

Central Bureau Intelligence Corps Association

NEWSLETTER

MAY, 1988

BICENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES

MELBOURNE

Our American friends commenced their varied and strenuous tour in Melbourne and were entertained by some of their Central Bureau colleagues at a Chinese dinner at the Shark's Fin Restaurant in Little Bourke Street. There were 20 Americans present and 16 Australians - Neil EVANS, Pat GILL, Eric NAVE, Keith PAYNE, Bill ROGERS, Bert RUSHEN, Lester TRUEX and their wives, and Sylvia (FERGUSON) Paris and her husband. We of course claim Lester with the Australians, not with the Americans!! It is good to know that an ex AWAS member was also in attendance - Sylvia, like Michael Casey, was 18 when she arrived at Central Bureau.

The credit for organising this get together goes to Lester, so thanks to him from the Executive Committee. And thanks to Keith for giving us the details.

SYDNEY

ANZAC EVE WREATH LAYING. On this special Anzac Eve a larger number than usual attended, including members from interstate and the U.S. - Ian Buckingham, Michael Casey, Maurie Coombs, Gordon Gibson, Coral & Sandy Hinds, Al Jenkin, Norma Keeling, Harry Kroger, Dennis Moore, Allan Osborne, Diana Parker, Geoff Patience, Aub Roberts, Jim Williams, Marion & Stan Winn, Madeline Chidgey and Associate Member Ron Chidgey. After this moving ceremony, several members left to meet with and welcome our American visitors at their hotel and some returned to the Cenotaph with them for a further wreath laying by the Americans to honour their former comrades.

ANZAC DAY

MARCH. Perfect weather was again laid on for the March, and of course, it was a delight to have our Americans take part, with Sandy Hinds and Dennis Moore again carrying the Banner. Abe Sinkov, Maurie Coombs and Joe Richard (looking great in his original uniform), led the Central Bureau team, followed by President Michael Casey, Vice President Jim Williams, and Geoff Patience from Caulfield, Victoria.

Then came Americans Ken Bakewell, Don Conover, Ruth Gauger, Carl Henke, Meredith Hull, Dorothy Kubik, Chester Lange, John Larkin, Doug Loseke, and Phyllis Peirce. The Australian members followed, including a most gratifying number from interstate, and taking the total numbers of marchers to 64.

It seemed that there was a bigger crowd than ever to watch the March, and our group was given a good T.V. coverage and commentary.

REUNION AT PHILLIP'S FOOTE. This was attended by 100 people, laughing, talking, swapping yarns and photos, eating and drinking - the food was very good and there was plenty of it. Michael Casey made a welcome speech to our Americans, to which Abe Sinkov responded, both remembering that brevity is the soul of wit. It was good to welcome for the first time some C.B. colleagues who had learned of our activities from 'Reveille' and 'Wings'.

If the old stones of Phillip's Foote could speak, they could not recount a happier occasion than the Central Bureau Reunion, Anzac Day, 1988.

LANE COVE RIVER BARBECUE. In the midst of such a period of wet weather as Sydney experienced in April, we could not believe our luck when another fine day dawned for the barbecue on 27th April. Many thanks to Noni and Lach McNaught who arrived early and set up the tables. By this time we were getting to know our Americans, of whom 20 turned up, preferring our "do" to a tour of the beaches, which was optional for them. It was another happy day, with beautiful surroundings, fresh air, good food and drink, and good friends reuniting and enjoying each other's company. Many thanks, also, to all the willing souls who helped with food, and especially Aub Roberts and Dennis Moore, who manned the barbecue, no small task for 55 hungry people. I must give a mention to Norma Keeling's friend, Thelma Hodgson, who made the delicious pavlovas, very appropriate for an Aussie get-together in honour of visiting Americans.

B R I S B A N E

We had a really fantastic attendance for the unveiling of the plaque at 21 Henry Street: one hundred and thirty!. This number included members of the Wireless Units and it was great to meet them for the first time in some cases. Once again we were graced with good weather, though at one stage it looked as if it might rain on our parade.

The tables were set up in the grounds under the spreading jacaranda and poinciana trees, a delightful setting for a very happy gathering of old friends. Al Jenkin of Brisbane (he had been with us in Sydney on Anzac Day with wife Eunice, a pleasure to have them for the first time) arrived early to set up the P.A. system, and even supplied flowers for the tables.

From then on, it was 'Go'; and what had seemed a daunting undertaking was accomplished with comparative ease and a lot of goodwill, excitement and hilarity by the great number of helpers. And they used to say to us in the Army, "Never volunteer for anything!". We could never have managed without our volunteers. Eventually the food was prepared, tables laid, friends greeted with much hand shaking, hugging and kissing, cameras wielded, drinks partaken of, all under the astonished stare of the Looks' cat, Cassius. At least, that is what I called him - he had the fashionable lean and hungry look of today's cats.

At noon we were all summoned by Michael Casey to the entrance of the beautiful old house, where the plaque was covered by a small green curtain. Clarrie Millar, M.P. for Wide Bay, Qld, said a few words of wisdom and wit, followed by Michael Casey. Michael said his first impression of C.B., as an 18 year old, was of a redhead in the front office, but she was much older, fully 23 - it was our Marion Winn! Michael finished with a few words which struck a chord in each of us: "Cherish this day, as most of us will not pass this way again". Upon which, he called upon Colonel Sinkov to do the honours. The Colonel gave a brief history of Central Bureau, and after a solemn pause removed the curtain, and our plaque was there for all to see. It reads as follows:

CENTRAL BUREAU, AN ORGANISATION COMPRISING SERVICE PERSONNEL OF AUSTRALIA, U.S.A., BRITAIN, CANADA AND N.Z., BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, FUNCTIONED IN THIS HOUSE FROM 1942 TILL 1945. FROM INTERCEPTED RADIO MESSAGES THE ORGANISATION PROVIDED INTELLIGENCE WHICH MADE A DECISIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE ALLIED VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC WAR.

I wonder how many young eyes will see it when we are gone, and ponder on its meaning.

The picnic lunch was appreciated by us all (except poor Norma Keeling, who was so busy she had no time to eat!), and although a lot was provided from Association funds, there were many delightful salads and sweets donated by the makers. Noni (one of the world's best cooks) did a huge piece of beef and supplied a large ham which must have taken her hours to slice. Molly Colless made a huge cake, decorated especially with a C.B. motif, which was quickly demolished. Someone took a picture of us cutting it - I would love to have a print. So many people helped and donated in cash or kind, it is impossible to thank everyone separately.

Poor Mrs. Look got out of a sick bed to accept with her husband the gift of six souvenir glasses, elegantly boxed by Gwenda Roberts. The Americans then presented them with two framed pictures - one of a group of the original S.I.S. boys who worked at 21 Henry Street; the other of General Blamey and Brig. Rogers, D.M.I. on a visit to C.B. with our Director, Brig. General Spencer Akin, U.S.A. - and expressed their appreciation of the kindness of this lovely young couple in letting us have our Reunion there. - as did Michael Casey.

It was a thrill for us cipher girls to go around with Iain Allan, who was the boss of the Cipher Section, to the old garage where we worked the cipher machines. Rita Taylor Balin, who was such a help with organising, catering, etc., later took the Americans to look over Ascot Park and the old Fire Station, which is now used by a T.A.F.E. College. As Colonel Sinkov was leaving, Michael Casey thanked him for doing us the honour of visiting us; and an honour it certainly was.

Two regrets expressed were - it was all over too soon, and a number of our members (especially foundation members) were unable to attend due to illness. However, Ron Chidgey has taken photos of all functions from the March assembly point to the Henry Street do, and anyone wanting prints may write and ask for them. Address: 1 Daphne Street, Dolans Bay. 2229.

Also, we would appreciate receiving some of your best shots which we might be able to include in our next Newsletter, which may just happen to be more pictures than words!

The sincere thanks of the Executive Committee go to all who helped in so many ways to make our Celebrations such memorable occasions: the donations of money, time and effort, expertise, delicious food, and last but not least, those who helped us clean up afterwards. Special thanks to Aub Roberts, Geoff Ballard, Mac Jamieson, Al Jenkin and Lach McNaught (despite his very painful foot). It was a great co-operative effort by all.

To save repetition of names of those attending individual functions, we give below names of those who took part in any or all of the Celebrations, accompanied by wives, husbands, family and friends, whose attendance always brightens our gatherings.

Iain ALLAN
Norman ALLEN
Rita (Taylor) BALIN
Geoff BALLARD
Jack BENNETT
Bruce BENTWITCH
Sybil (Beck) BRADY
Jack BROWN
Ian BUCKINGHAM
Syd CAREY
Keith CAROLAN
Len CARRIGG
Connie CARPENTER
Michael CASEY
Gordon CHAPMAN
Geoff CHARLESWORTH
Betty (Tough) CHESSELL
Madeline (Bell) CHIDGEY
'Nobby' CLARKE
Molly (Lusk) COLLESS
Peter COLLESS
Sydney COOPER
Alan CORNISH
Alf DAVIS
Ray EDDOLLS
Neil EVANS
Ron FORMAN
Dave GEYER
Gordon GIBSON
Pat Gill
Joyce GRACE
Ailsa (Hurley) HALE

Marj (Piggott) HENDERSON
Earle HEAP
Jean (Sinclair) HICKS
Coral (Osborne) HINDS
Sandy HINDS
Roma (Parratt) HODSDON
John HUCKER
Frank HUGHES
Mac JAMIESON
Al JENKIN
Norma (Scarfe) KEELING
Helen (Frizell) KENNY
Stan KING
Harry KROGER
John LAIRD
Noel LANGBY
Alan LANGDON
Vic LEDERER
Bob LEONARD
Joyce LINNANE
Betty (Paterson) LORDING
Brian LOVETT
Les McCLEAN
Phyllis McLEOD
Noni (Grant) McNAUGHT
Doreen McPHERSON
Mac MARONEY
Clarrie MILLAR
Val MILLER
Dennis MOORE
Dot (Hilleard) MORROW
Reg MURPHY

Roger NALDER
Eric NAVE
Allan OSBORNE
Sylvia (Ferguson) PARIS
Diana (Matthews) PARKER
Geoff PATIENCE
Keith PAYNE
Ivan au PRINCE
Aub ROBERTS
Bill ROGERS
Doug ROSENBERG
Bert RUSHEN
Joyce (Roberts) SANDARS
Norma (Peel) SCHNEIDER
Diana (Dawson) SEYMOUR
John SHOEBRIDGE
Arthur SIMS
Arthur SMARTT
Merv STINSON
Lester TRUEX
Frank WARD
Roy Ward
Athol WHYBURN
Heather WILLIAMS
Jim WILLIAMS
Gordon WILSON
Marion (Manson) WINN
Stanley WINN
John WOOD

PLUS OF COURSE THOSE OF OUR
S.I.S. CONTINGENT WHO ARE
NAMED ELSEWHERE.

[If we have left anyone out, we apologise. Our]
[hard working Secretary, Gordon Gibson, had a very]
[busy time checking names.]

We were particularly pleased to have with us DAISY BOBIN, RUTH McPHERSON, and MARGARET McCAFFERTY, Associate Members, whose husbands are sorely missed from our company.

The souvenir glasses, obtained with some effort by Norma Keeling, and embossed with the C.B. crest in gold, were a great success. One was given to each member attending any of the functions, and also to all American visitors. Any member who attended but did not receive a glass, please contact Hon. Sec. Gordon Gibson.

A few years ago it was Peter HASTINGS who suggested that a commemorative plaque be placed at 21 Henry Street and we were sorry that he could not be with us for the unveiling as he was then on an assignment in Indonesia. For your interest, we enclose a copy of Peter's article, published in the Sydney Morning Herald on April 27.

Among others unable to attend were:

Ken PRICE, Adelaide - very busy in Local Government matters.

Bob BURNSIDE, Bill KALBFELL - not quite fit enough at the time.

Percy PLEDGER - in hospital and quite ill.

Bob and Fay BEVAN have moved to Rockhampton. Many were asking after Bob, as he was missed in Sydney and Brisbane.

We were particularly sorry that Bill Estep was unable to meet with the Americans as he was in the very first contingent of S.I.S. personnel to cross the Pacific to Melbourne early in 1942. Florence was quite unwell during our activities, but we are happy to report that she is fit again now.

Our sincere condolences go to Marj HENDERSON, whose husband George passed away on 16th February. George was also a C.B. member. Marj has also suffered a heart attack, but is on the mend and made the effort to join us at Henry Street with members of her family.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Emmeline Armstrong, U.S. "The kindness of the C.B.-ers will be my best memory of Australia".

Phyllis Peirce, U.S., on being told why we wear rosemary on Anzac Day, "Whenever I cook with rosemary, I will think of what it means to the Aussies".

Al Jenkin, Qld. on the eve of the Henry Street do, "Don't worry, everything will be fine tomorrow". Thanks, Al.

Carl Henke, U.S., the morning after Henry Street, "You folks sure did us proud".

Mac Maroney, Vic., in a letter, "John and Barbara Larkin have taken home to Florida many wonderful memories of the Bicentennial Celebrations, and particularly of the March. 'Nothing like that in the States', was John's comment, and he was very proud to be part of that March".

Roma Hodsdon, new member, Qld. "It was a really great day and I hope it is not the last when we can all be together again".

Norma Keeling. "I was delighted to see Ruth Gauger who worked with me under Lester Truex, and Frank Ward, with whom I worked at Fighter Sector in Brisbane and then at C.B.". Norma showed Ruth and Frank her old autograph book, in which they had written 45 years ago.

I must add my quote, from an Address given on Anzac Day, 1943, by an Army Chaplain, whose name I cannot remember. But his words were a talisman to me then, just before I joined the Army, and they still are. After speaking of the evils of war, he said, "But there is one thing, a treasure of purest gold, which shines through it all. That treasure is friendship".

Dr. Abe Sinkov: "I had the honour and satisfaction to participate in the ANZAC Day parade. The management and organization of the parade were most impressive. There was a large number of participants who had been connected with intelligence activities and I was granted the special distinction of being in the front rank of that contingent.

A particular item of interest was the tremendous number of people who came to view the parade. They were lined up several rows deep on each side of the street for the entire length of the parade route. It was all a stirring testimonial of tribute and remembrance for those who had perished in the wars."

Daisy Bobin: "Sunday was a lovely day, and I was happy to be involved, in memory of Alf. Many thanks for the hospitality, and being able to say hello to so many folks".

Arthur Sims: "It was indeed a day that will, I believe, be indelibly imprinted on the hearts of all who were privileged to attend as we realise that we may never pass that way again".

Stewart Southam wrote with news of Anne (Moon) and Bill Chippendall; Bill Rogers who "continues to distinguish himself, having recently joined the B.H.P. board of directors"; and Pat Gill's doings as a real estate tycoon in Melbourne, as detailed in a newspaper clipping Stewart enclosed.

Phyllis Peirce, U.S.: "Today is our last full day here, leave for home tomorrow. Thank you and everyone for the wonderful hospitality you showed us all along the way. The lovely lawn party ... and I'll never forget the Anzac Day parade". Phyllis sent a special thank you to our inimitable Secretary, Gordon Gibson, whose raucous "Left-Rrrat-Left!" kept her in step. She walked with the aid of a stick but never missed a beat.

Incidentally, all our Americans will be sent a copy of this Newsletter.

Our sincere thanks to the "Team" in Melbourne who looked after our visitors when they first arrived in Australia. Heartfelt regrets to all who were unable to join us, we missed you. And to all those who by their attendance made it a time to remember, "Thank you for coming"!

Madeline Chidgey
Publicity Officer
1 Daphne Street,
Dolans Bay. N.S.W. 2229.

Radio secrets that helped win a war

"SYDNEY MORNING HERALD" 27/4/1988.

During World War II, Australia listened to Japanese military radio traffic, helping to change the course of the fighting in the Pacific. PETER HASTINGS reports.

ON SUNDAY, 60 Australian and 12 American Pacific War veterans will gather outside the entrance to a rambling, two-storey house in Brisbane's leafy, upmarket suburb Ascot for the unveiling of a plaque.

Number 21 Henry Street, or "Nyramdla" as some of us remember it, is now divided into four attractive home units. The garden is tidy, the outside painted and there are no longer armed guards on the gate to ask: "Where's your pass, soldier?"

Between September 1942 and August 1945, hundreds of Australian and US servicemen and women — later joined by British, Canadian and New Zealand counterparts — worked in the building or in temporary huts erected in nearby Ascot Park next to the racecourse.

Personnel comprised peacetime musicians, mathematicians, linguists, university gold medallists, skilled W/T (wireless telegraphist) operators, Middle East veterans, you name it ... they all rapidly learned one skill in common on arriving at number 21 — *ka/na*, the Japanese phonetic morse code.

The plaque commemorates that number 21 was a site of CB (Central Bureau) Headquarters, one of World War II's most secret and effective organisations. Its forward units operated in the islands and as far north as the Philippines while, as the war slowly turned in our favour, its forward HQ moved to Port Moresby, then to Hollandia (Jayapura) and ended the war in Manila.

Leading the US contingent on Sunday is 80-year-old Abe Sinkov, a former brigadier-general and one of Central Bureau's wartime co-directors and later a mathematics professor at Arizona State University.

One who won't be there is the other co-director, the late Colonel A. W. "Mick"

Sandford, a distinguished AIF officer whose skills and drive made a singular contribution to CB's success.

A member of a wealthy South Australian family and an Oxford language graduate, he made a tremendous reputation in the Middle East as a cryptanalyst.

CB had sister units in India, the US, and at the famed Bletchley Park in Britain. CB was the parent of DSD (Defence Signals Directorate), the most secret and fruitful of Australia's present intelligence organisations.

CB, part of MacArthur's South-West Pacific command, was broadly responsible for the interception, decryption and analysis of Japanese wartime operational traffic.

The official war history volumes refer time and again to the role of "allied intelligence", a euphemism for CB, in winning major sea and air battles against Japan through decoding and analysing

The former could read Japanese diplomatic traffic in the same way as the fabled Enigma machine, smuggled out of Poland early in the war, at Bletchley Park could read German diplomatic and military traffic.

In the Pacific War, intercepts intelligence was initially more successful with naval than with army wireless traffic. This may not have mattered because for most of 1942 Japanese naval traffic was more important as accurate analysis of Japanese naval messages led to US successes at the Coral Sea and Midway battles.

In a curious turnaround for one so sophisticated, MacArthur initially distrusted intercept analysis. His virtual refusal to accept highly accurate intelligence that the Japanese intended to take Port Moresby, for example, nearly landed him in a catastrophe which would have finished his career.

At the end of 1942, however, he accepted

“By early December 1941, Canberra knew from cryptanalysis that Japan would enter the war any day.”

Japanese operational messages, a capability of which Tokyo largely remained ignorant.

Although it operated on a financial shoestring, Australian code-cracking goes back to the 1920s. But it was the Pacific War that really got it going. In 1940, Paymaster Commander R. C. Nave, an Australian officer serving in the Royal Navy, returned to Australia and set up a small wireless intercept unit in Melbourne with the help of some Sydney University academics, including classics Professors Dale Trendall, A. P. Treweek, and the late T. G. Room, a mathematics professor. The group broke Japan's diplomatic traffic directed to Australia.

By early December 1941, Canberra knew from cryptanalysis that Japan would enter the war any day.

Early in 1942, Singapore's highly-trained wireless intercepts personnel moved to India, MacArthur's codebreaking unit left Corregidor for Australia bringing with it the "Purple Machine" and "Red Machine".

"Magic" intercept analysis from Washington that Japan did not intend to invade Australia.

By the same token, there was often a notable lack of liaison between various intercepts units. The US Navy unit in Melbourne, for example, sent its valuable intercept analysis direct to Admiral King in Washington bypassing an increasingly angry MacArthur.

At the same time MacArthur, a ruthless egotist, while using Australian cryptanalytical skills to the full, distrusted Australian operational use of intercept analysis and sought to limit its distribution.

The need for protection for the source of such intelligence was undoubted. On more than one occasion, the British sacrificed men and machines in operations in which they could have defeated the enemy on the basis of their intercept knowledge. But to have done so would have told the enemy they had an intimate knowledge of his codes.

And there were certainly occasions when US and Australian commanders talked too freely about what they knew. Australia's General Blamey was particularly guilty, thoroughly alarming the Americans in Washington in 1944 with his loose but highly accurate talk about Japanese operational intentions.

The US Navy and Air Force provided about half CB's headquarters personnel and Australian services the other half. CB field parties in north Australia and the islands were almost entirely manned by Australians.

As numbers increased — from 100 or so in mid-1942 in Melbourne to 1,000 in 1943 to 4,000 when advance HQ moved to Manila in 1945 — so did technology with improved direction-finding equipment, banks of teleprinters, specialist wireless sets and scrambler phones in forward wireless units.

As CB forward units prepared to move forward under US control, the Australians realised that in the New Guinea islands and in Borneo they would lose their hard-won intercept capability and the use of CB's all-important IBM machines.

Blamey complained but the US insisted on the move. As it turned out, CB units in Manila maintained a stream of intercept intelligence to Australian forces.

American dissemination procedures were not as efficient as the British and it was only when the US adopted British procedures in 1944 that Australia got the full benefit of both British and US "ultra" intelligence. Characteristically, MacArthur resisted the move.

In May 1945 Colonel Sinkov, Colonel Sandford and Wing Commander Booth wrote a joint appreciation, almost certainly drafted by Sandford, on the future of "Sigint" in the Pacific and the implications for Australia. I read it not long ago and it remains extraordinarily prescient about Australia's future needs. It probably influenced the decision two years later to continue CB in its present guise of Defence Signals Department.

A final note on "Mick" Sandford. He retired to Florence where he died of asthma many years ago. I have a vivid memory of a conversation with him 46 years ago when he put me, in his words, "on to a good thing" — the now dated but still urbane and witty novels of Ronald Firbank.

REUNION AT PHILLIP'S FOOTE.



Vic Lederer, Mac Maroney and Friend

LANE COVE RIVER BARBECUE, WEDNESDAY APRIL 27



Norma Keeling - Who could withhold subs from such a cheery Treasurer?!



ASSEMBLY POINT: Publicity Officer Madeline, with recording pen at the ready, with Secretary Gordon.



THE MARCHERS - IN MARTIN PLACE



"A woman's work ..

.....!"

Peter Colless seated -
cheery and brave, with
two artificial legs.

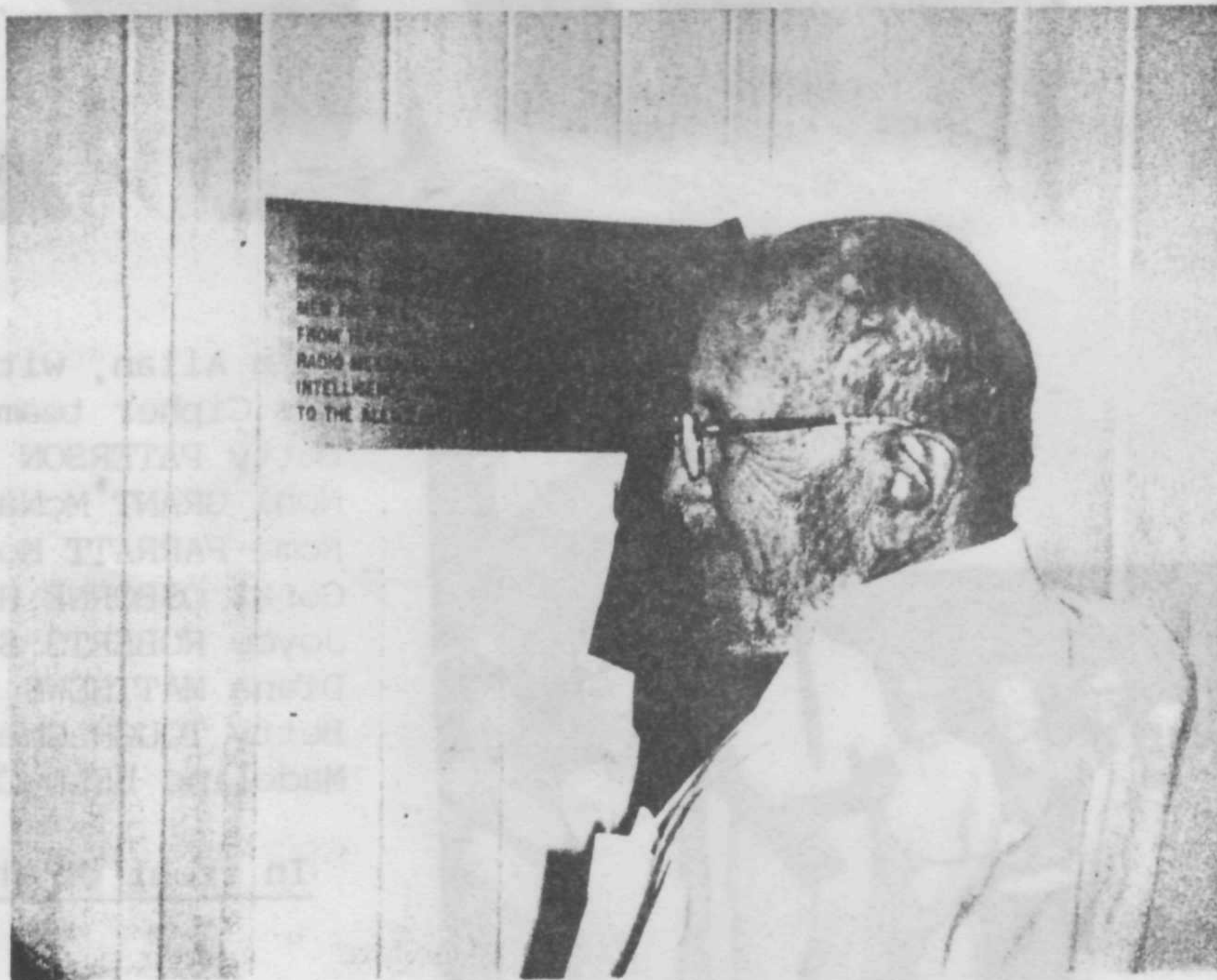


Iain Allan, with some of
his Cipher team: L to R:
Betty PATERSON Lording
Noni GRANT McNaught
Roma PARRATT Hodsdon
Coral OSBORNE Hinds
Joyce ROBERTS Sandars
Diana MATTHEWS Parker
Betty TOUGH Chessell
Madeline BELL Chidgey

In front of the Garage



Michael Casey, President of C.B.I.C.A., giving
us all a Welcome
Clarrie Millar in the background



Dr. Abe Sinkov - and the unveiled plaque