

Central Bureau Intelligence Corps Association

NEWSLETTER

MARCH, 1986

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on the 10th February. Fourteen members attended and it was good to see Les McClean again. All present stood in a minute's silence in memory of JEAN BURNSIDE, wife of BOB, STAN (PAPPY) CLARK, and ALLAN MACDONALD.

President MICHAEL CASEY reported on the year's doings and thanked those on the Committee for their efforts in the success of our activities in 1985. Treasurer Norma Keeling reported a balance of funds at 31st December, 1985 of \$639.29. All officers were re-elected as follows:

President	Michael Casey
Vice Presidents	Allan Osborne & Jim Williams
Hon. Secretary	Gordon Gibson
Hon. Treasurer	Norma Keeling
Publicity Officer	Madeline Chidgey
Executive Committee	Charles McCafferty
	Dennis Moore
	Aub Roberts.

Associate Member Ron Chidgey agreed to be our Auditor for 1986. Our December Newsletter indicated that Michael Casey was not standing for re-election to the Presidency but in the absence of any other nominations, we are pleased and grateful that he has agreed to continue for another year. DENNIS MOORE has indicated his willingness to take over the job next year, after his return from nine months abroad with his wife PEGGY. They will be spending time in the U.K., Europe and Egypt. SUE and GORDON GIBSON will not be with us on Anzac Day, as they also are off overseas - to Sri Lanka and the U.K. We wish them all very happy times on their exciting travels.

NORMA KEELING and new member BETTY CHESSELL have group photographs from Henry Street and they will be on display on Anzac Day hoping that we will be able to put names to faces. Photos are of great interest to us all and receive appreciative attention around the tables at our Anzac Day Reunion that is a gentle hint to bring some of your CB memories with you!

Norma's visit with EVE SCOTT last year to 21 Henry Street and to Ascot Park were very successful and enjoyable. The owners at 21 now have a Visitors' Book, donated by MARJORY HENDERSON, and they are interested to receive visits from people who served at 21. Norma on her travels called to see BRIAN LOVETT at Tuncurry, and Brian and his wife expect to be with us on Anzac Day.

We are also expecting to have MAX and NANCY HURLEY from Western Victoria in Sydney for Anzac Day, and hope that we shall again be joined by MAC MARONEY, GEOFF PATIENCE, PERCY PLEDGER, and LESTER TRUEX, all from Melbourne. If his doctor gives the OK, ALF BOBIN with his wife DAISY will be motoring down from Gympie to be with us also. Another we expect is VIC LEDERER from Canberra. It is always a pleasure to have visits from CB people living far distant from Sydney.

CORAL HINDS, of Vermont, Victoria, is undergoing a long convalescence after operations on both feet - which must be hard for an energetic girl like Coral, who was one of the best marchers in the AWAS. During our Sigs training at Bonegilla before our CB days, we AWAS girls took pride in our marching. I remember clearly on the day General

Blamey came to review the troops, the sight of Coral, starched and neat as a new pin, marching smartly out on the parade ground to be our marker. General Blamey addressed us, drawn up in formation as we were and surrounded by thousands of male personnel, as "the flower of Australian womanhood" - and some of us don't let our spouses forget it. Coral aims to be with us for the 1987 March, trying out her new feet, accompanied by husband SANDY.

Another with foot trouble is MAY GERBER, who is currently mastering the art of using crutches. May heard the telephone ringing when telephones shouldn't ring, around 12.45 a.m., and in her effort to get to answer it, stumbled and hurt her foot, staggered to the phone, later crawled back to bed, and next day found out that she had a nastily fractured bone. We are sure she will be fine again by Anzac Day, and will then be able to tell us the cause of her fall and her opinion of operators in Tokyo who call wrong numbers in Sydney at such an hour!

Our sympathy to both CORAL and MAY in their pain and discomfort, and best wishes for a speedy recovery.

A letter has been received from Legacy, celebrating their Diamond Jubilee. They still have 107,000 dependants, and are holding a monster raffle. Our Association usually makes a yearly donation, but if anyone wishes to give added help to this worthy cause by buying tickets, they may write to Sydney Legacy Appeals Fund, P.O. Box E5, St. James, 2000.

There are a few books in print which may be of interest to you:

"The Ultra Secret", by F.W. Winterbotham
"A Suitable Piece of Real Estate", by Desmond Ball
"The American Magic", by Ronald Lewin
"The Puzzle Palace", by James Bamford. ***

The last named has not been obtainable in Australia but if you are interested in buying a copy, we can let you have further details if you perhaps have a friend travelling to the U.S. who could buy it for you over there.

It was suggested by LES McCLEAN at the A.G.M. that we should try to make ANZAC DAY 1988, being Bi-centennial Year, an extra special occasion, and invite members from far afield who would not normally make it to the Reunion. If anyone has any ideas on the subject, please contact me at 1 Daphne Street, Dolan's Bay, N.S.W. 2229. Please also let me have any news items of interest to members.

We are very happy to welcome three new members to the Association: BETTY CHESSELL (nee TOUGH), AILSA HALE, and BILL ROGERS. Their addresses are:

BETTY: 255 Stanhill Drive, Chevron Island, Qld. 4217. Phone 075 31 5735
AILSA: 5/22 Nelson Street, Penshurst, N.S.W. 2222. 02 57 1172
BILL: 23rd Floor, 535 Bourke Street, Melbourne. 3000.

We have been advised of two address changes -

MAURY COOMBS now R.F.D. 1, Box 646 Lancaster, Virginia. 22503. U.S.A.
KEN HENDERSON now 18/66 Darley Road, Manly. N.S.W. 2095. Phone 02 977 1085.

Please remove Mrs. MARGARET DUNLOP from your list. Margaret was the widow of ERIC DUNLOP, a CB member, and had been as Associate Member for some years before her death last year.

One of our members has recently received from the U.S.A. a very long list of names and addresses of American S.I.S. and R.I. ex members, so if any of you are interested in making contact with Americans you served with in the field or in Brisbane, please contact Gordon Gibson to see if we can help.

*** Joy Linnane has advised of a publication acknowledging the work of Wireless Units - "A Saga of Achievement".

Ex WAAAF, NORMA KEELING, JOY LINNANE, MARION WINN, and the cheery EVE SCOTT from Brisbane have just had a great weekend celebrating the 45th birthday of the WAAAF which was formed in March 1941 and grew to over 25,000 members. The outstanding events were a dinner in the Sydney Town Hall attended by 1,040 and a wreath laying ceremony at the Cenotaph when about 600 ex WAAAF from all States marched from Elizabeth Street down Martin Place to occupy most of the space between Pitt and George Streets, each side of the Cenotaph - the Town Hall occasion was a time of reminiscing, mirth, and searching for ex colleagues; the Cenotaph occasion was one of remembrance and dedication. A fine experience for them all.

EVE SCOTT reported that she had been in contact with RITA BALIN in Brisbane and also had a visit with BOBBY & ELSIE JONES from Florida, U.S.A. ELSIE was WAAAF Elsie WASHINGTON, and Bobby was U.S. Army. They had been visiting Elsie's home town, Melbourne, and took a trip to Brisbane to revisit old haunts, including of course 21 Henry Street and Ascot Park.

We believe we should learn more about our members and their experiences in CB and the field, and therefore intend to include short 'profiles' in this and future Newsletters. On the basis of 'Ladies First', we have asked for a contribution this time from JOY LINNANE, ex WAAAF. We hope to receive lots of resumes of your CB and service life for inclusion from now on. Depending on length, we may even be able to use more than one profile per issue. We thank you in anticipation of your co-operation and your interesting stories, told as briefly as is reasonable.

ANZAC DAY 1986. Arrangements for the Wreath Laying, March, and Reunion are set out on the attached form, and we look forward to another record attendance.

With best wishes to all, especially those on the sick list.

Madeline Chidgey, Publicity Officer.



Joy Linnane, with Gordon & Sue Gibson, at their Pymble home,
November 1985 Get-Together BBQ

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Central Bureau might be likened to a big wheel controlling many cogs, both large and small, few of these knowing, or indeed permitted to know, the function of the other. Only now, after 40 years, are we beginning to appreciate the multiplicity of the interesting and vital work that was carried out by our people.

One of the big cogs was the Wireless Units, set up to gain intelligence by intercepting enemy radio transmissions. It was a massive scheme, eventually extending to the formation of seven Wireless Units operating over the South West Pacific Area. The personnel included linguists, translators, code breakers, D/F operators and the kana intercept operators, the vast majority being RAAF. But quite early in the formation of Wireless Units, a decision was made to include WAAAF pre-trained W/T operators.

Being in the right place at the right time when volunteers were called for a special job, and being too new at the game to know never to volunteer for anything, I found myself involved in a most extraordinary interview which seemed to centre around my reaction to gory situations. I was told I was accepted - but for what? No one was about to tell me and I was not familiar with the term "Top Secret" which was to become a big part of my life for many years to come.

Whisked smartly off Rookies' Course (I imagine one of the few WAAAF who did not pass out on Rookies) and posted to Ascot Vale, we at last found that we were part of an intelligence unit, that we were there for the duration and that we were to be taught the kana code, which is phonetic Japanese morse. The symbols were much longer than the international code we had learned and the speed much greater. However, the selected 13 WAAAF all mastered kana and were posted to Point Cook. Here we learned the price of working with an intelligence unit. It meant isolation. We were barracked apart from all others in an old married quarters house and operated in a hut near the Sigs School and this became known as the "hush hush" hut. I have since learned that all the Sigs people were instructed not to approach us! Here we worked 4 hours on, 4 hours off, intercepting Japanese Navy messages - passed on to whom, I wonder? Rarely did we have more than 2 hours' sleep at one time.

We had a brief course of unarmed defence, and the use of firearms, and worked behind bolted doors and shaded windows, with a Smith & Wesson revolver by the door, and emergency buttons near the AR7's which were the radio sets we used. Because we worked Tokyo time, we were out of step with the Station and in the 6 months I was there I never ate in the Mess. We collected and cooked what food was available over a radiator in the hut.

Eventually in early 1943 we were posted to 1 Wireless Unit, Townsville where we were barracked first at St. Anne's and then to the bush camp at Roseneath, living under primitive conditions. The Operations Room was located in an isolated area near Stuart. This was a remarkable building camouflaged as a farm house and inside furnished most impressively with all the sophisticated equipment necessary to a first class intelligence establishment. There were D/F and teleprinters, and , scrambler phones, plotting table, and dozens of radio sets.

We were small cogs, doing 8 hour shifts, each radio receiver covering a different frequency. We intercepted air/ground and air to air messages sent by enemy aircraft often on their way to bomb our bases. As each message was intercepted, it was quickly passed into the intelligence room. Enemy aircraft positions were fixed by D/F and warnings forwarded to the targetted areas. It was always a great satisfaction to operators when enemy aircraft signalled, "I am being attacked", and we knew our warning had got through and Allied squadrons were on the job.

We were a dedicated group and gained great satisfaction from our work. We had lots of fun too - dances in the Rec. Hut, swimming, trips to Magnetic Island, but always with our own Unit. As the action moved away, the RAAF intercept operators went on to land with invasion forces at Leyte. The WAAF were posted to CB, Henry Street, continuing our work there, and at Eldernell, Hamilton, which we shared with Lt. Col. Sandford's A.I.B. personnel. There we ended our service. It was a tremendous experience, and friendships made then endure to this day.

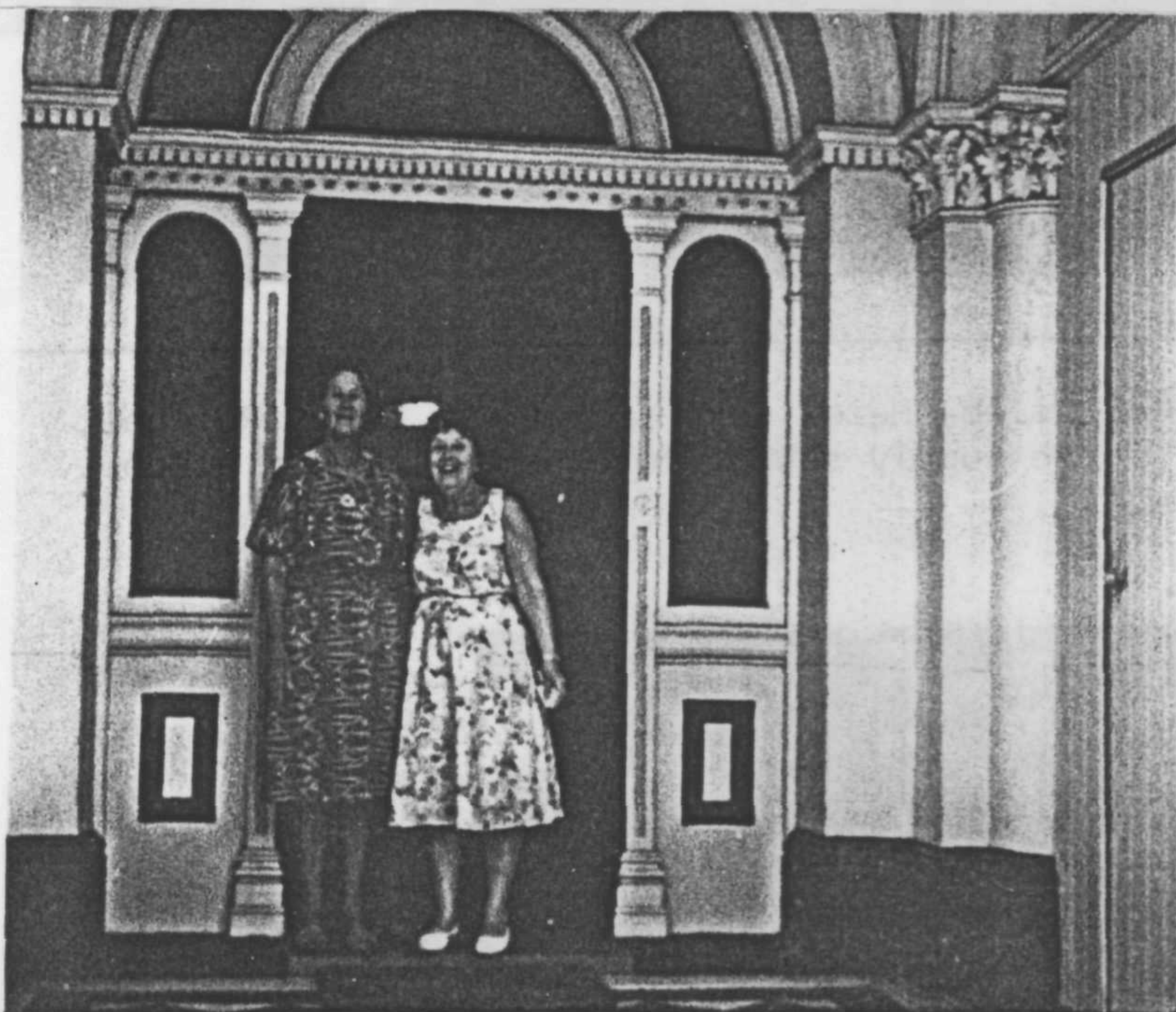


The Visit, Henry Street
probably 1943.

General Blamey with
Brig. Rogers, D.M.I. and
Brig.Gen. Akin, our Director

Back row:

Aide-de-camp,
Lt.Col. Harold Doud
W/Cdr. Roy Booth
Lt.Col. Mic Sandford



1985

Same place, different visit

Eve Scott & Norma Keeling



Eve Scott



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W
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S

We can see Annette Steele, Nellie Allen, Helex Rex, Judy Rowe, Nancy Reichelt
Betty Chessell. If you can, please supply supply more names for our album.



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We know all these, thanks to Norma Keeling.