



**CENTRAL
BUREAU
INTELLIGENCE
CORPS
ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATED**

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**Dennis Moore
Publicity Officer
183 Sylvania Road,
Miranda 2228
TEL: (02) 524 6267**

THE MERAUKE INCIDENT

It happened in March, 1945; at Merauke in Dutch New Guinea (nowadays it is Indonesia) in one of those buildings we used to call a mess; you know the sort of place it was; typical of many of the messes which fringed Pacific Island airstrips; most of us have been in one or two. Oppressively hot, humid and primitive. A young Aussie Flight Lieutenant wearing those distinctive, charismatic RAAF pilots' wings strode in with jaw set and eyes quickly scanning the usual assortment of sweat soaked Allied servicemen in tropic dress. Young Aussies were pretty aggressive types in those days. In addition to any culturally induced national characteristics, training for war fostered assertiveness.

The Aussie spotted his target. The target was also a pilot but not in RAAF uniform; he was Dutch. What happened next had nothing at all to do with his being Dutch, at least I assume it didn't. The pilots exchanged a few words. According to C.B.I.C.A. member Lou Harris, who was thereabouts at the time, "there was no unanimity of thought and it is alleged a flurry of punches was thrown by a certain Flight Lieutenant." The RAAF engineer, in partnership with his skipper, "took care" of the Dutch co-pilot.

Lest you hasten to decry Aussie aggression there were mitigating circumstances which should be revealed. You will not, however, find any mitigation in the Department of Defence record of the "Merauke Incident."

This is the official record.

"The Dakota in question was A65-60 (VH-CUS) which blew its starboard tyre on takeoff from Merauke on 31 March 1945. The aircraft groundlooped, just missing a tractor which was parked 25 feet off the edge of the airstrip. The aircraft was being flown by Flight Lieutenant R.J.Graves and was operated by 38 Squadron. RAAF Historical Section does not hold further detail of the incident."

RAAF Historical Section might not hold any further details but our members Keith Carolan and Lou Harris do. They were on board VH-CUS on 31 March 1945. Keith and Lou were RAAF Wireless Unit people on their way to join LST 696 to participate in the landing at Labuan Island, Borneo. They boarded the aircraft in Townsville en route to Morotai. VH-CUS was the usual aerial workhorse with a mixture of human and other cargo; in this case diesel generators chained to the floor behind a steel mesh bulkhead. We have Lou Harris' first person account of what took place.

"We left Townsville in bad weather and had to return. When we resumed the journey, the weather seemed to be worse but after a rough trip, we managed to land at Merauke to re-fuel for the trip over the mountains.

At take-off we noticed the usual DC3 situation — engines full throttle, wings flexing, fuel running down the wings due to full tanks, vibration etc. The metal strip was of reasonable length, with heavy timber jungle on our left, swampy/marshy areas and a lagoon on our right and jungle at the end of the strip. There was a tractor well down the strip; it was used to pull out bogged aircraft; if you went off the strip the aircraft bogged immediately. Everything seemed to be normal —lots of noise, a shaking aircraft, tail up in the take-off position, plenty of speed. We flashed past the tractor—and then, to our dismay, things started to happen. There was a loud bang, a grinding sound, a brief excursion in the air thanks to a ground loop, a thud or two—and so on. Fortunately the chains on the generators held and the bulkhead served its purpose. The passengers? They had cuts, bruises damaged backs and knees and a stunned look or two. Perhaps there was some swearing.”

Lou confirmed that the Dakota blew the starboard tyre and sustained other consequent damage. High octane fuel leaked at an “alarming rate”. The passengers evacuated that plane quick smart. They were careful to avoid the “medics” who wanted to see them. No way were they going to be held in swampy Merauke or sent back to Moresby or Townsville. A day or so later they did get to Morotai.

But before that there was more action on the airstrip. Lou continues his first person account.

“(i) a Dutch pilot, flying a Mitchell bomber (B25) had taken off ahead of our DC3.

(ii) the nose wheel of the B25 failed to retract, it seemed to be faulty and the Dutchman decided to land at Merauke and take his chances.

(iii) our crashed DC3, badly leaking fuel was clearly visible, located towards one end of the strip.

(iv) the Dutchman did not follow the established procedure of flying around to use up most of his fuel before attempting a landing [apparently fuel couldn't be dumped from a B25].

(v) nor did he land on the part of the strip away from our crashed aircraft, knowing that the strip was metal, that his aircraft would not be under control on landing and that sparks were inevitable.

(vi) by a stroke of luck the B25 missed the DC3 by approx. 20 metres, slewing, as it happened, to “our” side of the strip area rather than the other, jungle side of the strip area.”

Bob Graves and his engineer, as their duty demanded, were standing by their crashed aircraft to supervise fuel removal. They were somewhat irate as they watched the antics of the B.25. They reckoned that they had already used up their share of the day's luck. The thought of being incinerated in a petrol fire ignited by sparks from the out of control B25 did not appeal. By the time they reached the mess they had built up a fair pressure of suppressed anger.

Ultimately Bob spent 10 days in the brig for clocking the Dutchman.

EPILOGUE.

As the years passed Lou and Keith often thought about that Dakota pilot; they realised that his skill under crash conditions gave them the future they both enjoyed. In 1991 Lou wrote to the Dept. of Defence and discovered his name, but no more. Then, out of the blue last year, press stories about mustard gas in Australia detailed the experiences of former RAAF pilot Robert Graves: yes, it was the same bloke! Last year, in September, Keith Carolan, Lou Harris and Bob Graves lunched at Bob's place. “It proved to be both a nostalgic and enjoyable day”, says Keith.

There were other Wireless Unit people on VH-CUS. If you were there, or if you know of anyone on their way to Labuan via Merauke and Morotai fifty years ago this month Keith and Lou would like to hear from you. They are contactable through ‘Newsletter’.

On 7 September the “Gosford Express” carried some words and pictures of the characters of this yarn as did the country edition of the “Sun-Herald” of 25 September. The pilot had become a journalist in civvy street.

EXECUTIVE NEWS.

From the President's Desk.

On behalf of the Executive Committee I extend to all members of Central Bureau Intelligence Corps Association Inc. best wishes for 1995, the 50th anniversary of the end of the 1939-1945 war. Yes the Department of Consumer Affairs have approved of the Association's application for incorporation. Congratulations to our Hon. Secretary, Gordon Gibson who pursued this goal from September last year through to 6th. March 1995.

Annual General Meeting 1995.

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Com-

bined Services Club, Barrack Street, Sydney on Monday 6th. February 1995. Approximately twenty members were present.

The A.G.M proceeded in accordance with the agenda distributed with the December (1994) Newsletter.

* Apologies were received and recorded by the Hon. Secretary.

* The Hon. Secretary read the previous A.G.M. minutes, held 7th. February 1994. The minutes, as read were confirmed and accepted as a true and accurate record of that meetings proceedings.

* The President's report was presented - as in the past the report reflects the years activities - thanking those who were able to attend and those who were responsible for the organisation of the various functions.

* The Hon. Secretary presented and read the minutes of the Special General Meeting (15th. August 1994) at which the decision to proceed with an application for incorporation was adopted. The minutes of the Special General Meeting were accepted by those members who were present at the S.G.M. 15th. August '94.

*The Hon. Treasurer, Norma Keeling, presented an audited income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st. December 1994.

The report showed receipts for year \$3826.69, expenditure \$3718.98. Balance at bank was \$1432.53, an increase of \$107.71 from the year ended 31st. December 1993. The Treasurer's report was adopted.

* Election of office bearers.

The President declared all positions vacant and called for nominations for the various positions. It was proposed and adopted by those present, that the office bearers for the past year, 1994 be re-elected for the year 1995.

The office bearers for 1995 are:-

President	Aub. Roberts.
Vice Presidents	Noni Mc.Naught Michael Casey
Secretary	Gordon Gibson
Treasurer	Norma Keeling
Publicity Officer	Dennis Moore

Committee Members

Madeline Chidgey
Helen Kenny
Bruce Bentwich

* Appointment of Auditor :- Our Honorary Auditor, Ron Chidgey, was not present but Madeline assured the meeting that Ron was willing to undertake the task for another year. Our thanks, Ron, for your assistance over the years and appreciation for your ongoing commitment to the Association.

* Anzac Day arrangements :-

Anzac eve (Monday 24th. April) wreath laying ceremony at the Cenotaph; assemble 1830 hours at corner of Pitt St. and Martin Place for wreath laying parade with A.I.A. members.

Anzac Day march —Assemble 0900 hours at Hunter and Elizabeth St. C.B. members will again march in close proximity with Australian Intelligence Association and "Z" Force groups. After the march the reunion will be held at Phillip's Foote Restaurant.

*General Business.

The main topic discussed was the 1995 reunion; namely location and time.

The two options for the reunion to mark the 50th. anniversary of the end of World War II were:

Location —Brisbane or Canberra.

Time —V.P. Day 15th. August 1995 or November 1995 as normal for our reunions.

After spirited discussion it was moved and seconded and unanimously accepted, in view of the various arrangements proposed by the Federal and State Governments, there would not be a combined reunion to commemorate V.P. Day. Members should join in their capital city's organised activities.

Central Bureau's 1995 reunion was debated and it was agreed the venue to be Canberra on Saturday and Sunday 11th. and 12th. November 1995.

Reunion 1996 will be held in Brisbane.

At the closing of the 1995 Annual General Meeting members stood in silent tribute to deceased members and associates.

I would like to thank the members for their support over the past year and for re-electing me as President for the ensuing 12 months.

D.S.D OPEN DAY.

A group of C.B. Members attended D.S.D. Canberra on Saturday, 18th. February. The visit proved to be both interesting and entertaining. One unexpected item was a recital by the D.S.D. choir; a welcome change from the numerous technical displays. Our tour guides, Peter Wilkinson and Fran Lethbridge are to be thanked and congratulated on the manner in which they conducted the tour, enabling the group to see the maximum number of displays.

BERETS.

Bruce Lovett contacted me suggesting that members obtain and wear berets for parades etc. Bruce has offered the purchase and handling. He stated the price if quantity purchased would be approximately \$12 plus postage and handling. I shall be in contact with Bruce and raising the suggestion at the next Executive meeting early April.

Aub. Roberts.
15 Gregory St.,
Putney
(02) 807 1426

HON. SECRETARY'S PAR.

V.P. DAY CELEBRATIONS - FIFTY YEARS ON.

There was a lot of discussion of this important matter at the A.G.M. Those present gave their opinions and the views of quite a few of those absent, who had been sufficiently interested to write letters or make phone calls, were relayed to the meeting. It soon became evident that some fairly "high key" celebrations were planned for all capital cities (and other centres) throughout Australia and that there would be considerable local attachment to these celebrations which will be organised by the Department of Veterans Affairs in conjunction with State Branches of the R.S.L. In the end the consensus was that C.B.I.C.A. members should, on this very special occasion, join in the activities organised in their own city or other centre and get themselves involved in local celebrations, which will of course be widely publicised in the press and ex-service publications. In Sydney, for example, the proposed commemoration functions have already been published in "Reveille". They will include a march of Australian and Allied Ex-servicemen and Women who served during 1939-1945 on Saturday 12th. August and on Tuesday 15th.

August there will be services at the Cenotaph followed by a ticker-tape parade ending with entertainment at Darling Harbour and a fireworks display at night. As already stated similar commemorative functions will be held throughout Australia, so the word is "be in it", wherever you may be. More details in the next Newsletter.

COMBINED REUNION NUMBER 7 - CANBERRA 11th.-12th. NOVEMBER 1995.

As foreshadowed in the last Newsletter, the venue and date for the 1995 Combined Reunion was left to the A.G.M. to decide and the decision was as above. It was also resolved that Brisbane should be the venue for the 1996 Reunion and we hope that decision will make Betty Chessell, Al. Jenkin and other Queensland members feel a little mollified following the A.G.M's failure to endorse Brisbane as the venue for the 50th. Anniversary Celebrations. Some of those who attended the D.S.D. Open Day in Canberra stayed at the Eagle Hawk Hill Resort and were favourably impressed with it as a venue for the Reunion this November. Situated about twenty k's out of the City itself (within NSW border) it has a quiet location, swimming pool, spa and sauna, tennis courts, barbecues, conference rooms — all mod. cons. Full details about arrangements for Combined Reunion Number 7 will be published in the next Newsletter. Meanwhile keep the date in mind. And once again a warm welcome is extended to all A.S.W.G. and R.A.A.F. W.U. Association members to join us. I know we can rely on Steve Mason, Harold Jones and Mac. Jamieson to pass the word on to their members. Thank you, Steve, Harold and Mac.!

CENTRAL BUREAU INTELLIGENCE CORPS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED.

Yes, we are an incorporated body at last and in case you wonder what difference it makes I can tell you it makes us \$317 a year poorer. That is the premium payable to G.I.O. for a public liability insurance coverage. In balance, however, it appears to have been a wise precaution to take in view of the possibility of an untoward incident at one of our functions involving personal injury or damage to property possibly resulting in a member of the Executive or even just an Association member being sued for a large sum of money. These things are happening lately.

NEW MEMBERS.

Eric Fleming of Cronulla, NSW was with 6 W.U. in Leyte and Luzon. Phillip Burrill of Taroom, Tasmania was at Tarlac (Luzon) in 1945. Phil is only our second member from Tassie. Nancy Goldsteen (nee Nelson) lives at Coombabah, Queensland and was at 21 Henry Street from December '43 to December '45. A warm welcome to C.B.I.C.A., Eric, Phillip and Nancy ! Hope to meet you at one of our functions in the near future. After the recent rain in Sydney I'm looking forward to a bright sunny Anzac Day for the March and Reunion. See you there !.

Gordon Gibson
Hon. Secretary
7 Lindsay Close
PYMBLE
02 449 9450.

TREASURER'S COLUMN.

A special Anzac Day "Australia Remembers 1945-1995" coming up soon which means another C.B. get together which I know we all enjoy and look forward to. Being the 50th. year since hostilities ceased in W.W.II I'm sure our numbers marching and attending our luncheon will be up on other years, I do hope so.

I remember on Anzac Day in my early teens my girl friend and I would get to town early to get a good spot and most unladylike would sit on the side of the kerb until the Light Horsemen came into view, we would then get very excited and wave out flags madly - oh yes we always bought a flag which I think would cost about sixpence. After the march was over we'd dash off to the Tivoli for the matinee and buy the cheapest seats up in the gods as they were then called. Talking about the Tivoli I remember when I came home on leave during the war my Mother would always take me to the Tivoli and then to a Chinese meal, a really great day.

We had a good roll up for our A.G.M. many matters were discussed and it seems by the vote that our Annual Re-union in Nov. next will be in Canberra and hopefully back to 21 Henry St. in 1996. Thanks all who sent in their apologies which were duly given to our Secretary Gordon.

Another new member from Tasmania, Phillip Burrill, all we need is a member from N.T. and

we'd be represented in all States, surely there must be someone who served with C.B. living in N.T.

Thanks again to the folk sending me stamps for the Christian Blind Mission they are much appreciated, if they have any old spectacles they also would be appreciated.

If anyone has any photo's of our Jamberoo Re-union they could spare for our C.B. album Madeline would be delighted to receive them her address is:- Madeline Chidgey 1 Daphne St., Dolans Bay 2229.

My Mail Bag.

I asked one of our new members, Arnold Sullivan, if he ever caught up with Arthur Sullivan who I worked with in Hut 20, Ascot Park but he didn't but he could remember Lesley Irwin, Dot Soulsby, Rita Fraser, Greta Caldwell, ACW Piper and Kath Mc.Can — does anyone also remember them?

Thanks Arnold for your Xmas wishes.

Thanks for your letter, Jack (Brown) and noted your altered phone No. and that you managed to find out what you wanted.

Glad you'll be at Phillip's Foote on Anzac Day, Doreen (Mac.Pherson) join the party for knee problems. Thanks, Lou (Harris) for your very kind words re C.B.'s Committee and best wishes, they are very much appreciated and to all others who voice the same words and those who say they enjoy Dennis's Newsletter, some say it gets better every time.

Looking forward to seeing you, Joy (Nowland) at our next re-union, as I've noted it will be in Canberra. Always like to read a few words from you, Alan (Osborne) and do hope you will be down for Anzac Day and again give us our marching orders loud and clear.

Glad to read all has turned out O.K. healthwise for you Jean (Robertson) and hope you may be with us on Anzac Day or in November for our Re-union in Canberra.

I do hope your knee replacement op. turned out a complete success and not too painful Val. (Miller) and from now on, having stopped arranging Myers functions you'll have time to attend C.B. functions. I do hope that you will make "Down Under" Graham (Lobb from U.S.A.) to join in the celebrations for the ending of W.W.II as you said in your letter dated Jan. 95. Graham tells me he was in Brisbane at Central Bureau when hostilities ceased.

Be sure to let us know when you'll be arriving. I enjoyed reading your letter, Jean (Hicks) re Geoffrey Ballard's book and the photo's therein. No, Jo Poulsen is not a member but I note her in her summer uniform in the photo. I happen to be in the same photo second from left bottom now my maiden name was Scarfe — remember me? Your experience trekking in the Annapura Circuit in Nepal and spending time in Chitwan National Park sounds absolutely marvellous, Joyce (Sandars); you really must be in tip top health to take part in this sort of holiday — keep it up.

Thanks so much for your 2 foolscap page letter Cec. (Cousens); was interested to read all the family activities and to know Daphne, your wife, is going well after her operation, 8.5 stone doesn't seem a bad weight to me, wish I was that weight now. Will be great for you to meet Gordon Richard Gibson on Anzac Day, I'm sure he'll make the effort knowing you'll be there, he was at our reunion last Nov. at Jamberoo with his wife. For anyone who can help Cec. Cousens to obtain for his personal library a copy of the book "Betrayal at Pearl Harbour" by James Rusbridger which he says is no longer in print would they contact him at:- 74 Jonathan Street, Eleebana, NSW 2282.

Ending my column with these words:-

The person who never stubs his toe is probably standing still.

Norma Keeling.

C.B.I.C.A. VISITS D.S.D.

C.B.I.C.A. members who laboured mightily to give birth to and nurture the "Sigint" infant in Australia (with help from our Allies) may be surprised by the maturity of that infant fifty five years on. That poor infant was virtually unknown and unnamed at birth. Certainly it was secreted away behind a collection of euphemisms such as Australian Special Wireless Group; RAAF Wireless Units; Central Bureau and somewhat more revealing names given to American units.

That "Sigint" infant has become, without doubt, a very, very prosperous friend to Government. You can tell how prosperous and important it is when you first cast your eye on its new home. Located in the exclusive Russell Offices estate in Canberra it is housed in a building which would be the envy

of any rich multi-national trying to promote a prestigious corporate image. You enter the building via a beautifully designed 1990's style vestibule with a towering ceiling, glossy white walls and tall white columns. The rest of the building is just as impressive. Perhaps you may ponder on just whom this prosperous entity, known as the Defence Signals Directorate, Australia is trying to visually impress. Few Australians would ever pass through the glass front doors.

On Saturday, February 18, about twenty five C.B.I.C.A. members and family joined that exclusive band who have actually been inside D.S.D. Canberra. We were impressed and informed and entertained and some of us, at least, were intellectually challenged. Not surprising as we had well and truly reached our maturity before the age of main frame computing and complex electronic communications and codes. It didn't matter, however, that we all did not understand everything we saw nor everything that was so painstakingly explained to us. We were impressed by room after room of rack upon rack of electronic equipment, desk top computer terminals and a vast space housing the main frame computers.

Now for the specifics; the nitty gritty of what we saw and understood. To the uninitiated just to look at a main frame computer installation is not all that exciting. Without access to the "input and output" there is no action to be observed and an I.B.M. box doesn't have that much appeal even if it is coloured blue. Some D.S.D. workers enliven the image of the space by referring to it as the "Marilyn Monroe" room. It has many airconditioning ducts which blow cool air from ventilators in the floor. The pride and joy is a modern "Cray" computer. Said President Aub. in an aside, "That's the Rolls Royce of the computer world.". There are lots of I.B.M. boxes and refrigeration units and a complex tape storage silo.

The laboratory for the analysis of received electronic signals grabbed attention. It has the capacity to dissect complex signals into component parts and to measure everything that can be measured. A first step in determining what modern complex signals are supposed to do and what information they might carry is to pull them apart to see how they are constructed. When the explanations get into such topics as the conversion of analogue into

digital for ease of analysis many of us old timers have to tune out.

Having in mind Mr. Ken Barnes references to "Infosec" (see Newsletter 4 of 1994) it was interesting to see tests in action to determine whether communications equipment is radiating unwanted signals which could be received and interpreted by an unwelcome eavesdropper. D.S.D. has the role of ensuring that equipment used by Australian Government Departments and Agencies, including computer equipment, cannot be 'listened to' by unauthorised or clandestine operators.

Under the wing of Mr. Peter Wilkinson and Ms. Fran Lethbridge we were guided through room after room of electronic wizardry. Eventually at the end of a long corridor C.B.I.C.A. members were permitted to peek through the door of Aladdin's cave. Well not actually a cave; more like the command centre for a space fleet perhaps. A.S.W.G. people would refer to its wartime equivalent as a "set-room". Had Joy Linnane and some of the former A.W.A.S. from A.S.W.G. been with us they would have been proud to see some smart young servicewomen doing what they used to do.

Our thanks to Martin Brady who made our visit possible and to all of those bright enthusiastic workers in D.S.D. who devoted time and their personal communication skills to make our visit such a worthwhile experience.

A TRIBUTE TO LESLIE DOWNER (1921 - 1994) **by Geoffrey Ballard.**

May I pay tribute to Leslie Downer, of Canberra, one of our members, who died on 6th October, 1994 and express our Association's sympathy to his widow, Jill, and their three daughters and son.

Leslie was a friend of great personal integrity and of amazingly wide community and public commitment. He first became known to me as a young member of 51 Wireless section in Darwin in early 1943. However, I got to know him on a more personal level after receiving a distressful telegram from his father, asking me to inform him of the sudden death of his brother, Ron, who was known to me as a brilliant young cryptographer at Central Bureau in Brisbane. After calling on Leslie's parents in Sydney on the way home on leave, we

became firm friends with them, visiting one another regularly both in Sydney and Melbourne and overseas.

After the war, Leslie and I continued our friendship, often visiting one another, as well as maintaining a vigorous correspondence. It was during this period that I gradually became aware of Leslie's distinguished scholarship in law, history and linguistics, and his keen involvement in travel, reading, music and singing.

Geoff Ballard.
10 /1/95.

Geoff. also noted a fine tribute to L.J. Downer by an academic colleague, Professor Louis Waller. Having graduated with honours in Arts, in 1940, Leslie was further honoured by the award of the University Medal by Sydney University upon graduating LLB with First Class Honours in 1947, after his war service. Then followed three years study in Oxford and a long successful career in academia. He retired from the staff of the Australian National University in 1986.

BETRAYAL AT PEARL HARBOUR - AN AMERICAN ANALYSIS OF THE CONSPIRACY THEORY

Keith Payne had never been comfortable with the general thrust of James Rusbridger's thesis expounded in the "Betrayal" book. Neither did he have warm feelings about the collaboration which is claimed to have been given by Eric Nave who was named as co-author. Keith has had access to a series of articles recently published in the United States about the position taken by Rusbridger and Nave. He has contributed the following review. *"A recent review published in the International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence discusses Eric Nave's and James Rusbridger's book, 'Betrayal at Pearl Harbour: How Churchill Lured Roosevelt into World War II'*

This review includes an essay by Donald M. Gish, an historian in the National Security Agency's Centre for Cryptologic History, following an introductory commentary by Louis Tordella, former Deputy Director of NSA and Ed. Fishel, Former chief of the National Cryptologic School Press.

Tordella and Fisher make the case against the conspiracy theory advanced by Nave and Rusbridger on two grounds:-

One - that for Churchill to deny information to the US about a surprise attack on Pearl Harbour would be nonsense in that he had nothing to gain by withholding such information. To suggest, as Nave and Rusbridger did, that America would have entered the war quicker if the Japanese made a surprise attack is illogical as the US would have entered the war when attacked whether by surprise or otherwise. If warned and precautions had been taken the US Navy would most likely have suffered fewer losses and probably would have inflicted damage on the Japanese that could have reduced the capacity of the Japanese military for the rest of the war. In effect Churchill would have gained by advising the Americans of any attack and gained more by giving advance warning.

Two - that in 1941 JN-25 was virtually unreadable and unproductive to the point that Churchill had no JN-25 intelligence to withhold. In any event the two Comint units active in the Far East in 1941, the Far East Combined Bureau (FECB) a British multi-service intelligence at Singapore and Station Cast, a US Navy Comint station in the Philippines, were collaborating suggesting that if intelligence was available but withheld by the British then the US Navy must also have withheld the same information from Roosevelt.

The commentary then goes on to discuss the information that Nave provided Rusbridger pointing out that Nave would not have worked on JN-25 after 1940 as he was transferred from Singapore by then. Geoff Ballard points out in "On Ultra Active Service" Nave was in Australia in February 1940 (page 164) and worked on diplomatic and commercial traffic at that time. After Nave stopped work on the system in 1940 changes made to JN-25 increased the complexity of the system. The code book was changed in December 1940 doubling the number of code groups in the previous version used in 1939 while by August, 1941 the seventh additive book was introduced, the cryptosystem then designated as JN-25B7. This additive consisted of 500 pages, each containing 100 five digit groups. On 4 December, 1941 the eighth additive book was introduced. To suggest that given the resources available at that time JN-25 was continuously readable is nonsense. Anyone who worked on

additive systems without the benefit of machine processing (well do I remember trying to recover key on System 666 manually at Henry Street months after a new additive table was introduced) would realise that recovery of additive based systems over a two part code takes months of work and a lot of luck - reuse of key for one thing.

JN-25 cryptosystem was a two part code with 5 digit code groups arranged by encode and decode sections with the decode section meanings arranged in random or mixed order. Without the benefit of a captured code book, and there is no reference anywhere that a captured code book was available, indeed the fact that work on recovering the initial code book used had enabled 2000 words and phrases to be identified by January 1941, with most likely 1000 of these representing the numbers 0 to 999, makes it most unlikely that anything but very limited sections of text of pre Pearl Harbour messages could have been read. Further the recovery of the additive tables was most unlikely to have reached the point that messages could be deciphered to give continuous text, while missing sections of the messages and the like would have delayed recovery of the key as well as the underlying code and made readability spotty at best. To suggest that JN-25 was completely readable must be wrong.

One can only wonder why this sensational claim by Rusbridger about Churchill was made. Was Rusbridger using Nave's imperfect recollections (at an age of 88 years it would seem doubtful that Nave could have remembered the detail) to gain notoriety for himself or was there collusion between the so called authors to make considerable personal profit by sensationalising the matter and distorting the facts to make a better story and gain a higher profile (and larger sales).

As the years go on and our collective memories dim I wonder whether we romanticise about our work to the point that we manipulate the facts to make a better story. I believe that there is a real danger as more and more of the so called experts put their pens to paper in an effort to exploit the romantic stories of the war (and make money on the side) that the true stories and major contributions made by so many dedicated people will be glossed over and the real benefits of Sigint and the contribution it made to the outcome of the war

will be tarnished. It is no wonder why some of the more knowledgeable people in Central Bureau have declined to write their version of their contributions to the war. [My blocks; Ed.]

Keith Payne.

A NEW ULTRA BOOK! Focussed on ASWG Sections !

That is the headline preferred by the author to introduce his forthcoming paperback entitled "THE ULTRA FACTOR". It seems that this is not just another sigint book; not a text book history but more like a novel based on the exploits of the hypothetical "78 Australian Wireless Section". In this way the author claims that he can bring together in an interesting way the real story of the work done by the ASWG'S jungle intercept sections.

The author is Basil Fogarty who served with both 53 and 55 Sections. He says that included in the material which he researched was data collected by Geoff. Ballard, which Geoff. made available to him. Let's hope that Basil has filled in the gap in Australia's sigint history by revealing to a wide readership the exploits of the Australian Army as jungle eavesdroppers; a story which may not have been told before.

"The Ultra Factor", to be released on 10-4 -95, may be ordered from the author at the pre-publication price of \$13.00, post paid. Basil Fogarty may be contacted at PO Box 133, TERANG 3264 VIC.

MOORABBIN WINS THE WAR.

The "Moorabbin Standard" is a substantial local Newspaper with an address in Cheltenham, Victoria. It was natural in this year of 'Australia Remembers' that the editor used pages one, two and three of his Feb. 1 edition to tell the story of Moorabbin's significant role in World War II. Mr. Carter, City of Kingston's Library Services Manager, after opening Australian Archives files on Moorabbin's involvement in early WWII battles, said "Moorabbin's contribution was literally war-

winning." The articles tell readers that Moorabbin was the site of a listening post staffed by US and Australian naval officers— 35 US personnel and 24 WRANS. It occupied a dairy farm plot at the corner of Chesterville and Keys Roads.

Three pages of most interesting and detailed revelations by reporter Martin Curtis about the Navy's Sigint include what is becoming the ultimate cliché of Pacific Sigint — yes! it was the Moorabbin unit and FRUMEL which copied and decoded the message which led to the assassination of Isoroku Yamamoto. That Admiral didn't have a chance; now it seems that his itinerary was copied by 1 Wireless Unit, FRUPAC in Hawaii, the Moorabbin operators and indeed Nev. Wintin believes that it would be most unlikely that A.S.W.G. operators would have missed the message which sealed Yamamoto's fate.

It appears that the WRANS did it tough at Moorabbin. Chief of Staff, navy man Jack Newman, reported in June 1942 that no doors were fitted to the WRANS bath shed "and the WRANS ratings are exposed to the gaze of passers by". Neither were there any curtains, except blackout curtains 'to restrain public curiosity about the WRANS cottage' a former farm house. In 1943 a medical inspection of the site referred to the great number of flies which infested the station.

One of Australia's pioneer intercept operators now lives in Cheltenham. He and some other members of the RAAF were learning Kana morse five months before Japan waged war on 7 December, 1941. After reading reporter Martin Curtis' story in the local paper Australian Sigint veteran "Snow" Bradshaw established contact with Mr. Curtis and as Snow expresses it, "I attempted to impress on him the need to be very accurate with his quotations and conclusions. I advised him to read the book "The Eavesdroppers" before venturing any further into the realm of what work was actually done and by whom."

Readers of the Weekend Australian of 22-23 October, 1994 would have gained another perspective of Australia's contribution to the sigint war in the Pacific.

Geoff. Patience also sent to us copies of the Moorabbin articles.

IN BRIEF.

New member Keith Jarrott has sent some interesting copy; one story covers his personal account of travel on the Brisbane - Hollandia run on an USAAFE Dakota; another describes a landing at Lake Sentani (Hollandia) when one of those ubiquitous Dakotas blew a tyre on touch down and the third item is a copy of Keith's speech to the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, given in June last year, about the history of 21 Henry St. Ascot and Ascot Park, including its time as home to Central Bureau.

In a letter to author Colin Funch, who had invited comment on his manuscript about Sigint for a forthcoming book, Joe da Costa claims that 51 Aust. W/T Section was the first C.B. Unit into Darwin arriving in May or early June 1942. Perhaps it depends on how you define a C.B. Unit. Messrs Bradshaw, Davis, Hermes and Towers of the RAAF were in Darwin copying Japanese traffic long before that. They noted increases in Japanese signals on the morning of 19 February, 1942. According to Jack Bleakley in *'The Eavesdroppers'* they passed on warnings which were apparently unheeded: by the afternoon Darwin was devastated. The RAAF Kana operators were scattered across the north when Darwin was destroyed. Joe also provided to Mr. Funch some information about his interrogation of a downed navigator of a Japanese DINAH aircraft.

Eve Scott is saddened by the demise of the famous Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital in Brisbane. Both Eve and her late husband Norm had strong associations with the Hospital spanning 40 years in Norm's case and Eve totted up nearly 17 years as a volunteer. Late last year the Hospital presented to Eve a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of her dedicated service.

The obituary said that he was attached to a secret U.S. Navy team which stripped the covers from the unbreakable JN-25. Dr. Athanasius Pryor TREWEEK was also known to some of us as a member of the Central Bureau team. He died at age 83 on 21 January, 1995. Secretary Gordon Gibson remembers him as his lecturer at Sydney University; I recall him as a teacher at Canterbury Boy's High School in 1938. Upon retirement he

was associate professor of Greek at Sydney University. But he will be remembered as one of Australia's most important WWII code breakers.

Geoff. Patience comments that behind every good lady there is always a man. However, Jean Patience earned the 1995 Citizen Award for the former City of Caulfield by her own efforts. She spent the last 30 years up to her neck in voluntary work, according to the local newspaper report. Jean says she did voluntary work because she hated house work. "I never had any patience until I married it", she said.

Joe Richard tells us that an "Enigma" machine was made available for the children to play with at function associated with last years S.I.S. reunion in USA. At the Sydney Power House museum only the curator could lay a finger on 'our' Enigma; and even he put on white gloves before he placed that finger!

US member Graham Lobb has enquired about our local celebrations to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the end of it all. He would like to return "Down Under" to join in. Secretary Gordon is providing him with the details. We hope to share a grog or three with Graham.

EDITORIAL.

If you have a moment glance again the Treasurer's column. Note well these references; "Join the party for knee problems." and "I do hope your knee replacement op. turned out a complete success and not too painful." To be sure Norma is expressing concern for our members to whom her comments were directed. Perhaps she is also expressing some thoughts about herself— especially the "not too painful" bit. You see, Norma is booked into hospital on 11th. April for knee replacement surgery. It will be quite a few weeks before she will be able to climb the stairs to her fourth floor unit.

Norma, however will be well cared for during the long road back to full mobility. She has the support of her colleagues on the Executive Committee and the good wishes of all of her friends from the membership of C.B.I.C.A. Inc.