJ-Day fifty years before.

An Honorary Life Member of the RSL (1988), RUSI (1991), Red Cross (1992), and Australian-American Association (2003), Joan received a Service Award in 1996 in recognition of 50 years continuous service as a member of the RSL. She was also a long-serving supporter of the Cancer Council and the Guides and a long-time member of the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps Association in Western Australia and the Naval, Military and Air Force Club. She served on the State executive of the RSL for 23 years (being awarded the RSL Meritorious Service Medal in 1991) and was instrumental in the securing of equal veteran's benefits for returned ex-Servicewomen. Joan joined the RUSI in 1947 and served on the State Council for longer than anyone can remember. In 2005, Joan was awarded Senior Volunteer of the Year by her local Council of Mosman Park.

She remained very active in the ADA to the last, being a principal organiser of the Executive Director's program for his week-long visit to Perth in April 2006 and introducing him to a wide range of people he needed to meet. Joan's contacts in Perth and her reputation were such that a recommendation by her as a speaker was enough for most organisations to promptly issue an invitation. An invitation to attend a function from Joan was also regarded as an offer you did not refuse.

Joan lost her only brother Frank, an RAAF pilot, during the war. After marrying her great love, engineer Major John Dowson, after the war, she was widowed in 1966 but never lost her zest for life or her dedication to securing an adequate defence for the country she loved and served. The ADA thanks her children, John and Judith, for the sterling service rendered by their mother and offers its condolences for her passing.

Neil James

Vale Captain W.F. (Bill) Carpenter, USN (Retd)

Captain William F (Bill) Carpenter USN (Retd), a long-time friend of ADA, died recently aged about 88. A native of Indiana, Bill Carpenter graduated from the United States Naval Academy in, I believe, 1940. Pearl Harbour saw him serving in the battleship USS *Oklahoma* but he had been granted weekend leave over the critical dates of 6/7 December 1941 when his ship was sunk.

Subsequently, Bill served in the anti-aircraft cruiser, USS *San Juan*, during the Guadalcanal campaign and made his first visit to Australia late in 1942 when the *San Juan* was damaged. Bill was, I think, later the last captain of the *San Juan*, the name of which is now preserved in a Los Angeles class SSN.

After leaving the navy, Bill worked in the strategic studies division of SRI International and was well-regarded as an East Asia expert. He was one of the principal organisers of the series of Western Pacific conferences on the security of sea lanes of communication (SLOC) with which the ADA became involved in 1983. After attending the Tokyo conference in that year, I was inveigled into joining the organising committee with Bill and his colleagues, Vice Admiral (Retd) Kitamura of Japan, Vice Admiral (Retd) Ko of Taiwan and Professor Dalchoong Kim of Seoul's Yonsei University.

The conferences continued on a roughly 18-month cycle with ADA hosting the 6th conference in Melbourne in 1988. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, much of their impetus was lost but Bill with others believed that they served a valuable purpose in bringing together professional naval people, academics and diplomats from the Pacific Rim to flag issues of mutual concern. The ADA's direct involvement petered out in the mid 1990s as the RAN Seapower Centre took up the Australian end of the involvement and the Association's limited resources were focused increasingly on the Army.

Bill always recognised the importance of the Australian-American alliance to both countries and he was a strong supporter of the ADA and its work from his home in Virginia. He continued to work for SRI until well into his eighties and was near-missed on his way to work by the terrorists who crashed the Pentagon on 11 September, 2001.

Bill is survived by Mary, his wife of 66 years, and an extended family. To them we express our condolences on the loss of a much loved husband, father and grandfather, not to mention an American patriot.

Michael O'Connor