



The District Grand Lodge of North Queensland

Vol. 5 No. 4

News Letter

1-10-2023

Brethren,

A warm welcome to the 10 th edition of the NQ Compass for 2023.

I hope that you and your families continue to remain in good health.

September was another very busy month for the DGLNQ Team and as your Dist GM, I am pleased to advise that we received two pieces of very good advice in mid September as follows: 1.

The title to our 50 Ingham Rd property has been corrected and 2. We have signed a 'HOA' to lease of our vacant tenancy at Unit 2 / 50 Ingham Rd. A formal lease document is being prepared. The lease will commence Mon 9 Oct 2023 and is for 5 years with an option for another 5 years.

Many thanks to our **DGLNQ Registrar Bro Bob Bogie** for his diligence, effort and hard work in driving the title correction which was quite a complex issue and also for assisting with the lease of the vacant tenancy.

Our DGLNQ Teams were very busy on **Sat 2nd Sept** with the following Installation Meetings: **Ashlar Magnetic Lodge** - VW Bro Norm Souter Smith represented

the Dist GM and was supported by a small team for the installation of Wor Bro John Ewings and his officers. An enjoyable festive board was held at the Lodge. **St John Davenport Lodge** - RW Bro Les Keane PAGM represented the Dist GM and was supported by 4 DGLNQ Officers team for the installation of Wor Bro Iain Carnegie and his officers. An enjoyable festive board was held at the Commercial Hotel in Charters Towers. **Star of The West Lodge** - the Dist GM was supported by a team of 4 for the Proclamation of VW Bro Erick Hegh. 8 members and 3 visitors a shorter meeting and we adjourned to the Hughenden Railway Social Club for an enjoyable festive board. We wish the brethren of the above lodges all the best for the upcoming masonic year!

As Dist GM, I was able to attend the **UGLQ QC in Brisbane on Wed 6th Sept 23**. I was able to have a productive meeting with the Grand Secretary and Dist GM of DGL Carpentaria to discuss a number of issues in the afternoon prior to the QC. The QC was very well attended and informative and I encourage you all to read through the reports in the QC Business Paper circulated on 5th Sept 2023. An enjoyable and harmonious festive board was held after the meeting.

On **Sat 9 Sept 23**, our **Sept DGLNQ QC** was held at 50 Ingham Rd. I was supported by a DGLNQ Team of 17 to enter the QC and the meeting was reasonably well attended with 32 brethren in the Lodge room. During the meeting, several presentations were made by the Dist GM and we adjourned to an informal type festive board where Mrs Andrea Playford, on behalf of DGLNQ members and ladies, made presentations to The Joyful Foundation, QCWA Townsville Bch and St Andrews Meals on Wheels Townsville.

On **Mon 11 Sept 23**, **Townsville AIF Memorial Lodge** held at **1st Degree Meeting for Mr Jason Harton**. VW Bro Joel Coleman represented the Dist GM and was supported by a DGLNQ Team of 10. An enjoyable and harmonious festive board was held in the south!

On **Sat 16th Sept 23**, Northern Travellers Lodge held their Installation Meeting to install Bro Ryan Blackwood as WM. VW Bro Joel Coleman represented the Dist GM and was supported by a DGLNQ Team of 10, with 14 brethren and 4 visitors in attendance. Several presentations were made in the Lodge room we adjourned to the south, where the WM, with the support of his wife Anita and family, provided a great banquet for all which included smoked meats and installation cakes.

On **Thurs 21 Sept 23**, **Unity Lodge** held at **1st Degree Meeting for Mr Justin Trinder**, son of Bro Glenn Trinder also of Unity Lodge! As Dist GM, I was supported by a DGLNQ Team of 7 and there was a good attendance from the Unity brethren and visitors. A 30 year service jewel was presented to Wor Bro Dick Hodges. An enjoyable and harmonious festive board was held in the south!

On **Sat 23 Sept 23**, **Freemasons NQ** was proud to again to support **St James Shrine No 153 Townsville** with their **Devonshire Afternoon Tea** fundraiser. The event was well supported with over 80 people seated. Several donations were made on the day and a large raffle was conducted. Congrats to all on a well organised and successful function! *Another very busy month and again thanks to all for your on-going support.* RW Bro. John Playford, D.G.M.

Aims of The N.Q. Compass.

- To promote those values and virtues we as Freemasons profess.
- To provide articles of interest to Members.
- To promote discussion and debate amongst Brethren.
- To highlight the activities of the Lodges in this district.
- To recognise individual achievements.
- To inform

The New Shed at 48 Ingham Road.

As promised in the August edition of The N.Q. Compass we are now in a position to bring you progress photographs of the new shed that has been constructed in the rear right hand corner of at our premises at 48 Ingham Road. The final part of the construction, the roller door, was fitted week ending Friday, 29th September and is now at the lock up stage with inspections to be completed, and key hand over the first week in October.

The construction of the shed occurred as the result of a grant received from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund and will allow for secure tenure for the Masonic mini bus.



A Famous Freemason.



Ernest Duncan 1914-1993...
Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Barrister-at-Law
and Freemason...

The annals of the United Grand Lodge of Queensland are filled with men from all walks of life. Some lived ordinary pedestrian lives, good men and true; others appeared larger than life. Together they unwittingly built the rich canon of Queensland Masonic history.

THE EARLY YEARS

Born in Brisbane in 1914, the son of a draftsman, Ernest passed his Junior Certificate at fourteen, just as Australia was entering the Great Depression. Scholastically gifted, Ernest was accepted and excelled at Brisbane State High School. In uncertain times Ernest looked for certainty and was accepted in the Public Service. It was not long before promising reports about the new lad reached the ears of Public Service Commissioner John Douglas Story, DSO. A meeting with Commissioner Story led to an immediate position in his department.



The same J.D. Story, some years later as Vice-Chancellor of The University of Queensland, refused young Ernest Duncan permission to start his University studies until he was seventeen. He had already qualified for university at the age of sixteen after passing his Senior studies at Brisbane State High School. During the intervening year, Ernest fostered his love of languages by studying Ancient Greek. It was later, on the advice of J.D. Story that Ernest decided to study Law.

The establishment of a Law School at the University of Queensland in 1936 provided alternative means of entry into a career in Law as evening lectures allowed students to hold down a full time job. In the early 1930s articles were more or less a closed shop unless one had family connections with a legal firm. In addition, there was the premium of 300 to 500 guineas to be paid for the five year training period, a prohibitive amount at the time.

Ernest Duncan excelled in his studies. Roman Law, Jurisprudence and Public International Law were all studied before embarking on practical legal subjects. When he graduated with a B.A., LL.B. in 1939, he was one of only four Law graduates of that year. Before then, in 1933, Ernest left the Public Service Commissioner Story and was appointed Supreme Court Acting Deputy Sheriff. In 1936 he became a researcher for Chief Justice Sir William Webb.

LEARNING JAPANESE

Long before WWII began Ernest Duncan began studying Japanese. His ambition was to learn Japanese in order to qualify for a Foreign Affairs post in Japan in 1935. However, where do you find a Japanese tutor in Brisbane in the 1930s? Ernest placed an advertisement in the Courier-Mail.

Mr Suzuki, a Japanese laundryman and shipping agent in West End provided Ernest with the necessary linguistic skills; skills which later earned him much acclaim as the Pacific War changed the world and those who fought to its conclusion in August, 1945.

SOLDIER, SAILOR, AIRMAN

What followed in Ernest Duncan's life is nothing short of unique in WWII history. Duncan was a fourth year Law student in 1941. Following the November examinations he was called up for 70 days compulsory military training with other students with "U" Company of the 15th Battalion. He was converted to full time duty in February 1942, but in May that year he was transferred to 2 Camp Hospital.

An earlier ban on militiamen joining other services was lifted in the middle of 1942 permitting Duncan to enlist with the Royal Australian Navy where he served for the ensuing four months, before again being released to enlist in the Royal Australian Air Force in January 1943. In the RAAF he became a commissioned officer with the rank of Pilot Officer.



Rarely, if ever, has an Australian man enlisted, or served, in all three branches of the Australian Defence Force. Then again, Ernest Duncan was no ordinary man. By now, the Allied Forces were fiercely fighting the Japanese advance. Australia had been attacked in Darwin, Townsville and through torpedoes in Sydney Harbour. Ernest Duncan's innocent and perfectly legitimate studies with Mr Suzuki in West End a decade earlier assured an upward trajectory for the young Pilot Officer.

Seconded to the War Office of Washington D.C., USA, Ernest Duncan played a pivotal role in the war effort. With dashing good looks, keen mind and intellect, Pilot Officer Duncan became warmly embraced by Washington society and the novel work environment into which he was cast.

NEW ROLE IN THE WAR EFFORT

Arriving in Washington DC in 1943, Pilot Officer Ernest Duncan was assigned several roles while attached to the top secret Allied Research Intelligence Unit (AIRIND). He quickly rose to Chief Translator under fellow Australian, Adelaide born anthropologist Professor Norman Tindale, who was Chief of Section.

The unit gathered intelligence from the wreckages of Japanese aircraft. Interestingly, the Japanese planes featured extensive manufacturers' plates detailing not only date, but place of manufacture and assembly points.

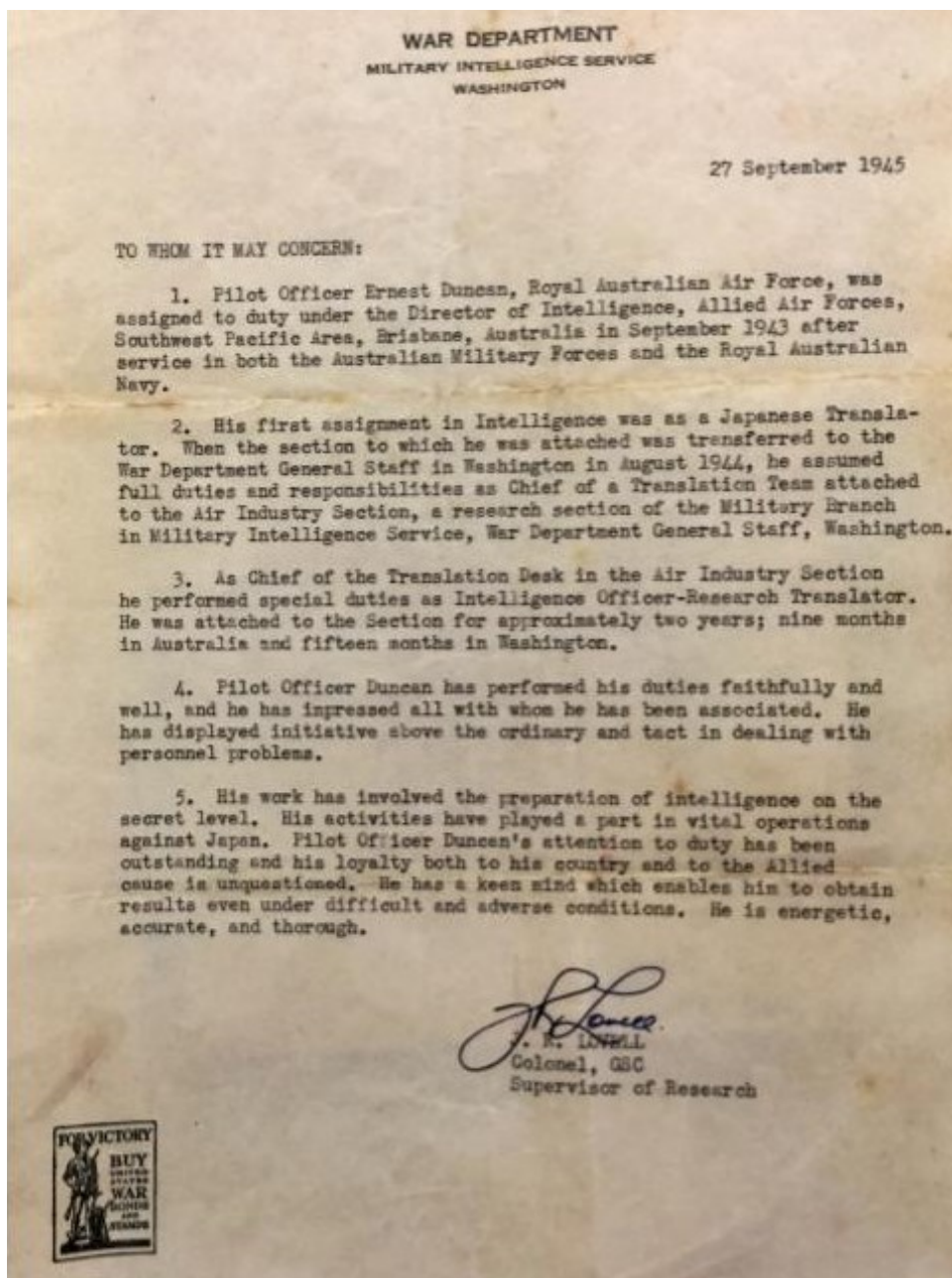
Moreover, the AIRIND had the capacity to determine crucial variations in metal compositions, from where these were sourced and a host of information which was passed to Allied Bomber Command enabling raids on manufacturing facilities from early 1944. Ernest

Duncan's dedication to his important task was more evident to the Americans, than to the Australians, at the time.

They are thankfully preserved for posterity in the Ernest Duncan deposit at the State Library of Queensland's John Oxley Library, a thoughtful gesture which also includes most, if not all of Ernest Duncan's personal papers, diaries, letters, medals and cloth emblems off his RAAF uniform.

Atypical of the U.S. War Office appreciation is a letter from Brigadier General Peabody, War Department, Military Intelligence Service, Washington D.C. December 27, 1945:

"It is hoped that the proper authorities in the Royal Australian Air Force will be informed of this commendation and that Pilot Officer Duncan will be given a copy as an expression of our appreciation of his work. I should like to express our thanks to the Australian Intelligence Organization for their contribution of his services."



Mission successfully completed Ernest Duncan returned to Brisbane, yet official correspondence from Washington to the Australian Government prevailed, U.S. Colonel Lovell's letter, a month after the conclusion of WWII, highlights the high esteem in which Ernest Duncan was held, while also paving the way for new challenges and adventure.

TELL ALL LETTER

Ernest Duncan waited many decades before penning this letter shortly before he died. He felt a duty to set the records straight: "Here is something for posterity. The secret file of US Military Intelligence is with my personal papers. To understand the operation I have kept two Japanese manufacturers name plates for the Zero fighter plane which were removed

early 1944.

The Japanese were so meticulous they attached full particulars of the date of manufacture of all components on their combat planes.

Professor Norman Tindale, anthropologist and a world-wide lepidopterist (butterflies) used his scientific research techniques to ascertain the production rate and place of manufacture of Japanese aircraft.

To Norman an aircraft was a butterfly. He started Air Ind Section in Australia and his research was so exact that RAAF Section was transferred to Pentagon. By 1944 the military Intelligence knew the production rate of bombers, fighters and other planes in Japan by monthly rates.

When McArthur advanced on Tinian and Saipan General Curtis le May Strategic Air Command with his B29 bombers knew all the major targets for manufacture of aircraft in Japan and sent missions to destroy. By the time the US Forces reached Iwo Jima the US had very small resistance from air attacks.

I retained some of the makers' plates – Zero or Zeke, the major fighter plane to give some idea of the research in Air Ind. There were special squads in Marine Navy and Infantry trained to collect the makers' plates which were received into the Section. I was Chief Translator of the Translation desk with nine Japanese translators and I had to check every single translation. If some important development in aircraft production occurred I would accompany Tindale to conference and give direct translations of the plate. It was on three occasions I went into a think tank not relevant to Air Ind Section. I don't think Tindale "Tinnie" has outlived us.

As to his death it may be easier to find out from the Ford Foundation as he received a grant from them for his contribution to the war effort. Please advise me what you will eventually decide to do and I will forward to you the duplicate copy of the Secret History of Air Ind together with other data you may require. I am commencing to get minor strokes which are beginning to affect my speech and mobility. All the best, Ernie Duncan."

FROM WAR TO PEACE

Ernest Duncan accepted a role with the newly formed United Nations. The posting was as Assistant Legal Officer in China.

Before taking up the coveted appointment Ernest Duncan had briefly returned to Brisbane on special leave to be admitted (in full uniform) to the Bar, this some six years after his graduation. In post WWII China, Ernest Duncan earned the name Ernie Duncan, The Troubleshooter, a reference to being able to handle even the most complex issues as China was plunged into its Revolutionary War (1945-1949).

While being based in Shanghai, China, Ernest Duncan travelled huge distances across China's western provinces which were his assigned regions within

the newly formed United Nations' Relief and Rehabilitation Association (UNRRA).

As its principal Administration Officer the work took him all over China, once being



captured by the Communists who held most of the rural provinces, he managed to escape his captors unscathed.

During his long sojourns across unsealed roads or navigating China's rivers and tributaries Ernest Duncan witnessed endemic poverty and destruction, the latter for most part caused by the occupying Japanese during the 1930s.

Ernest Duncan found time in his busy schedule to write to his mother in Brisbane. He was a prolific letter writer. These hand written letters are deposited in the John Oxley Library and often express the skill of an investigative journalist or foreign correspondent. Skilfully, Duncan took every opportunity to mail off his letters. One letter, expressing the hope it would reach his mother in the fullness of time begins:

"I've met this European missionary somewhere in Yunnan province who is going east and promised to mail it for me when safe to do so..."

His extensive travels, discoveries and reports with UNRRA drew to an end by 1948. It was clear by then that the Communists under Mao Zedong were winning against Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang. Duncan joined the international law firm Jacobson, Duncan and Yao in Shanghai as that part of China was blissfully spared to that point from the vagaries of the Civil War around them. Here Duncan acted for expatriates who were living in Shanghai's European concessions.

MARRIAGE

It was while in China that Ernest Duncan met and married his New Zealand born wife Valda Markham. The marriage took place in the British Embassy in Shanghai in 1947. The dashing newlywed couple emerging from the embassy could have been taken from a contemporary Hollywood blockbuster, Ernest and Valda both in white attire. (See picture on previous page).

It was not long before Mao Zedong and the Communists declared victory in the new People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. Staying under the new regime was not considered an option. Mr and Mrs Duncan returned to a new life in Brisbane where he commenced practice at the Bar, primarily in the area of criminal law.

FREEMASONRY BECKONS

The great divide between Catholics and Freemasons, which saw its genesis shortly after the new Crown Colony of Queensland was born in 1859, continued unabated for the ensuing century.

Such was the unwritten divide between, what was colloquially known as, The Kneelers and The Grippers, that all facets of society were strictly divided on sectarian lines. Queensland's legal profession was no exception. Indeed, it was the unwritten law and custom that an Irish Catholic lawyer would never get a foot through the door at a Protestant legal practice – and vice versa.

Not surprisingly, the Catholic Church and its adherents would only use the services of Catholic legal firms. Almost comical viewed through a contemporary prism; it was the accepted reality in 1950. On an upward legal trajectory, Ernest Duncan followed well established norms at the time.

It was in 1950 that Ernest Duncan decided to join Freemasonry. Having worked with, and exposed to Masonic Brethren in the USA, later in Shanghai, China and within Queensland's legal fraternity upon his return to practice, Ernest turned to fellow Barrister, John



John Roland Gilbert for an application to join the craft.

Wor. Bro. Gilbert proposed Ernest Duncan, while senior Courier-Mail Journalist William Patterson signed off as his Seconder. The Initiation took place in the Ann Street Masonic Memorial Temple on Thursday afternoon, March 30, 1950 in Thespian Lodge No 268, meeting in lodge room 3 at the time.

Brisbane bookmaker and philanthropist Rt. Wor. Bro Wally Northcott was in the Chair. Many of Ernest's colleagues from the legal profession were present at his Initiation, causing Master Northcott to quip:

"Should anything go wrong, we sure appear to have enough lawyers assembled here this

afternoon to allay any fears..." Bro. Ernest Duncan was listed at Barrister-at-Law, aged 36 and residing at Tarragindi.

Thus it was that Mr Duncan became Brother Duncan. On August 9, 1956 Ernest Duncan affiliated with Sir Samuel Walter Griffith Lodge No 408 which had gained its warrant from the United Grand Lodge of Queensland on April 30, 1949. It operated successfully until dwindling membership numbers caused its closure on March 1, 2002.

This lodge was almost the exclusive domain of solicitors, barristers and clerks. In an UGLQ pragmatic concession to prevailing dress code, members were allowed to attend meetings in white shirts, dark ties and business suits. Moreover, tiling of Sir Samuel Walter Griffith Lodge was set at 06.30 p.m. so that members could go straight from chambers and courts to the Ann Street Masonic Memorial Temple.

Bro. Duncan maintained his membership of Thespian Lodge, his mother lodge, until 1959, when the pressure of work precluded daytime Freemasonry. Bro Duncan's Masonic sojourn in Sir Samuel Walter Griffith Lodge No 408 continued unabated until 1989, three years before his passing.

Throughout his Masonic journey he maintained both a professional and close personal friendship with M.W. Bro. Sir Allan Mansfield UGLQ, Grand Master (1969-1973) and Governor of Queensland.

DISTINGUISHED LAW CAREER IN BRISBANE



Ernest Duncan's distinguished career in Law lasted for many decades. Beginning in April, 1949 he practiced at the Bar, predominantly in criminal law. However by March 1953, when being admitted a Solicitor following the purchase of the practice J. J. O'Connor, his career path changed. Indeed, he spent the bulk of his career under the name of J.J. O'Connor, Duncan & Co.

By 1979 his son Bill Duncan took over the practice which he amalgamated with David Purvis to form the firm Purvis & Duncan. Ernest stayed on as a consultant until 1985.

Not quite ready to retire Ernest worked for the Queensland Law Society as an assistant in the Department of Professional Conduct. At the time of his death he was a most respected Member of the Queensland Law Society.

Ernest Duncan suffered a heart attack and passed away on February 19, 1993. His ashes rest in a Mt Thompson columbarium to which is fastened a simple, modest plate void of pomposity in line with the man himself.

His incredible life and outstanding contribution along its way are clearly too numerous to list. Suffice it to say, Ernest Duncan led by example to the benefit of countless people both in his native Queensland and abroad.

EPILOGUE

Speaking at his funeral The Hon Justice K. W. Ryan said:

“There are two qualities of Ernie Duncan which stands out in my memory of him... One is that he was a genuinely kind man. He took an interest in people with whom he became associated which extended well beyond professional or social obligation. If he liked a person, or felt he could provide them with help or practical advice, he gave generously of his time and expertise to assist them. In his warm-hearted way he invited them home and in a sense made them a part of his own family. He loved to talk to people, to share his knowledge and to help them.”



“The other, associated quality was the breadth of his knowledge and interests... He was interested in so much, and above all in history and in literature. He read voraciously and he loved to talk to others about what he had read and to share with them the excitement at what he had discovered.”

No better eulogy sums up Bro Ernest Duncan, Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Barrister-at Law and, importantly..., Queensland Freemason. – Stig R. Hokanson

The N.Q. Compass wishes to acknowledge Wor. Bro. Stig Hokanson, Chaplain 268, Chaplain 536, Chaplain 8 — G.L. of Norway, Rep. to U.G.L.Q. for his kind permission to reproduce his article for your appreciation.

Brethren, you are reminded to log into your Facebook page and in the top left hand corner [Search Facebook] type in [The N.Q. Compass](#) then hit return to view photographs of events taking place through out the District or other wise having an effect on this District.

**The N. Q. Compass welcomed the following members
to the Craft during September.**

Name

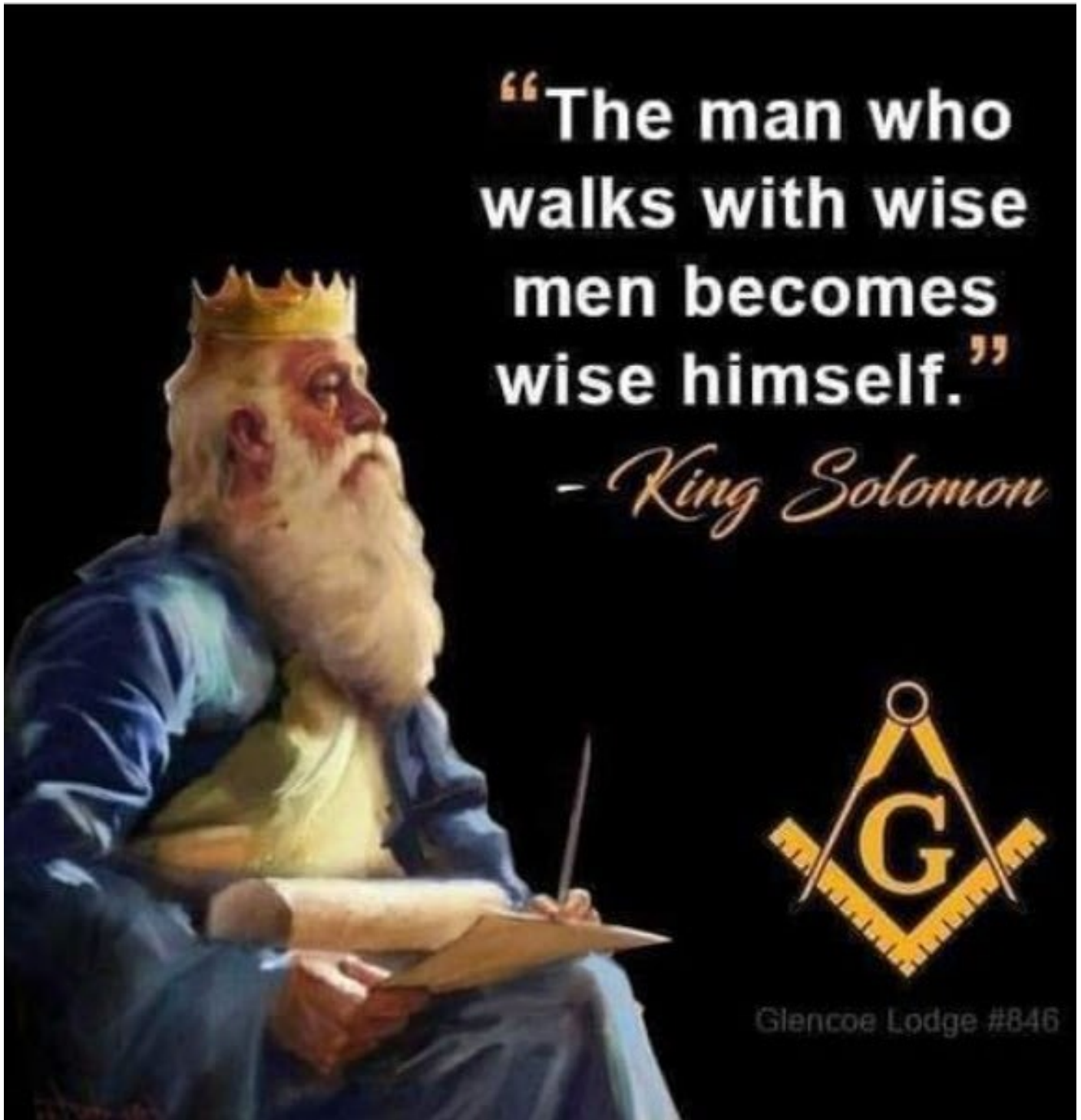
HARTON, Jason

TRINDER, Justin

Lodge

Townsville A.I.F. Memorial Lodge No. 377

Unity Lodge, No. 300



**Brethren "The N.Q. Compass" is a newsletter for YOUR enjoyment
Please help to popularise it.**