

# Farewell

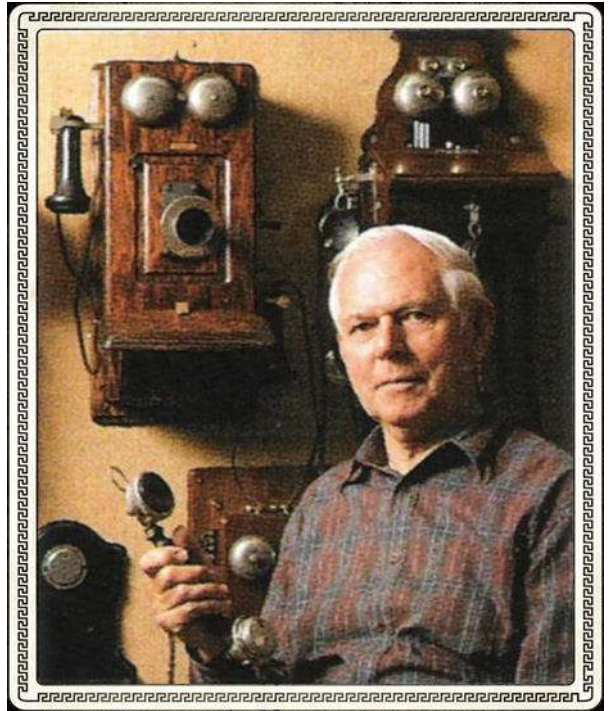
## Ric Havyatt

**A**laric Havyatt (Ric) passed away on 21st October 2011 following a long fight with cancer. He was 10 days past his 94th birthday.

As a young lad, Ric attended Sydney Grammar School and showed a great interest in radio, building crystal sets and simple radios from parts. He obtained his amateur radio licence in 1936 and remained active (now "silent Key" VH2PH) almost to the end.

He worked for *Australian General Electric* while pursuing a Diploma of Electrical Engineering course at Sydney Technical College which he never quite completed. By 1941 the war was well underway and, by then, Ric had obtained a Lieutenants Commission in the Royal Australian Engineers but he chose to change to the RAAF to become a Bomb Disposal Officer. With a posting to Darwin in early 1942, he saw much of the Japanese bombing of Darwin and defused many a unexploded bomb (see picture). He was later to spend time in many of the famous battle sites in Papua New Guinea such as Milne Bay, Lae, Buna and Gona.

On his return to civilian life, Ric took up a place for returned servicemen at Sydney University where he studied Mechanical and Electrical Engineering. In his first year he met a third year architectural student named Val and they married



a year later. Val went on to obtain her Masters and Doctoral degrees in Building Science. Val has supported Ric throughout their marriage both in life and in his collecting pursuits. Val herself has a fine collection of scientific instruments, sliderules and glassware.

Ric went back to work for *AGE* again and then went to England for a time working for *British Thomson Houston*. He returned to Australia in charge of a project to electrify parts of the NSW railway network. He finished his working life with the German based Siemens Organisation in Australia and is fondly remembered by several "old hands" still with the company.

Not only was Ric a foundation member of the *ATCS* but he also was there at the start of the *Historic Radio Society of Australia* (HRSA) and remained active in both Societies right up till the very end.

Ric's collection/hobbies started long before the *ATCS* started in 1977. Even in the 1970's his Radio, Telephone, Gramophone, Phonograph, Morse Code and Music Box collections were among the best in Sydney. At the meetings and Committee meetings held in his home all were in envy of the extent and quality of the collections and the knowledge that he had. His ability to fix, mend or make parts was first class. He would research and understand a problem or issue and then launch into the making of an article, restoration project or the production of parts. If he could not find or trade for a part he would make it.



Ric was a Bomb Disposal Expert at Darwin in 1942.

Here he is down a hole with an unexploded Japanese bomb

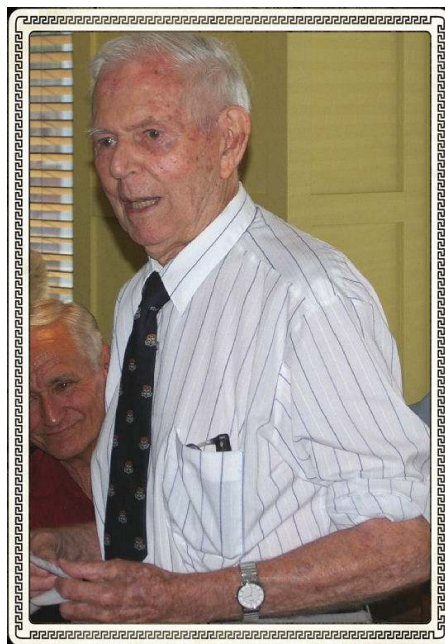
In 2009 Ric was asked which of his hobbies, radios, gramophones, music boxes, phonographs, Morse code or telephones was the most important one and, you guess it, the answer was telephones. Many had assumed that Radio was his first interest.

Ric was particular about correctness, protocol and general business affairs of the Society. Over the years Ric held all the major positions in our Committee, particularly that of Secretary, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor, right up until his retirement from active duties. Even after retirement he still remained an ardent contributor/collector/member.

Unfortunately as we get older one has to reevaluate our circumstances and so Ric had to downsize his accommodation which resulted in reducing his collections at the same time. All his prized items went to good loving homes which was gratifying after having put so much time, love and effort put into his restorations. Ric sold his entire telephone collection in 2009 and saw it installed in its new home as a complete collection.

A number of members have contributed to this obituary and a common theme of these contributions follows the line that their first memories of Ric date back to the 1970s, the really early days of the Society, and to the 1980s at the Pole Depot in Mortdale. In fact it was more the team of Ric and Val that we all remember so

Ric at his Testimonial, February 2010.



well, and how everyone was made welcome at the Society meetings and functions.

Examples abound where Ric provided information to solve a riddle concerning an unusual or old telephone or where he was able to manufacture or copy a part to complete someone's valued telephone. Ric did such a lot for so many members in so many ways, one thing that always stood out was the attention to detail and professionalism that he displayed.

Ric was the first person to be awarded life membership of the ATCS for his contribution to the Society and a number of us were honoured to be there to witness him receive that award. The plaque used to hang proudly in his workshop along with other significant accolades he had received over the years. Later, he was doubly honoured to receive a second life membership for being a foundation member of the Society.

Ric will be long remembered as a founding and outstanding Society member, a friend to all and a mentor to many. He will be sadly missed.

*Information on Ric's early life taken from HRSA "Radio Waves" magazine, October 2003*



Ric and Val (standing) with Bid and Arthur Challinor, February 2010

*Members are reminded that Val and the family are planning a celebration of Ric's life in the New Year after family members return from overseas. All ATCS members are cordially invited to attend. Keep an eye on the web site for details as they become available or contact a Committee member.*