



**Number 3, 1996
September**

Central Bureau Intelligence Corps Association Inc.

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SIGINT VETERANS REUNITE IN BRISBANE.

When closing the Olympic Games, Juan Antonio Samaranch usually says that those particular Games were the best of the modern era; except for the Atlanta games. He did not bestow that accolade on the games of the 26th Olympiad. CBICA does not have to be apologetic about our last major event. It could be said that our most recent reunion in Brisbane in 1996 was indeed "the best" yet. This reunion brought together a wide range of sigint veterans, women and men, from Australia, the United States and Great Britain who served in Armies and Airforces.

Over the weekend of 10/11 August we visited the Office occupied by General Douglas MacArthur, where he planned to drive the Japanese forces back to their home Islands ; we visited the sites in Ascot, Queensland, where many of our members served the Allied cause; we shared a reunion luncheon with the Queensland RAAF Wireless Units Association and viewed the marvels of a rejuvenated City of Brisbane from the comfort of a ferry on the Brisbane River.

Above, beyond and transcending all of those events we talked with one another; we mulled over shared experiences; we were emotional when meeting colleagues, once close confidants but rarely seen over the past 50 years; we were defensive of and loyal to our particular small group or sub-set with whom we shared day to day war-time experiences; we rued the ravages of advancing age and admired those with us who did not let serious physical disablement stand in the way of joining in fully the spirit of the reunion. Both publicly and privately we thought about colleagues who had died.

People and Places. AMP Building

It is a beautiful sunny Queensland Saturday morning after a five degree night. The old AMP building looks much the same as it did more than fifty years ago but there are no American Military Police on guard. Some of our party recall those white helmeted soldiers. We take a lift to the eighth floor. Then we are in Mac.Arthur's office. It hasn't changed much; among the historic photographs on display are pictures of the General; in one picture he is sitting right where we are gathered and the scene in the photograph is recognizable to-day. But this time we are permitted to tarry in this once most secure holy of holies. Some of us are deeply impressed by this physical connection with past times. Perhaps some of us are unmoved. Some people are more emotional about different things such as a Bronco's win or by a win by Hawthorn or a North Sydney victory at Bear Park; but not everyone. We are, however, all impressed by nonagenarian Allan Campbell whose efforts over many years, we hope, will result in this historic site being preserved for future Australians.

Allan tells us about the battle of Brisbane. His is a first hand account. The battle was hushed up at the time because the combatants were Australian and American soldiers----- and people were killed. Allan himself was wounded. Australians too young to have experienced the war years might be surprised to know that American and Australian servicemen fought one another in Brisbane. Aussie blokes who lived through the dark days know that there were tensions and with the stresses of those times, when Australia was under threat of invasion, violence was close to the surface. Through the Australian-American Association, of which Allan was the first President, he has sought over the years to heal the schism and to promote Australian American co-operation and friendship; that Association is behind the moves to preserve the MacArthur site and to develop the collection of memorabilia. John Negus, the Federal President of the Federation of Australian- American Associations Inc. is with us in MacArthur's old office. Also in the office is former United States Army Warrant Officer Joe Richard, his Australian born wife and his two teen-age grandsons.

The Old Fire Station.

A plaque on the building recalls its history as a centre of Allied Intelligence Operations from 1942 to 1945. This former fire station sits on the fringe of "the park". It was part of the area into which Central Bureau expanded when it burst out of 21 Henry Street as its significance grew. Probably no one at that time envisaged that some of the people who worked in the building between 1943 and 1945 would gather there again more than fifty one years afterwards.. But gather there they did.

"All the IBM card punching was done right here in this room". The voice is that of Lester Truex. He knows because he was there. He supervised the input of messages into the card punching room and received output from the card sorting equipment in the adjacent room. John Stumm asserts that CB had not moved into the fire station in 1942. Lester agrees;. they did not go there until 1943. "I worked the punch card machines and I took them into this great big thing where they rammed them through." This voice is that of Ronnie O'Neill from Frankston, Victoria who spent some of her war service in the old fire station. "Yes", says Lester, "they did sorting and tabulating with them". In more recent times it has been suggested that the fire station housed computers. It seems that because the card punching and sorting gear was made by IBM someone assumed that it must have been computing equipment. Not so. This is the gear that sat rusting on wharves in Sydney for too long

because it was so secret and its destination was so secret that nothing happened; it just sat on the dockside.

The old fire station is now a language and literary centre for Queensland TAFE students; specifically students who cannot read nor write. Its Manager, and our host for the day, is Ms Leonie Fox. Leonie wants to have the building's history properly recognised and to make it known to the students who will pass by in years to come. If you can help with relevant photographs please contact Leonie, through Newsletter. She has the facilities to make copies.

21 Henry Street.

People who operated cypher machines in the multi car garage behind the main building at No.21 gathered again in that place of once secret activity. Fifty plus years later they tried to work out the floor plan that was once familiar to them and to locate in their memories just where the cypher machines sat and how many of them there were. There were differences of opinion. And so it went. Many of us who had worked or trained at 21 Henry Street tried to recall, and perhaps relive, a little of those far off days. We could bounce memories of one another because we had been there.

Once again Andree and Joe Look were gracious in letting us into their home and making us feel so welcome. We appreciated the display in their hallway of war-time memorabilia relevant to 21 Henry Street (and those of us interested in furniture envied the ambience of this home).

The Irish Club in Elizabeth St.

At the 1996 Annual Reunion Luncheon of the Queensland RAAF Wireless Units Association, Association President Harold Cook presided over a larger than usual gathering. Perhaps it was the largest post-war gathering in Australia of the veteran's of Douglas MacArthur's signals intelligence empire. These veterans came from all over Australia and as far afield as Maryland, USA and represented most facets of the sigint operation; even the RAF input. Veterans, their partners and some distinguished guests totalled about one hundred and twelve.

We shared a room, perhaps best described as being like a ballroom, with a high ceiling decorated in the style of the last century and naturally enough with a strong Irish theme.

The Australian-American Memorial.

Under a clear, blue Queensland sky, on the banks of the Brisbane River, on a quiet Sunday morning CBICA Inc. President Michael Casey placed a wreath and we remembered the sacrifices made by those whose lives were taken as a result of war.

It was, however, CBICA member Alan Langdon, who made the ceremony memorable for many of the gathering. His words are recorded in this Newsletter. Towering over this group of veterans and friends was the Australian-American memorial. It has its own story.

John Negus says that the appeal to erect the giant American eagle memorial in the National Capital was oversubscribed. Queenslanders were generous in their gifts for the Canberra monument so it was decided to let Brisbane have the surplus funds which were used to build the smaller replica on the banks of the Brisbane River near to where explorer John Oxley landed many years ago.

The City of Brisbane.

The city we knew back in the 1940's has some recognisable features but much has changed. Cruising the Brisbane river is a comfortable way to view the buildings and skyline of this modern metropolis. In its early days our cruise boat, the *Adai Princess*, once plied the rougher waters between Townsville and Magnetic Island. On this Sunday in August it carried our members and guests from the heart of the City to the commercial docksides further to the east and back again.

We were sad that our guest, Bettye Walsh, who hosted Treasurer Norma Keeling during some of her stay in Brisbane last month, fell heavily before the boat left the jetty and Bettye travelled by ambulance to Brisbane hospital. Norma reports on Bettye in her column

Names You Might Know.

(Sighted at Reunion Functions)

Charlie Baxter Bruce Bentwich Bill Benston Margaret and David Berry Phillip Bobin Lorraine and Ian Buckingham Bill Burns Allan Campbell Norma and Syd Carey Joan and Keith Carolan Michael Casey Dorothy and Gordon Chapman Betty Chessell Madeline and Ron Chidgey Agnes and

Harold Cook Pat Cook Edna and Bruce Cooper Lee Daddow Dot and Trevor Donald Isobel and Don Dunn Bill Dunn Mary Drinkwater Bill Esdaile Basil Fogarty Leonie Fox Rupe and Mrs Fisher Joy and Allan Fraser Peg and Gordon Gibson Nancy Goldsteen Joy Grainger Sheila Gregory Noeline and David Hansen Reg Harris Beryl Holsberger Perc Howard Frank Hughes Irene and Mac Jamieson Daphne and Bob James Florence and Harold Jones Keith Jarrott June and Doug Kantar Norma Keeling Helen Kenny Clare and Mat Lacey Pam and Allan Langdon Andree and Joe Look Brian Lovett Clarrie Millar Val Miller Dennis Moore Marj and Noel McCullough Amy and Colin McTaggart John Negus Ronnie O'Neill Diana Parker Geoff Patience Gordon Peters Doug Pyle Margaret Raymond Phil Raymond Elsie and Joe Richard The Richard Grandsons Jean Robertson Don Robinson Norman and Mrs Rolfe Allan Ryan Joyce Sandars Norma and Ern Saxon Eve Scott John Shoebridge Rona and Ron Simms Harold Sullivan John Stumm Barry Theiss Jack Thorpe Doug Triggar Cath and Lester Truex Betty Walsh Bill Walsh Jim Williams.

HON. SECRETARY'S PAR.

For me the Combined Reunion in Brisbane seemed to start at the Qantas Terminal, Sydney, where CB-ers were waiting to take off on Friday, August 9. Here opportunely, when the strap on my elderly, pull-along suitcase decided to part with the metal ring tethering it, and to pull no more, arrived John Shoebridge, and also Bruce Bentwich. With their help, I manoeuvred the case inside and got rid of it to Qantas staff. (I rather wish they'd kept it). I didn't part, though with the shoulder bag, which was packed with folders, plans for the reunion and those dreaded name tags, which Diana Parker, of Tathra, had checked the night before.

Onto the aircraft we moved. Then to quote the old slogan of a once famous airline, it was up, up and away. Somewhere, down on the ground, trains and cars were Brisbane - bound with CB and Wireless Unit members headed for the Sigint Reunion, for the Hamilton Motor Inn, and for the homes of friends.

Would things work out? I wondered. (We were descending now. Here was land, there water, then the airstrip and the reassuring thump as wheels touched down.) Soon, I'd be meeting all those Brisbane

correspondents — Allan Campbell, Al Jenkin, Reg Harris, Mac Jamieson, Harold Cook and Dennis Burt, of the Hamilton Motor Inn. A taxi ... and there we were, all checking in.

Unpack. Settle in. Gather on a pleasant terrace for a "photo-call." The gathering was good, and everyone was there but the photographer. Strange things can happen on newspapers (I know) so, when he/she didn't arrive, some of our members produced their own cameras and took snapshots for the record. We dispersed until dinner. There was time to explore the neighbourhood and to see Hamilton Docks, just across the road.

Hamilton Docks. Great wharves from which ships came and went. Here, at war's end, we saw men of the Eighth Division returning from Japanese captivity. How emaciated they looked as they came down the gangways, and how expressive their faces as they realised - at last - they were home. So many troops, American and Australian, trod on those docks. Late in 1945, the bride-ship, "Lurline" sailed down the river, bound for the USA, with the young wives of American servicemen.

Those docks have gone now. Restaurants, waterside walkways and gardens replace old sheds, old wharves. This is modern Brisbane. Exploration of the city lies ahead. That night, many of us dined together at the Hamilton Motor Inn. It was certainly an interstate - and international -reunion and one just beginning.

My mind was on the morrow, and the day after tomorrow. In the dining room the telephone rang. I was called to the bar —no ! not in that sense. Allan Campbell was the caller. Things should be all right **NOW**, he said. This sounded ominous. I asked what he meant by now.

Allan, President of the General Douglas MacArthur Memorial, Brisbane, and a founder of the Australian-American Association, had gone up to the eighth floor of the old A.M.P. building - once MacArthur's headquarters, to prepare the exhibition of wartime photographs, documents and memorabilia. There were no bulbs in the lights.

"I've put the lights in," he said. "It meant climbing up a ladder and fixing them."

I adjured him to climb no more ladders, in case of falls. He said he didn't need to go up the ladder again. As they're supposed to say at dress rehearsals, "It will be all right on the day."

It was. We crammed the eighth floor office, in which the General's chair stood at the head of a long table,

where the display was splendidly arrayed. Allan Campbell, who worked there during the war, spoke. He was followed by William A. Bentson, an American who served in MacArthur's Headquarters from April 1942, (Melbourne), moved up to Brisbane in July of that year, and served there until September 1943 when he went to a unit in New Guinea. Both speeches were of deep interest. Bill Bentson, who settled in Brisbane, brought with him photocopies of telephone directories, marked Restricted, for May 1944 and October 1943. These will go in our planned archives. (I note that you could have rung Lt. Col. A. Sinkov, USAFFE, at his residence, M1312, or at AMP 98.) Bill Bentson also showed us a plan of the headquarters. This would have brought back memories for those who worked there, including Reg Harris, formerly of the Royal Airforce, who was in a Special Liaison Unit (SLU 9).

More of memories later. Is it too late for those who worked in the Park, Fire Station, or 21 Henry Street, to draw plans and sketches of these places for future record? If you can do this, please send them to me, or to Dennis Moore, of the Newsletter. Will Brisbane preserve MacArthur's headquarters as a memorial? The material for display is there. We hope so, but at the moment of writing, there is no certainty.

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Then came the Irish Club, a short walk away. The combined gathering started with drinks, moved down to the tables, where people shared talk and shared meals. Mick Casey, our President, spoke as did Harold Cook, President of the Queensland RAAF W.U.'s Association. Looking at the throng, it was good to see members with family and friends. There were three grandsons present —Ian (Geoff Charlesworth's grandson) and the Brayton brothers, who came from the States with their grandparents, Joe and Elsie Richard. Joe was resplendent in his wartime uniform, which I hear was tailored in Brisbane. What an advertisement for Joe! What an advertisement for the tailor! There were many, though who couldn't come.

Joyce Casey, Mick's wife, and Peg, wife of Dennis Moore, were not well enough to face the long journey. Wynne Christmas, from Castle Hill, NSW was in the same plight. Roma Hodsdon, struck by a flu virus, was in a Gold Coast hospital. We missed them. Others were away for happier reasons. Jack Bleakley, of 78 Balwyn Road, Balwyn, Victoria, 3103, had to stay in Melbourne where his book "The Eavesdroppers" was having its third reprint. Soft cover is \$19.95 plus postage, and hard cover - for CB and WU members - is \$24.95 plus postage. If this is a

plug, it is well deserved, and it will be good to see "The Eavesdroppers" in hard cover. Jack and Dorothy sent greetings to all and wished us a "marvellous weekend".

Thank you both. (Those who want the book please order direct from Jack.) Other messages came from Coral and Sandy Hinds, whose postcard was a wartime photograph of the "Colossus" machine at Bletchley Park. Yes, they were visiting what was once known as GCCS on their travels. Another postcard, showing "Heartland" country in the Yorkshire Dales, came from past secretary, Gordon Rossmore Gibson, who, with his wife Sue, seems to be organising his travels as well as he once organised past reunions.

Words about the Fire Station already appear in this issue so let's move on to 21 Henry Street, where the Looks, so generously, gave us access not only to the grounds but to the beautiful building.

No guards on duty now, no duckboards outside, no warren of subdivided rooms, where people came and went and all was secret. I remember a kitchen where cockroaches scuttled before dawn. The kitchen, the washroom and the garage where we worked at 12 (I think) typex machines, night and day, were the only places I saw. What was the layout inside the garage? I tried to draw a plan. Old colleagues looked at it and thought I had it wrong.

How lovely was the interior of 21 Henry Street: antique furniture, paintings, the spaciousness of great rooms with windows looking out to the front garden. Geoff Patience walked in. He pointed to areas where Colonel Sandford and Wing Commander Booth had had their offices. I tried to imagine it, but had met neither of these men, who remain in the minds of so many.

Sunday. A glorious morning. We stood on green lawns near the Australian - American memorial, where the wreath laying service was to be held.

I looked, not at Newstead House, or at the scene, but at the pathway. A bugler was to arrive by 0915. W.O.2 Laurie Case, Bandmaster of the Queensland University Regiment, had promised to provide one. What if he didn't turn up? I wondered. What would we do then? These baseless doubts were dispelled. Over the hill came the bugler, Ashley Van Gaalen, right on time. He was splendidly uniformed in white, with white helmet (is that the right term?). We lined up by the memorial. This 18-year-old music student sounded the Last Post and Reveille admirably. Alan Langdon spoke and this newsletter records his speech.

Those who heard it included members of the American Legion, the Australian-American Association, as well as CB-ers and Wireless Unit Association members. It was a moving oration

Then the Adai cruiser arrived, right on time, at the nearby jetty. We went aboard and prepared for the river cruise and lunch. Many people to meet and re-meet. The Saxons from North Buderim; Don Robinson, who worked in the Park before life moved on and he years later, became the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney. By coincidence, Joyce Casey and I both went to the same school as Don's wife, who was then Marie Taubman. The greatest coincidence of the weekend reunion (unless anyone betters it) came for John Shoebridge. Through Eve Scott (remember - she's hoping to gather CB-ers reminiscences for a possible book) John heard of Elwyn and Keith Cattach. He hadn't seen them for 52 years, since he was best man at their wedding in 1944. John (No. 2 WU) was in the RAAF, as was Keith (6 WU). The wedding took place at the Ann Street Methodist Church, Brisbane, just before Keith left for the Philippines. The bride was a WAAAF sergeant, in RAAF Command and the matron-of-honour was another WAAAF, Eve Scott. Before John left Brisbane, he had a great reunion with the Cattachs. They've sworn to meet again before another half century passes.

The cruise ended. The cocktail party followed. Talk flowed. Jack Thorpe and Gordon Peters, old friends, joined our table for a while. (It was a very moveable feast.) The evening ended in song. Most kindly, Syd Carey's wife, Norma, brought her music and played songs of our youth on the piano. Her playing was infinitely better than our singing. Thank you, Norma and forgive our off key moments. That was the end of the official reunion - but, thanks to Betty Chessell, an unofficial reunion continued for Joyce Sandars, Di Parker, Beryl Holzberger and I at Chevron Island. Roma Hodsdon missed out through illness

May we all meet again soon, somewhere, and may Dennis Moore be able to cut this down to size. He has permission.

Helen Kenny

Hon. Secretary,
27/1-13 Mackenzie St.,
Lavender Bay. 2060
02 9954- 0940

(As if this rank Amateur would be so presumptuous as to cut down to size the work of a n 'old school' professional journalist. DLM.)

THE TREASURER'S COLUMN.

They say there is nothing like a change and I certainly had that experience during the month of August, firstly enjoying the lovely mild Brisbane weather and staying with friends and then meeting up with you all at our CB reunion and directly afterwards up to the Blue Mountains where the wind howled through the trees, the rain just poured down and a few days before I woke up to a white world of snow and it was freezing, some nights two below zero, as usual I'm up here animal and house sitting for Jacky, my daughter, while she's away on a 15,000 km camping tour.

I do hope everyone enjoyed our reunion and on behalf of the Committee I'd like to thank all who backed us with their attendance as I've often said without your being there it would not be such a success so now we'll be thinking up ideas for our next reunion. I'm glad to say Bettye, my friend who had the fall on the cruise is now out of hospital after almost two weeks and her legs being attended to each day at home by the Blue Nurses, she's very bright and couldn't speak too highly of the Brisbane Hospital, I sent her a card on behalf of all who were on the cruise for which she thanks everyone.

Just a few replies to my mail bag :—

Your letter Olive (Williams) really touched me and I believe your faith, as you say, may have helped you get through your operation and illness and congrats on your forthcoming golden wedding. Yes, Olive, I have always remembered the banana and peanut butter sandwiches and other memories of our days at Ascot Park. Lt. Ward was a member of our CB Assoc. but resigned because of ill health. Thanks for your letter Max (Hurley) but was sorry to read of your wife's stroke and other complications and your cartilage removal which I too had 13 years ago. Had to laugh over your 27 containers to hold the water from your leaking roof Nancy (Goldsteen) hope all is O.K. now. I quite understood Bernard (Anderson) why you couldn't attend our reunion; it must be difficult for you both under the circumstances but I have the highest admiration for the blind as I drive for the Christian Blind Mission. Do hope your Surfer's Paradise holiday John (Warmington) was a great success and you felt all the better for it. I was talking to Joy on the phone Brian (Lovett) and she told me Heather was away from bowls because she was undergoing eye surgery in hospital. I do hope all is going well with her; give her my love. Many thanks

for the Bletchley Park postcard Coral and Sandy, was so pleased to read you had seen the place and enjoyed the visit there.

Now for another quotation :—

When Fate shuts a door, come in through the window.

Norma Keeling.

Hon. Treasurer

02 9525 0382.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIVIDUAL EFFORT.

On the banks of the Brisbane River, on Sunday 11 August, 1996, close to the towering Australian-American Memorial, President Casey placed a wreath and CBICA Member, Canon Alan Langdon, AM, spoke to the assembled Sigint veterans and their guests. In the hours and days following many who had heard and indeed, listened closely, asked that Canon Langdon's words be published. This is what he said.

"We meet at the Australian/American Memorial at Newstead with its motto: "They passed this way." 'They' includes not only the great American leaders recorded in history books, but the many thousands of ordinary American service men and women who made their essential contribution to the total war effort, though now unknown or long since forgotten. This Memorial honours them all, the great and the small.

It is an appropriate venue for our Association's ceremony today because of the nature of our wartime service in signals interception and signals intelligence: one of close co-operation between USA and Australian personnel. (cf. our Association's continuing contact and fellowship with our American counterparts as evidenced by their presence at this reunion.)

Yesterday we visited the AMP Building, now publicly recognised as MacArthur's Chambers and being developed as a fitting memorial to the General and his forces. However, we also visited sites not known to the general public but of importance to us: Hamilton Fire Station and 21 Henry St. Ascot where many of us worked throughout the war or to which

many of us returned after periods of service in Darwin, PNG, Dutch NG, other locations and eventually the Philippines. Except probably for a few great ones amongst us who were in the know, what we did seemed to most of us very humdrum and repetitive. During the comparatively few years our Association has been in existence, I have frequently heard members say that, especially during the 30 years of enforced silence and secrecy when you could hardly even mention your war service, you really wondered whether you ever did anything useful at all!

However, the articles and books that have been published recently show that at least some of the countless thousands of messages the SIGs intercepted and the intelligence personnel analyzed and/or decoded non-stop day and night, month upon month and year after year did have a notable influence on the course and outcome of the war. So apparently we were of some significance after all. And none of that would have been achieved without the unsung work of the administration, orderly room and Q store staff and the back up provided to the field units by the Don-R's, cooks etc. Our Association recognizes the role played by each one of us — the great and the small.

CB brought together people from the 3 services: Navy, Army and Air Force. This year is the 75th Anniversary of the RAAF. The TV coverage earlier in the year began with the reminder of the important role played in the 1st World War by the precursor of the RAAF, the Australian Flying Corps, including the tragic fact that one third of those Australian pilots were killed. The programme then surveyed the far ranging service of RAAF and WAAAF personnel in both the European and the Pacific spheres of WW2, including the many Australians who served with the RAF. In all, 13,000 RAAF personnel never returned.

Naturally the video concentrated on the courageous exploits of the Bomber Command and the fighter pilots where inevitably the greatest losses were incurred and we especially honour their memory today.

However, none of the pilots or air crews could have achieved what they did without the back-up service of the ground staff. Although I was not in the RAAF, I have it on good authority that a squadron of 20-23 aircraft with an air crew of 250 would have a total staff complement of about 1,500. Thus well over 1,000 men and women were needed to support the mammoth effort of the bomber crews. The ground

staff had to service, repair and maintain the planes while coping with the bitter cold in the fogs and snows of Britain and the blazing heat of the African desert. and they were frequently themselves the target of enemy air attacks. It was a team effort in which each person was significant.

This principle applies across the three services: the Navy, the Army and the Air Force and to the total war effort in its various theatres of action — and even of inaction! For instance, the many Army units stationed in WA year after year, feeling frustrated at apparently doing nothing. Yet had they not been there the western coast of our continent would certainly have been invaded by the enemy. Their service was significant, however they may have felt about it. They illustrate the truth of Milton's famous words: "They also serve who only stand and wait."

It also applies to all the civilians engaged in the wartime production effort and to the men and women, the wives and families who maintained the life of the community under so many wartime restrictions.

Perhaps the most interesting illustration of the principle I am stressing concerns the dozen or so surviving original Anzacs, the youngest of whom is 99. One of these few survivors who lives in Melbourne is Geoff Charlesworth's father-in-law, Wal Parker, who turns 102 today (11 August). (We regret his failing health and also Gwen's inability to be with us, but are glad of Ian's presence today.) I was present at his 100th Birthday and in 1990 heard him describe vividly his return to Gallipoli for the 75th Anniversary of the first Anzac Day. He was among the troops who were on the last ship to take part in the withdrawal from Gallipoli.

Now, he was a private, as were 2 of the other survivors now living in Victoria, together with a gunner, a trooper, a driver, a L/Cpl., a Cpl. and a L/Sgt. Presumably, all the officers would have been older and have already died. These men are now being given special recognition and honour and are seen as particularly significant in the history of WWI because of their longevity — and quite rightly so. But my point is: They always were significant but were unknown and unsung, like so many of their mates who have predeceased them..

All of us who are ordinary people making our ordinary contribution to society, by doing our daily work honestly and faithfully, by supporting our families, by helping our friends, our neighbours, and especially people in need are already significant,

whether we are men and women or boys and girls, however young or however old we may be.

One outstanding illustration of that truth is the person I understand is the oldest surviving Anzac: Dr. Cyril Checci who turned 104 in July. At the end of 1914 he had graduated in Medicine from Melbourne University. He heard the call for doctors to join the British Medical Corps and volunteered immediately. He sailed on the Orontes at the beginning of 1915 and served with the Anzacs at Gallipoli. His own son was killed in the RAAF in 1942.

Dr. Checci's subsequent history is fascinating and would probably have remained virtually unknown, had he not been one of the very few surviving Anzacs. He served as a GP at Willaura in Western Victoria till his 95th year when the authorities would not renew his driving licence despite appeals from the State RSL President, Bruce Ruxton. He is now in hostel accommodation in the Willaura District Hospital which he had helped to build.

At his 100th Birthday one of the guests was his friend of 20 years, Sir Weary Dunlop of the Burma Railway fame who died in 1993. Also present were the Head of the school he had attended as a boy, Brighton Grammar, Mr. Robert Rofo, and the school archivist. They took back with them 30 leather-bound books — the prizes he had won at the school. He has now published a book entitled "The Greatest Joy of All".

It would appear that he has become a significant part of Australia's history because he has lived so long. But he always was significant, whether we knew about it or not. THE SAME IS TRUE OF EACH ONE OF US!

It has been said that God must be very fond of ordinary people because he made so many of them! Let us never underestimate what God can do with one ordinary life — at school, in the home, at work, in the life of the community and through the church, if we give him the chance. The most quoted verse in the Bible tells us that God so loved the world (i.e. ordinary people like you and me) that He gave His Son that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life.

It would seem to me that this principle is under special threat today as illustrated by the Olympic Games, just completed. The media's obsession with winners, the medal tally and the very remark: "We'll

have to settle for a bronze!" overshadow the great achievement of any participant in being chosen to represent his or her country in an international competition. This is true, wherever they come in a race or event, especially from a country with a relatively small population like Australia. By contrast, tiny nations within the 197 participating nations honour their few representatives for the very fact that they are good enough to be there at all. One Australian who came 5th had actually surpassed her previous 'personal best' and should have been hailed as a hero not ignored (or rather castigated) as a loser! The highly sophisticated technology that enables a distinction of point one of a second to determine a result reinforces the spirit of competitiveness and militates against the goal Baron Pierre de Coubertin set when reviving the Olympic Games in 1896: "The important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win, but to take part. The important thing in life is not to triumph, but to struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered, but to have fought well."

In the build-up to the Year 2000 Olympics in Sydney, there is an urgent need in our society to rediscover the concept of a 'personal best', of competing against oneself, of recognizing honest achievement as worthwhile of itself, with an inherent value that is irrespective of its ranking relative to the accolades won by others. There is nothing wrong with the goal of excellence in sport or in education, for instance, provided it means 'my personal best', not an undue pressure on competitiveness and a mad race for medals or top scores.

Today at this Memorial let us honour the memory of each American and Australian service-man and woman who paid the supreme sacrifice in the defence of our land and record our indebtedness to all the ordinary unknown and unsung veterans whose service made it possible for us to meet in freedom today. But let us also learn from them that our personal worth is not determined by any criteria of success or notability and that our value as individuals is measured against our own personal best. In other words, whether, by God's grace and forgiveness, we are living our lives with accountability to God who gave us life and in love and service to Him and our fellow human beings.

Let us pray: Almighty God, maker of all things and Father of us all, you have shown us in Christ and in the Scriptures the purpose of your creation and called us to responsible service in the world, may we delight

in your purpose and work to bring all things to their true end; and may the God of Peace give us His Peace, now and always. Amen."

TO BE 21 IN '42

Is it not true that most books are written for commercial gain? Commercial gain seems to be the prime motivation for most authors and perhaps all publishers. At the age which we know SF65185 Signalwoman Maney, J.A. must have now attained it is unlikely that financial gain is the motivation behind her decision to take up both authoring and publishing. Indeed, perhaps there is a risk of financial loss.

Jean Hillier, who in her past life was Signalwoman Maney, says that she was influenced to publish by recent author, Basil Fogarty (The Ultra Factor). Jean says his "passionate conviction that some record should be left removed my reluctance to publish." Jean writes of young AWAS who trained alongside the men in ASWG. (Australian Special Wireless Group.) It is her conviction that "those young women should have a place, no matter how small, in the Nation's memory."

Whatever her motivation Jean has painstakingly recorded a segment of Australia's history based on her recollections as a very young woman, brought up in rural Australia and swept up in this country's effort to withstand the onslaught of an enemy whom we hoped we could defeat.

Let us not forget that in 1942 there was real fear, although many tried to conceal it. It was by no means clear cut that we would be able to withstand the enemy. Jean's story deserves to be read (a) by her contemporaries to rekindle memories; (b) by younger Australians to gain some insight into the history of

their country in the nineteen forties, and (c) by people interested in social history to tease out some interesting insights into the attitudes and values of those times. The book should also attract some comment; the author deserves some response to her work.

This reader has the feeling that Jean Hillier, writing in 1995, is still influenced by the sense of propriety which meant different things in the polite society of rural Australia in the 1930s than it does now. Her prose is not of the style of Germaine Greer. Nevertheless she does raise the more recent concepts of affirmative action and equal opportunity as they applied to AWAS in ASWG Units. We read about her obsession to be a radio operator, of her experiences as a young worker in a country store which "prepared me for entrance into a male sphere without illusions or expectancy of chivalrous attitudes"; of Mic. Sandford's "charm and eloquence" as he talked about intercepting Japanese morse. Mic. spoke of the "difficulties of training men and women together and asked us to think of ourselves as brothers and sisters." Perhaps this remark revealed something about Col. Sandford himself.

Jean writes that the word "Kana" still has an emotional impact upon her; a kind of fear, she says. The men and women who served in Australia's infant eavesdropping units will empathize with her comments about the extreme emphasis on secrecy. Her colleague, Jean Meredith, who also writes in the book recalls it as a "security brainwash". Jean still believes that the security was vital. Secrecy did indeed add another layer to an otherwise rather mundane task. Hour after hour, day and night copying, from radio, encrypted messages in morse code in any language does not offer much intellectual stimulation. It is very much an automatic stimulus -

response situation; one hears a group of dits and dahs and writes down a symbol. The trappings of a secret wartime activity—and there were many — tended to glamorize the business of sigint. On the other hand my masters in RAAF Sigs. School made it clear to the classes of trainee telegraphists that the Japanese listened to our signals so we should adhere strictly to approved signals procedures when sending. It would have been naive not to acknowledge that the Japanese knew that we were listening to them. If you wanted to refute the argument that eavesdropping was a mundane activity you could use some of Jean's references to her deductions about the moods, personalities and fears of the Japanese operators whose morse she copied — just by analysing their sending styles.

There are some surprises in the book. Rarely would you find a soldier describing two N.C.O's as having a "kind of nutty sweetness which made them very likable" and on another occasion "wearing expressions which resembled nothing so much as that of nannies.....". Read the book to find whether you knew them; male, of course. Not to be missed is Eileen Brown's startling recollection of her time in 64 Section when she logged messages from a pilot flying over Fremantle and reporting the positions of ships in the port.

DLM.

NO MEDALS IN THIS UNIT is written and published by Jean Hillier and may be ordered by writing to the author at Chark Farm, Box 73 Mundulla South Australia, 5270. The price is \$17 per copy.

In Brief.

Committee Member Bruce Bentwich has discovered that the elusive **Philippines Liberation Medal** will

be presented to eligible applicants from NSW at a ceremony at NSW Parliament House at 2.30 pm on 21 October, 1996. If you believe that you should be on the list and have not been told you may find out more by contacting the Philippines Consulate at 301 George Street, Sydney.

Gordon Swinney was elected to our Committee this year. Perhaps he could be a good candidate for Publicity Officer. The words he chooses to advise us of problems with his heart are graphic and to the point. He describes the operation he is likely to have and gives us all some assurance by adding a postscript. "Dr. xxxx has done this operation before." We all hope that by the time this is published Gordon is able to report a successful surgical procedure.

A few weeks ago someone found your Association's last Newsletter on the World Wide Web. What's more he read it through to the end. Having noted the par about the U.S. Coastguard phasing out morse telegraphy he took the trouble to send an e-mail to let us know that the R.A.N. has also phased out morse telegraphy. Perhaps someone will let us know whether Japanese operators still use Kana. If they don't we are well an truly redundant or at least the intercept operators are ; we have a totally useless skill.!

Editorial.

As the Brisbane Reunion dominates the text in this edition of Newsletter once again good stories have been placed on file for further issues.

AND we needed to leave space so that you can tell the Committee whether to book Phillip's Foote or The Lawson for next Anzac Day. If you have a preference please respond so that we are able to do the right thing by the majority.

The Hon Secretary, CBICA.INC

My preference for the Anzac Day Reunion Luncheon is : ----

Please write you choice of venue on this form, cut it off and post it to Secretary Helen, 27/1-13 Mackenzie St., Lavender Bay 2060.

(A signature would be appreciated.)