



CENTRAL BUREAU INTELLIGENCE CORPS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 3

SEPTEMBER 1992

V.P. DAY.

A small contingent represented C.B.I.C.A. at the Sydney commemoration service on 15 August. This service marked the 47th. anniversary of the cessation of hostilities in World War II. It was a Christian service full of ritual, symbolism and tradition.

The officiating Service Chaplain, from the RAAF, must have been focussed on the horror of war when preparing his address, particularly on the recent and current trouble spots throughout the world where people are still killing one another in an organised way. "Mankind is not basically good", said the Air Force Chaplain. "We are predisposed to self destruction."

His Excellency, The Governor, in impressive naval uniform, with Vice-Regal decorum placed the first wreath. President Jim Williams placed a wreath on behalf of our Association.

After Last Post and Reveille echoed across Martin Place the few hundred veterans present at the Service folded their banners and gradually left the scene. Some of them, or perhaps many of them were contemplating the Chaplain's view of mankind and the evidence which supports that view.

EXECUTIVE NEWS.

From The President's Desk.

Our November reunion with our Victorian and South Australian counterparts is drawing closer. We hope some Queenslanders can make it, but it is a long journey for them to Canberra.

Sadly our Vice- President Aub Roberts' wife Gwen passed away recently. Quite a number of our members attended the funeral service at St. Charles Church, Ryde. Gwen was always a regular attender at our "Phillip's Foote" Reunions and she will be missed by all who knew her.

Betty Chessell's husband Tom also passed away recently. Our worthy Secretary Gordon attended to matters pertaining to our condolences on this occasion. Betty is a Queensland member and I am told will be in attendance in Canberra.

Our member Bill Kalbfell passed away and we were represented at his funeral by Marion and Stan Winn.

We continue to receive applications for membership which is most gratifying. Our finances are in good shape thanks to our watchful Treasurer, Norma.

All the best

See you all in Canberra.

Jim Williams.

Hon Secretary's Par.

Once again courtesy of Les Downer, the 65 members, spouses and friends who have "signed up" for the Canberra Reunion will receive with this Newsletter locational maps showing the venues for our three week-end functions: Old Canberra House, the War Memorial and the Ainslee Football Club, as well as the Tourist Office and other points of interest. There will be no parking problems, says Les, at any of the established venues, but there could be in the shopping areas of Civic Centre on the Friday night and Saturday morning. See you on Saturday November 7th.!

Four new members have recently joined our Association. They are Nancy Miller (nee Boyd) of Gympie Bay, Bob James of Newcastle and Jane Williams and Joyce Grainger, both of Narrabeen. We look forward to renewing acquaintance at one of our functions in the near future.

Bob James writes that after brief service with C.B. he was posted to Combined Operational Intelligence Centre where all operational intelligence matters were consolidated and fed to the Commander -in-Chief and the Chiefs of Staff of all Services. The C.O.I.C was later absorbed into General MacArthur's command structures as part of the Advanced Echelon of G.H.Q. S.W.P.A. Bob also has an amusing story of having his attention drawn to a rather strange figure outside his tent in Hollandia. It was that of a man naked except for a loincloth standing on his head in the blazing tropical sun with arms and legs in a grotesque yoga pose. Wait for it! On inquiry Bob was informed that this man belonged to Central Bureau. Who could that have been?

Gordon Gibson
Hon. Secretary.

The Treasurer's Message.

A good response is being shown by our members and their friends for our forthcoming Canberra Reunion and I'd like to thank members for sending in their monies so promptly and am looking forward to receiving more bookings before the "deadline".

Last month I spent another couple of weeks up in Brisbane where I stay with an ex A.W.A. friend of mine. It seems incredible its over 12 months since we were all up at 21 Henry Street. Brisbane is certainly a changing city and now their "Southgate" on the site of Expo is something for them to be proud of. I recommend visitors to visit there and spend some hours enjoying this lovely spot. Also after Al. Jenkins recommendation to visit St. Helena Is. I spent a day deep in

Australia's Convict History plus enjoying a 30 minute catamaran ride across Moreton Bay.

Caught up at Sizzlers with a couple of Brisbane C.B. members, Val Miller and Sybil Brady and enjoyed a delightful lunch together reminiscing about our CB days.

Was very interested to read that our member, Roy Ward had been involved with the Olympic Games in Barcelona as one of the officials and now he's off to Jakarta to referee for the World Jnr. Badminton Championships---what a great life--- thanks Roy for your letter, sorry we won't see you in Canberra.

A short note of interest from Allan Norton saying he was with Jack Bleakley, the author of "The Eavesdroppers" until the end of the war in Townsville, Moresby, Batchelor, San Miguel and the Philippines.

Just in closing---would anyone who is not already collecting used stamps be kind enough to send them to me as I donate them to The Christian Blind Society. I'd be most grateful. And now my "usual".

A perfectionist is one who takes great pains and gives them to other people.

Norma Keeling.

CENTRAL BUREAU AND HMAS CANBERRA

It might be a perverse way of looking at things but perhaps an alleged intelligence failure puts more emphasis on the list of signal intelligence successes. Our field commanders expected to be forewarned of enemy threats and per-

haps had their guard down when they were not alerted by intelligence.

"Allied intelligence, in getting knowledge of that Japanese force to our Admirals at Guadalcanal left a lot to be desired" This is a quote from Mr. Dean Murray, a retired Navy Commander published in the Sydney Sun-Herald. Considering that 18 year old midshipman Murray saw his mates die on HMAS Canberra fifty years ago his statement probably reflects some traditional naval reticence and understatement. In similar circumstances a quote from an Army man, Bruce Ruxton for example, may have been much more forthright and emotional.

HMAS Canberra and USS Chicago, Quincy, Astoria and Jarvis were sitting ducks off Savo Island in the pre-dawn hours of August 9, 1942. They and other warships had been protecting the transports which had deposited United States Marines on Guadalcanal and they were still guarding the beachheads. Canberra's guns were unloaded and her crew unalerted and it was despatched to the ocean floor under a hail of Japanese shells. To quote the Sun-Herald of August 2 ".....in just forty minutes more than 1000 Australians and Americans had died in a ferocious attack by an inferior Japanese force". Vice Admiral Mikawa made his attack in the light of parachute flares dropped by two Japanese sea planes.

Given the skills of our signals intelligence people in forecasting enemy movements and giving due warning, it was a disaster of some magnitude. Indeed Jack Bleakley's research uncovered references to this period when he was writing his fine book, "The Eavesdroppers". He says that "this

was not an outstanding period for the cryptanalysts who were struggling with changes in the Japanese naval JN 25 code". A critical message from Admiral Mikawa to his forces sent on August 8 was intercepted but not "fully decoded" until the action was over.

An obvious question to ask is why routine traffic analysis had not raised any alarms. It would have been out of character for the Japanese to have been maintaining radio silence and it is said that they had reconnaissance aircraft over our fleet some hours before the attack. In relation to the Guadalcanal campaign Jack says "Traffic analysis assisted to provide a fruitful source of Sigint, although not all the opportunities presented were able to be availed of by the Allied forces". On the other hand he says that traffic analysis intelligence warned of the presence of a dangerous Japanese Naval striking force assembling in the Solomons area at the time the landings were being made on Guadalcanal.

And HMAS Canberra waited in the pre-dawn, unalerted and unprepared. Perhaps one day we might find out what FRUMEL (Fleet Radio Unit Melbourne) listened to. But given naval reticence, perhaps not. Sorry, Mr. Murray it certainly seems that on this occasion something did go wrong but I don't think you will ever get a precise and clear exposition of what really happened.

PEOPLE



BILL KALBFELL died on 8 July 1992 aged 84.

Marion Winn admits to a feeling of deep sadness as she wrote the following words.
"To those of us who had the privilege

of knowing and working with Bill Kalbfell, he was memorable for many reasons.

He had lived in New Guinea, his army number was NG24, he was familiar with the Japanese language, he was a quiet man, liked and respected by all.

Bill and Vic Lederer joined No. 4 Special Wireless Section in the Middle East after the evacuation of the Allied forces from Greece and Crete, and on return of the Section to Australia, they were among the foundation members of the unit which became known as Central Bureau. He was in the first of our teams to work in New Guinea - 55 W/T Section - and thereafter spent varying periods at C.B. Ascot and in postings "up north".

On page 203 of Geoff Ballard's book, there is a report of the work of a detachment from 55 which states, 'There was a great volume of low grade cipher messages which fell open to Bill Kalbfell's magic'. After the war he served for many years with the Army of Occupation in Japan and retired with the rank of Major in 1960.

Bill attended a few of our recent Anzac Day Reunions where he especially enjoyed the company of his particular C.B. colleagues, Vic Lederer and Nobby Clarke, seated in the corner of the very front section of Phillip's Foote where others of us 'visited' with them to talk of C.B. days.

Neville Wintin, Stan and I attended Bill's funeral at the Woronora Crematorium, quite a modest occasion, befitting the man he was. He leaves fine memories."

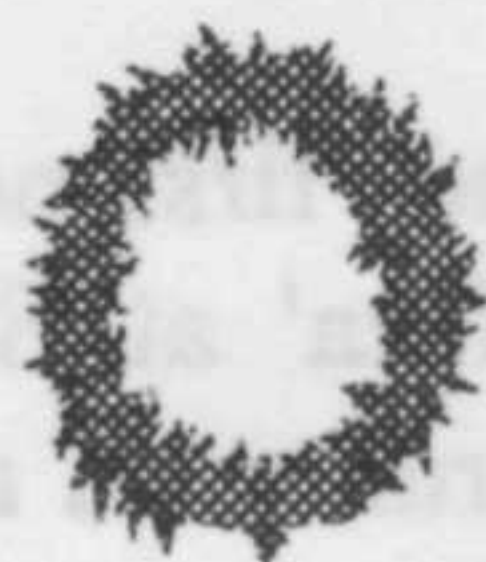
Vic Lederer also remembers Bill with great respect and contributes this final Vale to his old comrade.

"Bill, Nobby Clarke and I first met on the rotten old 'Mendoza' at Suez, packed closer than sardines in a tin and en route home, and soon the three of us became good friends. They had joined No. 4 W/T Section as Japanese linguists, prior to which Bill had served in ANGAU in New Guinea, having - in peacetime - been a Supercargo on some of Burns Philps boats.

Back in Melbourne Bill and I shared digs at South Yarra, both of us being among the foundation members of C.B. under the command of then Captain (later Colonel) A.W. 'Mic' Sandford, the best C.O. I had struck in my army experience. In those days Bill and I had a yen for the amber fluid and were 'regulars' at Chloe's and The Mitre. Our landlady, with soul-destroying monotony, daily made us soggy beet-root sandwiches which we religiously fed to the ducks in the pond of the Botanical Gardens during our lunch-time walks.

Subsequently we served in Moresby, Kaindi and other New Guinea areas, and at CB HQ at 21 Henry Street, Ascot Brisbane. I still remember the awful shock we had when sound asleep in our tent in Moresby when a terrible explosion shook the ground. We jumped up, thinking that a Jap bomb had had a near miss, but then saw the skyline line lit up blood red and next day heard to our horror that a lot of our infantrymen (2/33 Bn and others) had died as a result of their plane striking some power lines, just as they were on their way home for some well deserved leave.

Yes, Bill was a great friend and we had a very happy association and lots of fun too."



As noted by President Jim, GWEN ROBERTS supported Association activities from the time husband Aub joined the Executive a few years ago. Her participation declined only when she fell victim to a protracted and debilitating illness which claimed her life on 7th July. Our condolences have been extended to Aub and family.

New member NANCY MILLER (nee Boyd) was an AWAS operating a switchboard in Newcastle in 1942. Says Nancy "I was upended and sent to Melbourne for training before ending up in the Henry St. tin shed". This is the shed or garage described by Helen Kenny and Madge Chidgey a few Newsletters ago.

For JOY GRAINGER her C.B. episode was so remote that it was almost like some imagined experience. She had worked in solitude, in secret and mostly at night. But she does have a letter from W/Cmdr Booth dated August 45 thanking her for her excellent services. She had no subsequent contact with anyone from C.B. until she met Marion Winn at Narrabeen. Joy has now joined C.B.I.C.A.

ON ULTRA ACTIVE SERVICE

(The latest news from Geoff BALLARD)

"Sincere thanks to all members who responded to the call for more sales of the book in the March issue of Newsletter.

As a result, there has been a great surge in sales not only to individuals

but also to University, TAFE and secondary school libraries. This has enabled loans totalling \$5,000.00, kindly made available by the ASWG Association and one of its members, to be repaid in full- and we have now broken even, a most satisfactory situation. Sales continue at a high rate and we are now down to less than 200 copies of the original 2,000 printed.

I wish to express my special gratitude to Steve Mason for his professional advice in the management of our book account which has handled more than \$50,000.00 in transactions during the past year.

There have been reviews in eight more interstate and provincial papers, as well as in the British journal 'Intelligence and National Security', and the US 'Cryptologia' and 'Cryptologic Quarterly'. Reviews are scheduled for the journals of the Australian Defence Forces and the Australian War Memorial in the near future.

ENIGMA REUNION - Bedford, UK, October 3/4, 1992

I was delighted to receive an invitation to this reunion and plans to attend are well under way. The programme will include lectures on the following - the Allied 'Sigint' effort, and I have been asked to cover the Australian involvement; the 'Enigma', with an actual machine there for us to 'touch'; and the fabulous 'computer' invented for cryptographic solution. There will also be a guided visit to Bletchley Park, including some of the famous huts 'where it all happened'."

Geoff Ballard.

RAAF COMMAND

**Squadron Leader
William J. Clarke
M.B.E. harks back half a century.**

This item is based on an interview with Bill Clarke recorded in Phillips Foote on Anzac Day. It is best that this background be explained because some of the material revealed is not the kind of information which might be brought forth in a more formal and stereotyped interview situation.

At this time it is not clear whether pre 1942 references to "RAAF Command" are generic or specific. Jack Bleakley writing in "The Eavesdroppers" mentions that RAAF Command, in September 1941, selected Roy Booth to head the small RAAF Sigint group which existed from about mid 1941. It is possible, however that "RAAF Command" in the specific sense was not born until about June 1942.

By that time General MacArthur was more or less building segments of the RAAF into his organisation. Central Bureau, which had a RAAF component, moved to Brisbane and the interceptors working in Townsville had become 1 Wireless Unit. From Brisbane and points north there were elements of the Air Force working very directly for American establishments. It seems that RAAF Command took over the nominal command of elements working close to the Americans. RAAF Command was required to work in conjunction with RAAF Headquarters.

Says Bill;
"I was recovering from malaria in Heidelberg Hospital when I was told

of my posting to Brisbane in mid 1942. C.S.O RAAF Command Group Captain Wiggins asked me if I had any briefings from RAAF Headquarters. I told him I had reported to Section 10 which had all the data on ionospheric conditions like black spots and skip frequencies adding that I received a lot of information which I didn't know anything about. He was not perturbed and assured me that I would find it very interesting and different to what I had been through at Milne Bay and with 4 Fighter Sector at Port Moresby.

I made my way to Henry Street and met Roy. He introduced me to Mick Sandford, Major Norman Webb of the British Army, Eric Nave and Abe Sinkov. They were all in one big room with cross conversations going on in all directions. Roy had his Secretary, Marion Manson, alongside. Roy was a very serious type of man and he didn't joke very much. Mick would have a shot at him across the table and I could see red haired Marion's eyes blazing when Mick made these passes about her boss. They gave me a little office at the back of the building."

"Liaison with RAAF Headquarters was more complex than it should have been because at the time Air Vice Marshall Jones and Air Vice Marshall Bostock were at loggerheads. It dated back to the time when they were together at the Academy and something happened----one was promoted over the other."

When the wireless units were being formed Bill was concerned about the training of intercept operators and used his friendship with Wing Commander O'Neill in Melbourne to ensure that the Officer-in Charge of the Sigs School

selected only the top graduates from the wireless operators course to be sent to Brisbane for Kana training. From one of the early intakes from the Radio School we received the C.B. President, Jim Williams and Ron Tabley. If they had not been chosen for intercept duties they would have proceeded on aircrew courses to become Navs. or A.G's. or both. We were pleased when they agreed to become "Intercept" ops. with the Wireless Units.

There is evidence that the MacArthur style of command and the demands of a war unlike any other in the experience of Australia's ageing military establishment with its very British roots caused grave problems when the MacArthur command became very closely involved with Australian forces as it certainly did in the area of signals intelligence. It is not surprising, therefore, that RAAF Command had to steer a very difficult course to prevent the Americans coming into collision with RAAF Headquarters.

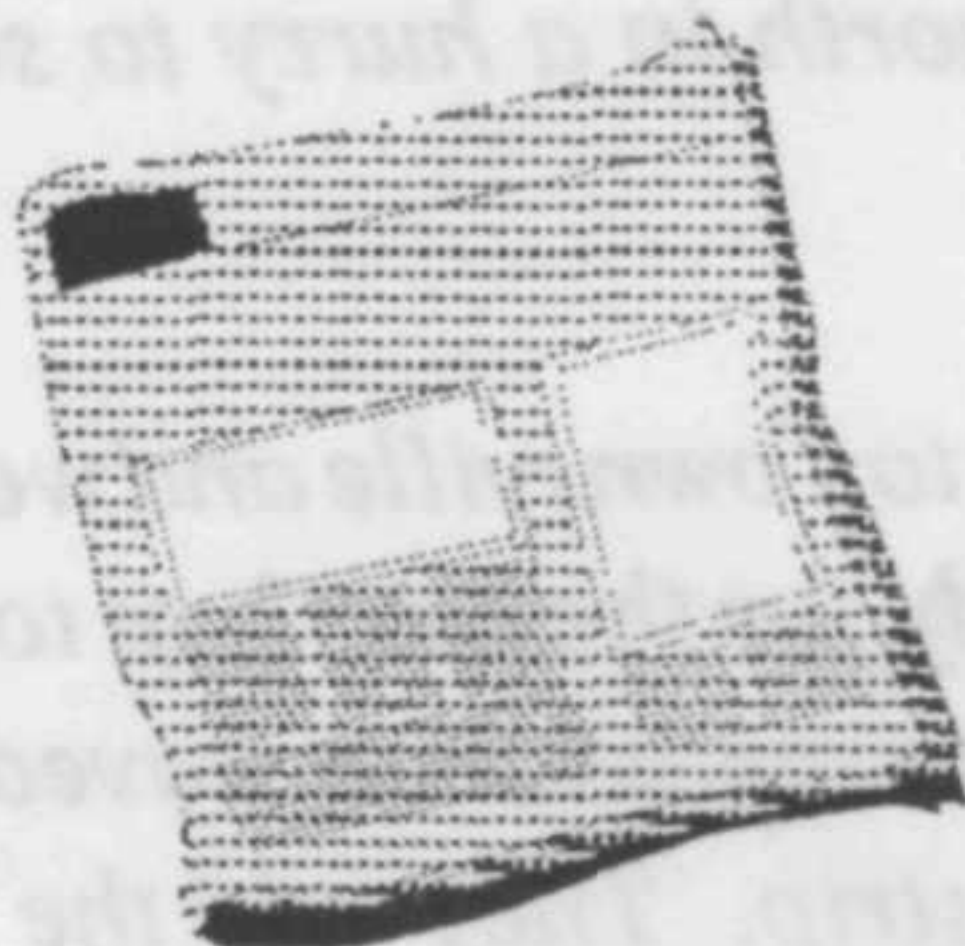
"I got carpeted when the Leyte invasion took place! The Americans worked fast. MacArthur would say what he wanted and expect to get it. Woe betide anyone who said something like 'no...you can't have RAAF personnel until their postings are approved!'. So, as we all know, Wireless Unit personnel did join the Leyte invasion fleet without any delay. Group Captain Wiggins, sent for those two chaps from C.B., Roy Booth and myself. ~We have an adverse signal from Headquarters signed by Air Vice Marshall Jones', he announced. 'RAAF personnel are aboard the ships for the Philippines and there is no official posting.' They were identified as sigs personnel so I was given use of the A.V.M's Beaufort bomber

to go north in a hurry to sort things out.

We got to Townsville and were fuelled up ready for the next hop to Merauke when an ambulance waved us down on the strip. They told the pilot that we had to be vaccinated as smallpox had broken out at Merauke. Then we had a ten hour delay in the transit mess at Townsville. We got talking to Jack Mahar, a met officer, and Billy Brown the cricketer who was piloting transport planes so time passed quickly. At Hollandia no one knew who we were nor did they want to know so we proceeded to Biak and spoke with 1 W.U. C.O., Cliff Hattam. You see the trouble was that we hadn't got any information at all from 1 W.U. as to what personnel had moved to Hollandia to go on the ships and the L.S.T. and that's what Melbourne was upset about.

So we flew on the remaining few miles to Noemfoor. With some trepidation I knocked on the door. 'Come in, what do you want' said Air Commodore Cobby. I am from RAAF Command compliments of AVM Bostock. His eyes shot up.... 'You're from the crowd that put those boys on the Headquarters ship without postings.' I had collected the list of names from Cliff Hattam at Biak. As I handed him the list and he handed it to his Sergeant his ranting was ceaseless. 'Don't ever let this happen again.'

As Bill's mind still muses about those events almost half a century ago he recalls how the then Minister of State for Air, Mr. Drakeford was too slow in making decisions himself or having decisions made. He wonders how in, the circumstances that existed at the time, the Wireless Units operated as efficiently as they did.



EDITORIAL.

In recent times there has been a flood of information about signals intelligence. Just a few weeks ago 2GB news carried an item about a decoded Japanese message foreshadowing by two months the Kokoda attack. Nevertheless, said the news broadcast, Generals Blamey and MacArthur did not act to reinforce our positions.

On 21 July the Bulletin published a piece about Bletchley Park where British codebreakers (and Captain Nave) worked in secret. The world's first computer was developed there as an aid to code breaking.

A flood may be; but the dam of information in Australia has not burst. In the Sun Herald of 31 August historian James Rusbridger says he has a letter from a British Cabinet Minister pointing out that the Australian Government has not released wartime intelligence material on the breaking of Japanese naval codes to academics and the general public because of a British veto over their publication. Apparently Britain's top secret eavesdropping unit, GCHQ is still concerned, in 1992, that release of the information "will damage the security of the Commonwealth".

David Jenkins, a Sydney journalist has just had published a beautifully produced hard cover volume entitled "Battle Surface 1942-1945". It records in remarkable detail the story of Japan's submarine warfare against

Australia. David has accessed many sources in Australia and indeed in Japan itself. He has devoted many paragraphs to the signals intelligence (intercept) activities of FRUMEL, the American Fleet Radio unit in Melbourne.

David did, however, hit the dam wall when he tried to get to some Australian material. He says that most of the Australian files on signals intelligence were closed to him because they are protected by a seventy five year embargo. I wonder if that is a result of the British veto?

There is still time to join in with your comrades in Canberra in November. If you have not already responded one further form is included with your copy of "Newsletter". Please note that if you have not previously requested accommodation you will need to make your own arrangements.

See you in the CAPITAL (and bring a story for "Newsletter" with you.)

Dennis Moore
Publicity Officer.
183 Sylvania Road, Miranda 2228
02 524 6267.