



JOHN PAUL QUINN

Recalled by some of his friends
for his children

1968

JOHN PAUL QUINN

(1919 - 1961)

As Remembered Until 1941

FRANK HORNER (assisted by ALLAN LOOMES and
DEREK SCALES)

In an Enemy Prison

R. H. SCOTT

As Seen by Subordinates

R. W. FURLONGER (assisted by L. BARSDELL, R. N. BIRCH
and G. WOODARD)

On Service Abroad

PETER HEYDON

In Canberra as New Policies Emerged 1954-60

J. PLIMSOLL

A Tribute

THE RT. HON. R. G. MENZIES (13 September, 1961)

John Paul Quinn, O.B.E.

Born 26 February, 1919, Sydney

Son of M. J. Quinn

*Educated: Sydney Boys High School, University of
Sydney, University of Paris*

*Married Josephine M. Paton,
daughter of P. S. Paton, 2 August, 1949.
One son, John, two daughters, Joanna and Alison*

*Appointed Department of External Affairs,
Canberra 1940*

*Third Secretary, Australian Commission,
Singapore 1941-42*

Interned by Japanese 1942-45

*Private Secretary to Minister for External
Affairs 1947-48*

*Chargé d'Affaires, Australian Legation,
The Hague 1948-50*

*External Affairs officer (Counsellor),
London 1950-51*

Acting High Commissioner, Pretoria 1951-52

*Australian Minister to Vietnam, Cambodia and
Laos 1952-54*

Department of External Affairs, Canberra 1954-60

*Australian Ambassador to the
United Arab Republic 1960-61*

CONTRIBUTORS

<i>Frank Horner</i>	Deputy Commonwealth Statistician since 1964
<i>Allan Loomes, O.B.E.</i>	Department of External Affairs since 1946 Australian Ambassador to Thailand since 1963
<i>Derek Scales</i>	Professor of French, School of General Studies, Australian National University since 1953
<i>Sir Robert Heatlie Scott, G.C.M.G., C.B.E.</i>	Commissioner General for the United Kingdom in South East Asia 1955-1960 Secretary, Ministry of Defence 1961-1963
<i>Robert W. Furlonger R. N. Birch G. Woodard</i> }	Officers of the Australian Department of External Affairs
<i>L. Barsdell</i>	Australian News and Information Bureau. Press Attache Australian Legation (and later Embassy) The Hague 1949-1955
<i>Peter Heydon, C.B.E.</i>	Australian Department of External Affairs 1936-1961 Secretary Department of Immigration since 1961
<i>Sir James Plimsoll, C.B.E.</i>	Australian Department of External Affairs since 1945, Secretary since 1965
<i>Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Menzies, K.T., C.H., Q.C.</i>	Prime Minister of Australia 1939-1941, 1949-1966 Minister for External Affairs 1960-1961

AS REMEMBERED UNTIL 1941

We all knew John Quinn at Sydney High School, which he joined in 1930. Naturally his aptitude for languages showed itself very early. But in first year I remember mainly his interest in mechanical and scientific things. We belonged to the same Meccano Club which used to meet on Saturday afternoons at Paling's Building in town. The club was run by a 2UW radio announcer named Clifford Arnold. There were competitions each week for the best original models, and John's were very ingenious. From the advanced models of the older boys we learned some interesting mechanical secrets — the way the differential of a car worked, and front-wheel drive. There were also occasional visits to factories such as Peters' ice cream factory at Redfern and Nestle's chocolate factory at Abbotsford. The Sydney Harbour Bridge, then being built, was another place we visited, and Mascot aerodrome, where some of us had a flight in the old Southern Cross. The Meccano Magazine published a group photograph of the club, with John's knees in the front row showing up white in the magnesium flare.

John and I both lived in Randwick, and I remember visiting him at his home in Monmouth Street and meeting his parents and sister Pat. Our conversation then must also have been scientific; I can remember mainly a discussion between John and his father and myself on the relative conductivity of copper and silver wire.

In second year John became one of the few who took German. The others included Allan Loomes, Harold Glass, Maurice Henry and Louis Cahn. The group met in the small languages room above the Deputy Headmaster's study. John enjoyed very much being in the group, working under the able German teacher, Mr. Abrahams, reading German magazines, and listening to German language records. The German class was reduced to four in Fifth Year — Quinn, Glass, Cahn and Loomes. Abrahams exactly predicted the results of the Leaving — two first class and two second class Honours — John, of course, got a first.

In fourth and fifth years John saw a lot of Allan Loomes and Ro Cutler, now Governor of New South Wales, and myself for we were all prefects. The master in charge of prefects was Frank Jones, later

Headmaster of Canberra High School. Among our friends, beside the German language group, were Doug Freeman (now Australian Manager for the Union Carbide Co.), Maurice Hale (Principal of Wagga Teachers' Training College), Ralph Blacket (a Professor of Medicine at the University of New South Wales) and Edgar Goode.

At University John made new friends. In 1938 he completed his B.A. course with First-Class Honours in French and German. University Medallist in French, he was awarded the French Government Travelling Scholarship, which he was to take up later in 1938; meanwhile he characteristically studied Italian at the University. John's winning of a scholarship to the Sorbonne was probably the turning point in his life, though his studies were not completed because of the outbreak of war. It had not been clear what ambitions John had, though he talked of various professions. His stay in Paris during the anxious pre-war period undoubtedly broadened his outlook, and it was probably then that his aims were crystallized — immediately after his return to Australia he joined the Department of External Affairs.

While working in the Treasury in Canberra in 1940 I resumed contact with John following a letter from him. John had returned from France and was coming to Canberra to join External Affairs. He sought my advice on living in Canberra, of which he said he knew only that it was "a green expanse dotted with cows and masonry". He soon discovered the truth of this impression when, soon after his arrival, he caught the right bus going in the wrong direction, after the pictures, and found himself alone in the farthest part of Ainslie, facing the long dark walk back to Brassey House.

I enjoyed John's company very much during this period when we were both at Brassey House. At that stage of Canberra's development, when you had to make your own fun, it was good to have found a friend like John with such a good sense of humour. We found a lot of humour in boarding-house life, the meals, our fellow-guests, and so on — and in the peculiarities of the public service and Canberra. We had some amusement out of the swordstick John took with him when walking to work in the spring, when the magpies began to dive-bomb the passers-by. It seemed to us a very stylish weapon; I have forgotten where he got it from. We had the usual Canberra hostel repartee and suffered contact with the occupational disease of the journalist guests, who could never be told anything, they had always heard it already. (I enjoyed a minor scoop when Bob Binnie became simultaneously posted to London and engaged to be married; the journalists had heard the former but not the latter, which was much the bigger piece

of news.) Brassey House, which had been transformed into a very comfortable place today, always brings back memories of cold evenings and of drinking cocoa made with powdered milk, sitting in a concrete-floored bedroom round a small radiator (big enough, however, to send the electricity meter spinning), waiting for apple seeds dropped on the hot radiator reflector to explode and listening to Malcolm Booker's latest stories of Billy Hughes during his term as Secretary.

John's sense of humour was always stimulated at the oddities of human nature (of which he had seen plenty in London and Paris as well as in Canberra) — and by verbal wit, which was probably part of his great love of language.

After a while John left Brassey House to join "Areopagus", a house in Melbourne Avenue occupied by bachelors, employing a cook, and later when a vacancy occurred, they invited me to join them. Life was very pleasant at Areopagus. Our fellow bachelors were Carson Gardner, engineer at the Power House, and Colin Moodie of External Affairs. Our main exertion was cutting wood for the fuel stove (Mrs. Jenkins had an aversion to electricity), and we did little else around the house. I am glad I was not there when the owner of the house returned from Melbourne to resume occupation and surveyed his house and his garden. We were occasionally shamed by visits from Roy Tait, still at Brassey House, working off his surplus energy on our fallen leaves and overgrown shrubs. John had more scope here than at Brassey House to go in for his hobby of photography. Our standard of nutrition was greatly improved; Mrs. Jenkins was a good cook.

After the fall of Singapore, years passed before I heard that John had been a civilian internee in Sumatra, and it was not until after the war I heard that a Red Cross letter I had sent him got through. Living in London and Sydney after the war I did not see much of John after his return to the Department, but it was very satisfying to hear occasionally from others of the high reputation he was making in the Department, and to know that the formidable qualities we always knew he possessed, both of mind and character, were finding scope in his work, despite the trials he had to live through.

John's superb linguistic gifts were often used by the Department of External Affairs. In January, 1947, the first South Pacific Conference was held in Canberra and organised in a great hurry. John was asked to find some additional translators and interpreters for the occasion, and as a result Nancy Robson and Derek Scales went to Canberra from the University of Sydney. John had the task of directing and co-ordinating the work of the translators, and he also did his share of

interpreting. One feat of his has remained impressed in Derek Scales' memory. The leader of the French delegation was to read a statement at the end of the Conference, and he provided a copy of the text beforehand. However, to the interpreters' consternation, the statement he made, while not differing in substance from the text he had given, was very different from it in form; moreover he reeled it off, and the interpreter had the unenviable task of attempting to reproduce it *in toto* after the speaker had finished. This John did in masterly fashion, and probably only his fellow-interpreters realized what an achievement it had been.

Coming to live near John in Canberra in 1958, I looked forward to seeing more of him over the years to come, and to our wives and families getting to know each other. It was characteristic of John that although his circle of acquaintances and his interests constantly widened, he revived old friendships easily and naturally. Derek Scales, who followed in his footsteps as a linguist at Sydney High School and at the University, had become Professor of French at the Australian National University.

The last time they met was a couple of weeks before he left to take up his appointment in Cairo as Ambassador to the United Arab Republic. He went over to the University to talk to him about possible future language courses for External Affairs officers.

The purpose of their meeting itself illustrated that although John was never charged specifically with administrative tasks, his mastery of languages meant that in the Department of External Affairs he was constantly used for advice and negotiation in the matter of language training.

Looking back, I find it very satisfying to have known John, to have seen the uncompromisingly high standards he set himself bring their rewards, and to have shared with him the jokes that you remember when you have forgotten the rest. Among his many outstanding gifts, that for friendship was perhaps the most remarkable.

FRANK HORNER

IN AN ENEMY PRISON

John Quinn and I first met in Singapore in 1941, some months before Pearl Harbour and the outbreak of war with Japan. He was on his way to Chungking with an Australian diplomatic mission; I was running British propaganda in Eastern Asia with headquarters in Singapore and a chain of offices in Japan and China, Indonesia and Burma, Indo China and Thailand. But it was as a fellow prisoner of the Japanese in Palembang, Sumatra, in the spring of 1942 that I came to know him well.

It was an exciting chapter of history. Looking back on it now, over twenty years later, it seems to me that there are only two lessons to be drawn from it. One is that however carefully plans are made, they are only as good as the assumptions underlying them. The other is that in the last resort it is men that matter. Neither lesson is new though both are always in danger of being forgotten until a crisis brings them out again.

First a word about the nature of the Australian interest in East Asia, because this naturally determined the pattern of Australian official representation; it was changes in the nature of the interest that led to changes in the pattern; and it was the change of pattern that took John Quinn to Asia, brought him to Singapore at the critical time, and later landed him in an enemy gaol.

I am not describing the prewar Australian attitude to Eastern Asia as it might be put by an Australian. I am writing as it appeared to a British official who had spent many years in China and the East, though at that time I had never been to Australia.

Before 1939 Australia looked on Eastern Asia primarily as a market. To promote Australian exports there were a few Australian Trade Commissioners, outstanding amongst whom was Victor Bowden at Shanghai, a man with long and deep experience of China and the area. At one time I was Commercial Attache in the British Embassy at Shanghai, trying to do a parallel job for United Kingdom trade. Bowden and I became close friends.

But for other official purposes Australia relied on the United Kingdom network of diplomatic and consular representatives throughout

Eastern Asia. I had had some experience of this myself, as British Vice Consul in Canton, when I had had to deal with the Chinese authorities there on behalf of Australia on such matters as the admission of Chinese students to Australian colleges, or the disposal of estates of Chinese market gardeners who had died intestate in the suburbs of Sydney.

This pattern would of course have been transformed in time in any case. The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 forced the pace.

From the 1914-18 war our ally Japan emerged as a major naval power. However remote the idea of a conflict with her might be, she had the potential in the shape of forces. Bases and defences take many years to construct; who could tell what the future might bring? The Singapore Naval Base was planned in the nineteen-twenties and completed in the thirties. Purpose: to deny the Japanese fleet access to the Indian Ocean.

Strategic assumptions: that Indo-China would be under French control and that France would be an ally; that in the event of Japan waging war against the British Empire reinforcements from the United Kingdom and India could and would arrive in time; that the Netherlands Indies would remain under Dutch control and that the Netherlands would preserve her neutrality. The then novel factor of air power was underestimated. So the task for the planners, on these assumptions, was to guard against Japanese naval raids mounted from distant bases.

When the crisis actually arose many years later the basic assumptions were all falsified.

Within a year of the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 France was conquered. There was nothing to stop effective Japanese control over Indo-China. The Netherlands were overrun by Germany and the Dutch authorities in Indonesia isolated from their homeland. Britain was fighting for her life in Europe and North Africa. The potential threat to Singapore was far different from what had been foreseen: the role of Singapore was no longer that of a base supporting Anglo-French operations far to the north. Singapore was an outpost.

Australia faced dangers unparalleled in her history, and if they materialised might find herself isolated. France and Holland were out of the war, the United States were neutral, Britain heavily engaged elsewhere. New Zealand would of course stand by Australia but New Zealand forces were small. Japan moreover had been fighting an undeclared war with China for over ten years. She had seasoned troops and

one of the biggest Navies in the world. Her Air Force was known to be large, though at that time still underrated.

An Australian Division was sent to Malaya to reinforce the British garrison there. If Singapore could be held it was unlikely that a direct attack on Australia could or would be made.

This outline is background relevant to the story of John Quinn because the Australian Government decided, after the outbreak of war in Europe, not only to send forces to South East Asia but to station a political representative in Singapore and to establish direct diplomatic relations with China.

Under Japanese pressure the Chinese Government had been driven into the interior, to Chungking. A great deal depended on Chinese intentions and on Chinese capacity. If the Chinese could be stiffened and helped, Japan might perhaps be so bogged down in China that she could not embark on other adventures overseas.

To deter Japan from making common cause with Germany was in fact the prime object of our policy in East Asia after 1939. Encouragement and help to China, exaggeration of the strength of Singapore, avoidance of provocation to Japan—all these were intended to further this policy, though in execution and in presentation these measures were not always easy to harmonise with each other.

In the autumn of 1941 Sir Frederic Eggleston was appointed first Australian Minister to China. Bowden had already been transferred from Shanghai to Singapore to meet the pressing need for Australian representation there as a link with the British authorities. With him went A. N. Wootton as assistant. Quinn was sent from Australia to accompany Eggleston to Chungking.

The Eggleston mission stopped at Singapore on their way to Chungking and Bowden asked me to join in the discussions; I had been paying visits to Chungking in the course of my work. It was in Bowden's house in Singapore that I first met John Quinn, a tall, dark, silent young man. He seemed to me an admirable choice for his duties as secretary to the mission—cool, detached, objective, modest, intelligent. This is almost a standard specification for a good diplomat in any country. Later I was to find that he had the additional qualities of character and courage that are the hallmark of a leader.

Quinn accompanied Eggleston as far as Rangoon and returned to Singapore in September, 1941 to join the Australian Commissioner's staff. When war broke out with Japan in December they were hopelessly overworked but coped as well as they could with the flood of

problems affecting Australian interests and Australian policy piling up day by day and calling for the closest co-operation with the various British authorities.

In February 1942 the Japanese made a landing on Singapore Island. The end was imminent. The Australian party got away in a small ship which was intercepted and captured by the Japanese. I got away in another with the last members of my own staff: our ship was intercepted and sunk, only two (a young Chinese clerk and I) surviving out of our party of 25. After two days I got ashore in the mangrove swamps of Sumatra, hid in the jungle for a time, tried to cross Sumatra, failed, and was made prisoner. The Chinese clerk found Chinese who befriended him, and by identifying himself with them evaded capture.

To this day no one knows how many small ships and boats got away from Singapore in the last stages of the campaign, how many were sunk, or how many casualties there were. Of those on my own ship—not a large one—over two hundred were drowned. Survivors were assembled by the Japanese and brought into the Town Prison in Palembang. To my surprise I found Wootton and Quinn there.

"Where is Victor?" I asked.

"Shot," said Quinn quietly.

Before he left Singapore Bowden had been instructed from Canberra to claim diplomatic immunity if captured. I have often wondered whether in fact such a claim could validly be made on his behalf. He was captured, he carried out his instructions, he refused to obey Japanese orders, and he was shot on the spot. A brave man! Perhaps also a lucky one as it turned out, for in the course of the war a high proportion of the prisoners in that camp died and all suffered great hardship. Bowden was nearly 60, and the older suffered most. I do not think he would have survived imprisonment for three and a half years.

Wootton, Quinn and I knew none of the other prisoners, about half of whom were local Dutch residents and the rest British, Australian, and Eurasian refugees from Singapore. Food was scarce—it was to get much scarcer—and there was at first no organisation. The Japanese gave us basic rations and left the rest to the internees. The prison was grossly overcrowded, cooking facilities quite inadequate, the ration rice old and heavily limed. Wootton busied himself with camp and kitchen chores, Quinn and I became night orderlies in the "hospital", a hut set aside for the badly wounded and the sick. Among the prisoners there were a few doctors who improvised surgical instruments and even performed amputations. But we had no drugs, no anaesthetics, no

medicines. The surgical cases were heartbreaking, but soon over, for they either died or survived. It was the dysentery cases that were the worst from the point of view of the amateur orderlies, because for them we could do practically nothing. Their manner of dying was slow and painful.

At that time there was a problem of relations between the two groups in the camp, the Dutch and the others. The Dutch believed that but for the Singapore refugees their rations would have been better and the prison not so overcrowded. They thought we had put up a poor show in Singapore, we thought that Java and Siumatra had fallen too easily.

John and I decided to do what we could to bridge the differences and started English lessons for the Dutch. Soon we had a little group which met daily. Some of our pupils reciprocated and started Dutch lessons for us. I doubt whether our Dutch pupils now remember more of our English lessons than I of their Dutch, but the purpose was served. Contact was made between the two groups and the camp atmosphere improved. And it helped to pass the time.

John took to teaching with the greatest of ease. He was a natural teacher, lucid, patient, quick to grasp the pupil's difficulties, quick to adapt his explanation to their understanding. He knew an astonishing amount of English grammar and literature and expounded them with a clarity that rapidly attracted a large number of earnest Dutch students ranging from middle-aged business men to young clerks.

But apart from the work he did in camp he made his mark by his example. The prisoners were a mixed lot, young and old, educated and ignorant, selfish and unselfish. Conditions fostered the doctrine of each for himself, survive if you can, if need be at the expense of others. From the beginning John Quinn set an example of personal conduct and principle of the highest standard. Young as he was, he soon came to be held in great respect.

Our joint efforts as teachers lasted for only a few months. Soon after the fall of Singapore the Japanese had prepared and circulated a black list of wanted men; my name was on it. It took them a few months to find me in Sumatra, but in June 1942 I was found, arrested, and taken back to Singapore for interrogation. I did not see Quinn again for many years.

When Singapore was freed three years later I was seriously ill and instead of being repatriated to England was sent to a hospital in India together with other survivors from camps all over the area also judged

unfit for repatriation. Amongst them there was an Englishman who had been with me in the Palembang prison three years earlier. I asked about casualties: they had been very heavy, from disease and hunger. I asked about Quinn: he had survived but had been very ill. He spoke glowingly about John as one of the outstanding men in the camp.

In later years I met Quinn from time to time, in Sydney, in Canberra, in London, in Saigon. For some privation, hardship and danger do not destroy the spirit but strengthen the character. So it was with Quinn. In his later career his wartime experiences served to help him resolve the problems that growing responsibilities brough to him. Shakespeare wrote of "adversity's sweet milk, philosophy". John was a modern example of a man to whom that old adage applied. "Calamity is man's true touchstone": that also could be said of him, and he passed the test gallantly, with flying colours.

London.

R. H. SCOTT

AS SEEN BY HIS SUBORDINATES

When Peter Heydon asked me to contribute to this memoir on John Quinn, I was grateful for the opportunity to record my impressions since both Peter Heydon and John Quinn had played an important part as my chief of mission in my early years in the Australian Foreign Service, and both became good personal friends despite our difference in rank. John Quinn and I in fact arrived in The Hague on the same day in 1948, and remained there during the unfathomable switch, to which Peter Heydon refers in his note, between the two of them in 1950. One gets to know colleagues well in the circumstances of a two-man diplomatic post, and my own collaboration with John Quinn, both then and later in Canberra, gave me the highest respect for his personal capacity, his integrity and his compatibility as a colleague.

But a memoir of this sort, which seeks to record a general impression of John Quinn as seen through the eyes of his juniors, needs to incorporate the views of a representative group of people. Indeed, John Quinn's own personal qualities were so varied, and his intellectual interests so wide-ranging, that a single view by a junior would not do justice to him. He was very reticent about himself, and given to doing good by stealth; and those who experienced his consideration for his juniors and profited from his guidance to them need themselves to say what it was that drew them to him both as a man and a leader. This note accordingly contains the recollections of Len Barsdell, who, as an officer of the News and Information Bureau, served with me under Quinn in The Hague; and of Bob Birch and Gary Woodard, who were closely associated with him in the Department of External Affairs in Canberra in the fifties. Equally well, one might have chosen other groups from among those that worked with him; I do not think the views expressed would have been significantly different.

Len Barsdell recalls:

"It was my good fortune to know John Quinn for many years and to be associated with him for a short period in his diplomatic work overseas.

". . . His erudition, keen intellect and quiet dignity always commanded respect. He was essentially a man of infinite charm and cour-

tesy. Yet he never lost the common touch. Junior officers making their hesitant way in the diplomatic world found in John Quinn a man who radiated trust and hope and an easy mateship that inspired confidence. He was an able and kindly man, sincere, generous to a fault and with those human qualities of informality, deep conviction and engaging frankness that made him so popular with friends and colleagues alike. Nobody, in all honesty, could ever accuse him of being conceited or intolerant. Such traits were foreign to his nature. He was a good bloke in the true sense of the word.

"I first met John Quinn in the latter half of 1946 soon after my appointment as parliamentary press representative in Canberra for Radio Australia. I asked him for translations of three letters I had received in Dutch, French and German . . . He glanced casually at the letters and dictated their contents in English with what appeared to me to be the utmost ease. 'How do you do it?' I asked. He laughed and made a remark which gave me an insight into his remarkable character. 'My mother thought I would never talk, I didn't mumble a word until I was more than three.'

"John Quinn had a way of laughing off queries like this concerning himself. Undemonstrative and modest, his rather serious countenance gave no indication of his keen sense of humour . . . He went through life seeing the humorous side of things, enjoying without malice the posturings of humanity and able all the while to retain his sympathy for his fellows.

". . . His personality was reflected in his attitude to others. He rarely spoke about himself, but always had a good word for others. In all the years I knew him I cannot recall his speaking in anger about anyone. He never shouted; he had no need to. His quiet, dignified voice conveyed his requests eloquently and adequately. But his charity and sympathy, always apparent, endeared him to his staff and earned in return the utmost in co-operation and goodwill.

"John Quinn will always be remembered as a man of cultivated mind, of high principles, happy in his family, never eager to display his obvious talents but always attentive to the interests of others. He was a grand chap and a warm-hearted friend who brightened the lives of those who knew him."

Bob Birch writes:

"Although I had known John Quinn by sight a tall, slightly stooped figure, a serious face with high forehead and wide mouth—stalking the corridors of West Block, I did not meet the full force of his personality

until 1956-57 when he took over from Allan Eastman the peripatetic responsibilities of Defence Liaison Officer. I was in Melbourne at the time, working with the Joint Intelligence Staff, and John Quinn would visit us regularly to attend meetings of the Committee. Despite the rushed and tiring trip by DC-3 via Corowa, he was courtesy itself, and his perspicacity and charm oiled the machinery of inter-departmental consultation.

Later I returned to Canberra and worked under him in the same Branch. They were busy days, in cramped offices, working on what we liked to think were important projects, and with insufficient staff. In such an environment, John Quinn's intellectual qualities shone at their brightest and we learnt a lot from him. He had an enquiring mind, broad in its perspective, but with a memory for detail; a capacity for intense concentration and a single-mindedness of purpose; and ability to see a problem in a clear light, sometimes hard to the point of cynicism.

He was a perfectionist in drafting and presentation, and a master of style. He rarely signed a document, whether of his own or our drafting, without detecting some cause for its correction. He might chew over the same problem for days, changing his mind several times in the process, but his final results were sure, his touch deft. He was, on the other hand, prone to defer judgment on matters which he considered less important, and we had to develop our techniques (although I suspect he was well aware of them) in extracting the more routine papers referred for his direction. He also had his moments of complete mental relaxation which tended to hold up his output and caused him to mislay his pen, keys, files, etc.

These human traits endeared him to us. We respected his intelligence, his perception, and his balanced judgment; we admired him for his convictions and high principles and absence of pig-headedness; and we were warmed by his innate modesty, his consideration for others, and by the fact that his individuality was presented to us full-face. He could be stern, reprimanding, but in a paternal, almost apologetic manner. His anger quickly dissipated. He had a good sense of humour and was a vivid raconteur, although rarely about his wartime experiences.

Towards the end of 1956 he was clearly ill. He would come to the office late in the morning, his face ashen, and his output would drop noticeably. He never complained, never attributed his illness to the war or hardship posts or overwork. He appeared to take as a fact of life.

His operation brought a marked recovery but he drove himself just as hard, and with the same dedication, when he returned to work.

Outside his office, John Quinn was an equally charming and delightful person, at ease in any company. He was devoted to his family and Sunday morning drinks at his new house, of which he was so proud, with Jo and the children was a warm and happy occasion. His ageing Austin A40, which had given faithful service in London and South Africa as well as Canberra, testified to his unpretentiousness."

Gary Woodard, on whom as a young officer John Quinn made a deep personal impression writes:

"My connection with John Quinn was much less close than that of many other officers who served directly under him or knew him over a longer period. I did not meet him until 1957. Yet though our contacts were infrequent I never felt surer of a colleague's sympathetic interest or doubted that I could get from him dependable and disinterested advice without risk of breach of confidence.

When I was detached to Victoria Barracks in 1957-58, he provided the close link with headquarters of which we all feel the need when away from Canberra. He took several initiatives which made it possible for me to be better informed of the Department's thinking, he encouraged me to come to Canberra as often as possible, and he made a point of seeing me on his visits to Melbourne.

The respect and affection in which he was clearly held throughout the Defence Department was a personal inspiration and a significant factor in the restoration of intimate links between the two Departments which culminated at the end of 1958 in the acceptance of a permanent External Affairs Chairman of the J.I.C.

I only heard John speak once of his war experiences, and then under prompting from some of his Defence colleagues, but one always felt how great a formative influence this must have had on his character and values, free of all pettiness and cant. The old-fashioned look which I got from him one day when had been advancing a thesis that the distribution of minor decorations would contribute to Departmental morale destroyed for all time in my mind any notion that there was anything to be said for orders and decorations.

I read recently of a contemporary political figure: 'In moral fibre he is the equal of anyone in public life. He is a rock, a bulwark, a support, a man whose personal character lends authority to his political line, a priceless asset in a Foreign Secretary.'

When one realises how true this was of John Quinn, one has some measure of the tragedy that there is in not now being able to speak of him in that tense."

There is nothing in these warm tributes with which I would not agree on the basis of my own experience. Diplomacy is a profession which can easily lend itself to the absorption of false values, and all who served with John Quinn are enduringly grateful for the sure hand with which, despite his own youth (he was only two years older than I was) he guided them in their approach to the job. He particularly led them away from anything pretentious and towards the simplicity, and integrity which characterised his own approach to life. I have never forgotten his saying one day, in an obviously deeply felt comment on a particular piece of prickly and pretentious social behaviour that we were talking about, that "those who matter, don't care; those who care, don't matter". He was at his best in deftly but considerably demolishing the pretensions of his juniors. Although an outstanding linguist himself, I well remember his gently taking me to task one day for using the expression "couleur locale"—an unnecessary affectation—in preference to the English equivalent "local colour". I never forgot the lesson.

The period 1948-50 during which John Quinn was in charge of the Embassy at The Hague was a very difficult time in our relations with the Dutch. Differences with them over the Indonesian movement for independence were magnified by the unnecessarily offensive form in which our official views, despite their basic validity, were expressed. Australia was fortunate in having, at first Keith Officer, and then John Quinn to represent us in the Netherlands at this time. While remaining completely loyal to his Government's policy, John Quinn was able to present it to the Dutch in a way that, while not making it any more acceptable, reduced the offensive impact; and his own high personal standing with the Dutch was never impaired. It was not, however, an easy task. The burden of defending an unpopular policy in a hostile and self-righteous environment was the more difficult since his health had still not been fully restored following his wartime imprisonment: and, particularly in his early time in The Hague, there were days when he was grey and inactive. Nevertheless, he never complained and always avoided discussion of what he had endured during the war. His inactive periods were more than compensated for by the perceptiveness and depth of his reporting during periods of full activity. One such item which comes to mind was a penetrating summary of the Dutch attitude towards migration and the opportunities which this presented

for Australia; and it was during this period that the beginning of the extremely successful programme of Dutch migration to Australia occurred.

John's marriage occurred midway through his term in The Hague. Although he relaxed well in company, he was not especially gregarious by nature, and his marriage did a very great deal to provide stability and an eminently happy home environment in the years that followed.

John Quinn was always at his best on the big questions. Uniquely in my personal experience of first-class linguists, he also had a first-class political mind of great subtlety and comprehension. He retained his early interest in technical and scientific questions and would sometimes quote obscure scientific formulae learned at school which I had long forgotten. Among his accomplishments was a considerable skill as a photographer, especially of children.

There were other people in the Department with minds as good as his, although perhaps none quite as varied and wide in scope; there were others as human as he, in the best sense of that word. But his combination of intellectual and human qualities was in my view unequalled at any level in the Department.

Life was unkind to John Quinn, but he would, I think, have joined in a comment made—not in complaint, but as a recognition of fact—by John F. Kennedy that "there is always inequity in life. Some men are killed in a war, and some men are wounded, and some men never leave the country . . . It's very hard in military or in personal life to assure complete equality. Life is unfair. Some people are sick and others are well." But, as Kennedy's biographer says in commenting on this statement, "he never complained. He loved life too much". It is not claiming too much to say—and I hope I will not be misunderstood in doing so—that, in his own way and in his own more limited sphere, John Quinn had a Kennedy-like quality about him. In reading Kennedy's biographers, it is striking how often they refer to qualities in Kennedy that most struck those who knew Quinn: his whimsical sense of humour, no doubt Irish in origin; his intellectual curiosity; his unaffected charm; his dislike of cliché and his scepticism about dogma; his uncomplaining struggle with ill health; his ability to look at himself with detachment and irony; his close attachment to his family; his liberalism without illusions; and, above all, his unfailing capacity to attract the devotion and loyalty of all who worked under him.

R. W. FURLONGER

ON SERVICE ABROAD

I first heard of John Quinn on his appointment the Australian Department of External Affairs, in a group with R. L. Harry, L. R. McIntyre and L. M. Murchison, in 1940. I was then in the Australian Legation at Washington and when Alan Watt arrived there in October, 1940, he told me much of our new colleagues—in greater detail than would now happen for we were then a small service, about twenty officers in all, and had the enthusiasm of pioneers.

On appointment Quinn was the youngest of us all but had concentrated great academic achievement in his twenty-one years and clearly had impressed Watt by his character and personality. He matriculated at Sydney University in my final year at the Law School, then in Phillip Street, so our paths had not crossed as students. From then on I was to hear items of news about him in Canberra—he lived in a house at Melbourne Avenue with a group of bachelors to which I had belonged in 1939 before going to Washington. In 1941 his appointment to accompany Sir Frederic Eggleston to Chungking and his assignment to Singapore were welcome news in the Service because, in those days, partly for selfish reasons, we noted every expansion with excitement.

Then in 1942 we heard he had been captured by the Japanese—the first member of our young service to suffer such danger, in the service. He was out of touch with Australia, with a status (as a member of an Australian Mission in British territory) which the Japanese might not regard as guaranteeing him the personal safety that would be the right of diplomats in the foreign territory of their posting. Then we learned of Bowden's death; doubts of Quinn's survival, which were not dispelled for some time, arose. Thus throughout the war he returned often to the thoughts of all of us—every Australian family knew relatives and friends who were prisoners of war of whom there was some, though infrequent and cheerless, news. For a long period there was no news of Quinn at all. Occasional action regarding mail or supplies for internees or prisoners of war of the Japanese always brought thoughts of Quinn, who became our one colleague in this predicament, after Officer, Shaw, Eckersley and Kuskie were repatriated from Japan late in 1942.

Finally we met in late 1945—when Quinn returned from captivity in poor health and those who had known him before 1942 implored the rest of us to withhold all judgment until his recovery. His mind and spirit were soon restored in spite of the physical effects which were noticeable for some years.

In 1946 and 1947 Quinn was for some months in charge of the Sydney office of the Department of External Affairs, an appointment designed to put him close both to his family and to good medical attention. He then became Private Secretary to the Minister for External Affairs, Dr. Evatt, for about eighteen months which included a visit to Japan with the Minister in July-August, 1947. In 1948 Quinn was transferred to The Hague as First Secretary and stayed there until May, 1950 (having acted as *Chargé d'Affaires* from the departure of Mr. Keith Officer, the Minister, in September, 1948). He was then transferred to London where I had been on duty since July, 1947, and I became *Chargé d'Affaires* at The Hague until October, 1950.

This curious exchange of officers, both of whose wives expected babies in a few months' time, gave Quinn and me a special bond, as examples of the perversity of official appointments. Neither of us ever divined its real purpose nor its actual value to the Australian Government's relations with either Great Britain or Holland. I had worked closely with Quinn in the Australian Delegation to the third General Assembly of the United Nations, Paris, September-December 1948 (when Dr. Evatt was President). Our relation thus established was greatly developed during 1950 first by the circumstances of our exchange and second because I was allowed to come home frequently to London where we saw a lot of the Quinns. Our daughters, born that summer, were brought into the world by the same doctor and at the same hospital. Naturally Quinn and I were also concerned with the continuity of matters we had begun in our respective posts and, so to speak, we were completing for each other. At all our early meetings in that period we enjoyed comparing the comments of various British and Dutch officials and of diplomatic colleagues on our exchange of duties.

This was the first time I observed Quinn's sure capacity for the estimation of human character. I differed from him, after six months, about very few of the dozens of people he had described in The Hague and usually only on small points. Strikingly he showed it in New Delhi in 1955 when he came there with Mr. (now Lord) Casey for a few days. We were rather different in training, in methods of work, in

interest and I suppose, in "techniques". Perhaps these differences made us good colleagues; where our judgments of people or situations tallied, I was always the more confident of them. One reason for Quinn's successful judgment was his extraordinary observation of detail, in the appearance, conversation and thought of others. He was conservative in manners, in dress, and in taste—and in dealing with foreigners tended to be formal. He noted all departures from a pattern, and he had a way of expressing opinions or characterising idiosyncrasies in very few words. Once when both were sitting on a selection committee for the Diplomatic Service — one applicant in an "unled" discussion was talking too much and expressing vague views carelessly: Quinn wrote on a slip of paper which he passed to me "As the other officer in a two-officer post? Surely not."

In thinking of political issues, Quinn was long-sighted, precise, original, nationalist and somewhat disposed to pessimism. His precision in political thought was assisted by his quite outstanding linguistic capacity—his French, German and Dutch were by any standard first-class. It flowed also from the allround quality of his mind which was finely penetrative, sceptical in the best sense. Slogans or platitudes provoked him to critical analysis—and generally a conclusion which neatly disposed of them. He looked beyond the current problem to its future significance. Combined with his honesty, his clear expression and thoroughness, these qualities made his political papers formidable. His general approach was cautious of allies (whether traditional, special or by treaty). In my own view Quinn was perhaps too critical of United States foreign policy—though Americans like other colleagues found him good to deal with. Equally his caution of situations induced a proneness to pessimism, which was natural after the harsh experiences of his life. Essentially he had a robust Australian approach to all problems of Australia's relations with other countries—this informed all his political argument. It must be said for balance that his precision of thought, his concern for fundamentals and his careful approach combined to make him less effective in dealing with immediate day to day matters than others—he often overlooked small matters because of his concentration of big problems. He was at his best, therefore, if he had a subordinate to whom he could entrust the less significant details.

As Bob Furlonger has done this so well, I will not comment on Quinn as a chief in detail. I would mention, however, that he had an easy way of maintaining discipline in the diplomatic service while postively, if quietly, promoting the camaraderie which develops from

recognizing that Ambassadors and their staffs should be generally the same in kind at any one time, differing only in degree, age, experience and duties, and which in no way undermines authority, respect or discipline. Essentially serious, his sense of humour was correspondingly deep and wide but, by way of relief in moments of stress, his whimsy could be uproarious.

Quinn and I often fell to recalling our period together at the third General Assembly at Paris in 1948. We shared with Hugh Gilchrist, who was our junior, the "administration" of the Assembly Delegation, which included the Minister for External Affairs (Dr. Evatt), the High Commissioner in London (Mr. Beasley), three other Heads of Mission, four other officers who were shortly to have their own Missions, two Bishops, several practising politicians, and several other strong and somewhat undisciplined characters. Moreover, we were a Mecca for Australian pilgrims—lawyers coming to see Dr. Evatt about the forthcoming Banking Case in the Privy Council, senior officials who were over for the Prime Ministers' Conference in 1948, in which Dr. Evatt represented Mr. Chifley, and other prominent Australians who were attracted to Paris to see an Australian presiding over the Assembly (e.g. the late E. C. Dyason, the late Sir Keith Murdoch). Roughly speaking, at least one out of Quinn, Gilchrist and myself (sharing charge of the team which ministered to the needs of this assortment) had to be in the office that had been improvised in the Continental Hotel at any time between 9 a.m. and 11.30 p.m. I had some Assembly duties as an Alternate Representative and, as I was stationed in London, did considerable liaison with the United Kingdom Delegation. Quinn, because of his superb French, did most of the dealing with French authorities. Gilchrist was the general administrator within the Delegation. But this specialisation was theoretic—we did anything that needed doing in a hurry, which was the rule both in post-war Paris and in any delegation led by the energetic and unorthodox Dr. Evatt, even without the addition of his special roles on several stages in the last months in 1948. This bizarre situation, our sharing of problems and tensions, and frequent meals together (often with Jim Plimsoll or Alan Watt), enabled me to know Quinn well personally—but my appreciation of his professional gifts developed in London in 1950 and Canberra from 1958 to 1960 when he performed duties more appropriate to them than the helter-skelter of the General Assembly in Paris.

My impression in 1948 was that Quinn, though he enjoyed being in Paris (which the outbreak of war had compelled him to leave in 1939)

had become somewhat disenchanted with Paris. At school and university he had built up a picture of France and Paris; as a student in Paris in 1939, he had the excitement of first life outside Australia. But the Paris of 1948 seen by an Australian delegate to the United Nations Assembly was different. Quinn read the newspapers with excitement and affection—often regaling us with examples of Gallic humour. But basically France was never the same to him after the war of 1939-45.

John Quinn saw and, in a real way, helped make Australian history. He served Australia both in tragic moments and in periods of expanding influence and widening interests. Many men have not been recognised at forty-one in careers they are later to adorn. Quinn by that age had become for many people in different parts of the world, a symbol of the best in Australia in capacity, humanity and honour. Especially he was this to his immediate associates.

PETER HEYDON

IN CANBERRA AS NEW POLICIES EMERGED 1954-60

John Quinn's final period of service in Canberra was from 1954 until 1960, and for most of that time—until I left for the United Nations in 1959—he was working directly to me, when he was either the Head of the South and South-East Asian Branch or the Head of the Defence Liaison Branch. In the two positions, the subject of the work was much the same, though the emphasis might be different and the persons with whom he had to deal outside the Department of External Affairs might differ. He had to devote himself to most of the great issues which principally concerned Australia in the 'fifties—the sending of Australian forces to Malaysia, and their role and purpose there; the evolution of Viet-Nam, Laos, and Cambodia after the departure of the French; the working of the security arrangements in the Asian and Pacific region to which Australia was a party—SEATO ANZUS, and ANZAM; the changes inside Indonesia, and the dispute over the future of West New Guinea; and the general problems and opportunities posed for Australia by the changes in Asia and by the Asian countries' differing foreign policies of alignment or non-alignment.

I shall first describe a typical working day because, though present readers may be familiar with the way a senior public servant normally spends his time in the office, this may not be true of future readers. John Quinn would arrive in the office each morning at about a quarter to nine. Some of the work ahead of him during the day he would have known of some time previously and it might perhaps have to be spread over many days, such as the preparation of a brief for Australian representatives to a SEATO conference, or the drafting of a Cabinet submission or a Ministerial statement, or the working out of an assessment of the situation in Viet-Nam. But some of the day's work would have its origins in the events of the day. The cables from overseas, or the morning's newspapers or wireless news, might have brought reports of a coup in Thailand; or the need to decide how to vote on a resolution in the United Nations; or a request by another Government for Australian views on some question. Then there were dealings with Australian firms, organizations, and citizens, requests to or by them for information or assistance or for various forms of co-operation. Some

of these things John would do single-handedly, but for the most part he would be working with others. He would have to see that, where appropriate, his seniors were informed and that other interested persons inside and outside External Affairs were also informed. He would have to see that his juniors were taking action and, if necessary, organize them. He would have to see that other parts of the Department were associated with whatever his branch was doing — for example, on West New Guinea the United Nations Branch often had as big an interest as his own. He would also have to see that Australian diplomatic posts overseas were kept informed, and were consulted and given instructions. In addition to all that, which meant writing, interviewing, reporting, supervising, and consulting, he would also frequently attend meetings with other Departments. At one stage he was flying to Melbourne on an average of once a week to attend some Defence meeting, because in those days the Department of Defence was still in Melbourne; and, as aircraft were much slower in those days, he was often to do the trip in a day and he had to spend a night in Melbourne away from home. The foregoing, then, was a typical day, ending with his leaving the office sometime after six o'clock. He would on occasion come back to work after dinner, and he would sometimes take papers home to work on.

It is often not possible to say of someone working in a Department in Canberra that any one thing is attributable to him. He is part of a team, and ideas or attitudes tend to grow up in the team as the product of many minds, though sometimes a single individual is the first to give voice to an idea. It is as a member of the team that I remember John Quinn during those years in Canberra—throwing in suggestions, editing and adding to other persons' work, discussing and persuading, sometimes perhaps sowing the seeds from which other men's ideas came, guiding, encouraging, and training those who were serving under him.

His character well suited him for his role. In the first place, he was liked. I know of no one who was jealous or distrustful of him. Apart from his general good humour and good nature, which in themselves could explain why he was liked, he was respected for his integrity and his moral courage. There was nothing devious about him. Consequently his disagreements never produced rancour in the other party. He was respected, too, because of his industry and his readiness to put his duty ahead of his own pleasure or comfort. On many occasions he would work late at night on a draft which was needed next day, rather than

shuffle off on someone else what he regarded as his own duty and rather than let something shoddy go forward.

As a result I remember those years as one of great internal harmony in our part of the Department. In addition to John Quinn and myself there were working there, among others, Malcolm Booker, Bob Hamilton, and Max Loveday, all strong figures with strong ideas. Yet it was a harmonious and productive team, and our conflicting ideas were worked out as we went along and we were never ranged against one another in any bitterness. John Quinn, by his personal character no less than by his intellectual qualities, fitted into it admirably.

Those were the days when the Department of External Affairs was establishing itself with the Defence authorities as a Department that was trustworthy and had something to offer. In John Burton's time as Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, mutual trust did not exist. When Sir Alan Watt succeeded as Secretary, past wounds had to heal; trust had to develop; and the External Affairs officers had to show to the Defence Department and to serving officers that we had a contribution to make to defence thinking and operations that was worthwhile and, indeed, essential. Many persons played a part in developing that mutual trust and co-operation, and a key point was occupied by John Quinn. His contacts were at the middle level—the Joint Planning Committee and the Joint Intelligence Committee. If External Affairs had had someone in that position who was stubborn, or provocative, or imperceptive, or impatient, co-operation between External Affairs and Defence might have been little more than formal. But the qualities in John Quinn which made him so effective in his own Department made him equally effective and influential in his dealings with other authorities.

He was very precise in his thinking, and this reflected itself in his fastidiousness in his writing. He chose his words carefully, to express his meaning exactly and to convey the impression he wanted to convey to the reader. He was clear and elegant in his expression. His corrections of other men's drafts were delightful to see, as he clarified or strengthened what had been written or on occasion exposed humbug or falsity. Good young officers working under him learnt a lot from such supervision and from other guidance he gave.

He had a sense of duty that kept him working when he might with good reason have felt he had done enough. I think that, as a result of the malnutrition of his years as a prisoner of war, his physical endurance was not as great as it might otherwise have been. Whenever over

a period he had to work long hours under pressure, physical effects began to show. But he never let this deter him from driving himself on if he thought that the occasion needed it.

He had a quiet, gentle sense of humour, and was amused by human foibles, recognizing them as common to all of us. He and I had between us a sort of family joke or saying, "Not like us", to be injected into discussion on occasion when someone else or some other country was being criticized. Someone might say, for example, that the Americans were putting their own interests first somewhere, and he or I would murmur "Not like us". Over the years many such short-hand expressions grew up between us, containing without need of elaboration a complete understanding of what was in one another's mind.

So it is as a personality that I remember him most. His mind was powerful and informed. On the whole he was conservative in his approach. He was sensitive to the thinking and movements in Asia within the framework of the existing order and of peaceful evolution, but he probably had less awareness of and little sympathy with revolutionary movements and doctrine, though he could see what gave rise to them. He worked for gradual change, the preservation of cultural traditions, and the avoidance of bloodshed. His own cultural background was European—English and French in particular—but most of his work was in Asia or related to Asia, and he liked Asians and his main political interests lay there. In the last two years, since I have myself become Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, there have been many occasions when there has been a post to be filled or a job to be done and I have wished that John Quinn was here for it.

J. PLIMSOLL

A TRIBUTE BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE R. G. MENZIES.

John Quinn has passed from us at the height of his powers and with promise of adding greatly to his already considerable achievements in the service of Australia.

He combined great intellectual power, complete integrity of character, and a sympathetic approach to his fellows.

He showed great courage during his internment in Sumatra and Singapore, and recovered to give outstanding service both at home in the Department of External Affairs and abroad as a representative of Australia.

My colleagues and I greatly value all that John Quinn did for Australia, and we offer our deep sympathy to his wife, children and parents.

13 September 1961