



CENTRAL BUREAU INTELLIGENCE CORPS ASSOCIATION Inc.

MARCH 1999

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THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 1998

1998 was yet another active and successful year for the members, spouses and friends of CBICA Inc. On Anzac Eve sixteen took part in the moving twilight wreath laying ceremony at the Cenotaph. On Anzac Day itself thirty five marchers swung through the sunlit streets of Sydney and the numbers swelled to fifty two at the Reunion Luncheon. Once again this was held at the Hotel Mercure (formerly Lawson) where, I think, everyone agreed that the service was excellent and the venue congenial for this convivial occasion. The V.P. Commemoration Ceremony in Martin Place was attended by only four members and I feel impelled to comment that this highly significant occasion receives too little attention from our own members and the general public.

The November Reunion included a guided coach tour of the Olympic 2000 Site at Homebush, a wreath laying ceremony at the Anzac Memorial, where Alan Langdon gave the address and a Formal Luncheon at The Sydney Rowing Club, Abbotsford. Here Geoff Ballard was our Guest Speaker and his subject, The Olympic Village at Heidelberg, which housed the athletes at the 1956 Games. A total of sixty six members and friends attended the Reunion and a pleasing feature was the number of Interstate visitors.

The Association continues to support the move to establish the General MacArthur Memorial in Brisbane. In recognition of his outstanding efforts in this cause, Allan Campbell was unanimously elected Patron of our Association at the 1998 AGM.

A noteworthy feature of 1998 of interest to members of CBICA was the number of publications relating to SIGINT and other aspects of WW2 that appeared. These included, "Their Service Our Heritage" by Bob Leonard, "A Code Breaker's Tale" by Hugh Melinsky, "The Quiet Heroes of the South West Pacific Theater" by Sharon Maneki, "Breaking the Codes" by Ball and Horner, "Report on Aust. Army Special Wireless Units 1940-45" by Colonel W. Ryan, "Archival Material" released by DSD, and lastly Nobby Clarke's Message in the December Newsletter from which I quote: "I can assure you that the efforts of the operators of ASWG and the RAAF and AIF analysts, strippers, collators and book-makers working on air-ground traffic produced the most useful intercepted information in the Pacific War. So if you want to know who were the heroes, it was all of you working together with humility and devotion. Your commitment and dedication were certainly crucial to the final outcome of the Pacific War." On behalf of all members, thank you Nobby Clarke.

Finally it is my sad duty to record the passing of the following men and women, who, though not necessarily all members of CBICA, were involved in SIGINT operations and consequently may well be known to many of us: Douglas McCallum, Quentin Foster, Walter Taylor, Jean Williams, Snow Appleton, Snow Bradshaw, Bill Robinson, Jack Thorpe, Stan Willis, Ruby McKean.

My sincere thanks to all members of the Executive Committee for their untiring efforts throughout the year.

Gordon Gibson, President.

EXECUTIVE NEWS

From The President's Desk

Combined SIGINT Reunion, Melbourne, November 2000.

The proposal for a special reunion of all personnel associated with Signals Intelligence to commemorate the New Millennium as well as the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the formation of the Central Bureau Intelligence Corps Association received the stamp of approval of the Annual General Meeting.

It seems particularly appropriate that this reunion should be held in Melbourne because it was there that Central Bureau first came into being back in 1942. Also our biggest ever combined reunion took place in the Victorian Parliament House Gardens in the 1980's - the biggest ever because it was so well supported by the RAAF Wireless Units and ASWG as well as CBICA. People like Roy Ward, Geoff Patience, Steve Mason and Harold Jones played a big part in the success of that reunion and we have already enlisted their support for the Year 2000 which may seem a long way off but experience shows that it is never too early to start organising for these events especially since our members are scattered so widely over our own and other countries. The dates to keep in mind are Saturday/Sunday, November 11 and 12, 2000, the last days of Melbourne Cup week. So please note this and pass the word on to any SIGINT personnel you might chance to meet whether or not they are members of one of our Associations. All will be welcome.

Steve Mason O.A.M., Australia Day Honours 1999. News editor of that incredible publication Ink Emma Ink which has kept ASWG members in touch with one another for forty years, player and administrator of various cricket bodies, member and guide of the Melbourne Cricket Ground and officer of the old State Bank for forty nine years and two months.

These are the bare bones of Steve's career but all who know him are aware of what a great bloke this unassuming "editor feller" really is.

Congratulations Steve from all CBICA members.

Gordon Gibson

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Hon. Secretary's Par.

Greetings again to Cbers, to those who are well, and to those who are house-bound through illness. The Newsletter, thanks to Dennis Moore, keeps everyone in touch. Those who cannot get to meetings, marches and reunions have it as a link, and, of course, those with e-mail can hold conversations all the time. This must be wonderful, and perhaps one day I'll be able to join in. Meanwhile its telephone or type writer, even hand written letters.

Now, on with the news.

At our Annual General Meeting in February all official positions were declared vacant. Nominations were made and votes taken.

Present at the AGM were Bruce Bentwich, John Shoebridge, Mike Casey, Gordon Swinney, Gordon Gibson, Dennis Moore, Noni Benn, Joy Granger, Helen Kenny and Frank Hughes.

Apologies came from: Jim Kennedy, Madeline Chidgey, Norma Keeling, Alan Langdon, Di Parker and Peg Teague.

Office Bearers for 1999 are: **President**, Gordon Rossmore Gibson; **Vice-Presidents**, Mike Casey and Frank Hughes; **Hon Treasurer**, Bruce Bentwich; **Hon. Secretary** Helen Kenny; **Publicity Officer**, Dennis Moore; **Executive Committee**, John Shoebridge, Gordon Swinney and Madeline Chidgey.

Notice the big change. No Norma Keeling as Treasurer. She has been seriously ill, going in and out of hospital, trying with customary Keeling determination, to make her reports and look after our finances. However, just before the A.G.M. her medical advisers urged her to take a long break and avoid stress. Reluctantly, she stood down from the Hon. Treasurer's job, and at the A.G.M. we passed a vote of thanks -- with acclamation -- to her. As Mike Casey remarked: "She's kept us on the right side of the ledger," and everyone is grateful for all her work and enthusiasm. Thanks to Norma, our venue at the Mecure Hotel Lawson was booked long ago for the Anzac Day. We hope to see you there, Norma.

Bruce Bentwich is now Hon. Treasurer, and has inherited the job, the files and paperwork from Norma.

She was WAAAF, he RAAF, so this seems to be keeping it in the service. He is an accountant, and for eight years was treasurer of his bowling club at North Willoughby. Best wishes for the job.

Madeline Chidgey, former Publicity Officer, Committee member, and goodness knows what else is back on the Committee. She and I were on the same shift in the Henry Street garage, and shared the same fibro hut with other girls at Chermside. That was when she became engaged to Ron, her husband of many years. In spite of family commitments and other duties, Madeline is returning to the Committee. Welcome back. I hear too, that you and Ron plan to move to a retirement village soon. Good luck with the move, and please tell us when it takes place.

Changed Addresses. Diana Parker has left Tathra on the NSW South Coast to return to Melbourne, where members of her family live. Her new address is: 3/2 Leach Ave, Box Hill North, Vic, 3129. Norma Schneider, following the death of her husband, has moved to Unit 54 of the Garrison Retirement Village, 15 Spit Rd, Mosman, NSW 2088.

Max Hurley's new address is 4/233 Henty St, Casterton, Vic, 3111.

New Member: D.G. Mowatt, who lives at 22 Monterra Ave, Hawks Nest, NSW, 2324, served with the RAF, attached RAAF, in Brisbane, New Guinea, Leyte and Luzon. Welcome to our Association.

News Items. The MacArthur Chambers affair drags on in Brisbane, and when the building will be restored and open is a guessing game. However, it's good to know that the General Douglas MacArthur Memorial Trust is well established, and that Allan Campbell has given his valuable photographs, documents, books and records to it. The Trust will now own and care for this collection, a gift made freely by Allan who neither required nor sought any monetary or other consideration.

Joe Richard has written to Mike Casey saying that he hopes to fly out from the States to join us on Anzac Day in Sydney. This American Cber, well-known to so many, has joined us before on Anzac Day, and at Sigint reunions. Don't forget, Joe and everyone, that a Sigint reunion is planned for Melbourne in 2000.

Max Hurley, (mentioned above) remembers early days of CB at Cranleigh, Domain Road, and how a "mob of us" played volley ball outside the old mansion. That building has gone, but the Botanical Hotel, which served as the Officers' mess in 1942, is still there, Max advises.

Anzac Eve/Anzac Day. As usual we march by the flower laden Cenotaph, with its sculptured figures of sailor and soldier. They were real people. As our own Newsletter of March, 1989 (then edited by Marion Winn) pointed out, the sailor was Leading Signaller John William Varcoe of the R.A.N., and the soldier was Private William Darby of the 15th Infantry Battalion and 4th Field Ambulance, A.I.F. Fortunately both men survived the war. The sculptor was Sir Bertram Mackennal.

But Sydney is a city of rumour and of change. From what I read, the basement of the once fine G.P.O. will be turned into a food hall, and another new hotel will tower above the site. What of the Cenotaph? Whisperings / furphies, probably put about to test the wind, have hinted that it might be moved. Far-fetched? I hope so.

Our ANZAC Day speaker, as you already know, is Professor Desmond Ball, co-author with David Horner of "Breaking the Codes: Australia's KGB Network." (Allen and Unwin, \$29.95)

Desmond Ball, "special professor" at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, will come from Canberra to join us at the Mecure Hotel Lawson on Anzac Day.

He doesn't belong to our World War II generation, but was born in 1947 in the country town of Timboon, Victoria. That's a long way in place and time from Central Bureau (Melbourne and Brisbane), from the Australian Special Wireless Group (ASWG) and the Wireless Units. Yet Professor Ball has immersed himself in the history of these units and knows more about what was going on than most of us.

This economist/mathematician did his Ph.D on American spy satellites, and with David Horner began piecing together the "pieces of Australia's Soviet spy jigsaw". This began (as the book states) when David Horner obtained a copy of General Blamey's January 1945 letter to the Minister for the Army. This revealed Soviet espionage in Australia, and activities of Australian Communists. Sigint and decipherment of KGB cable traffic between Moscow and Canberra in the "Venona" operation is described in "Breaking the Codes" [Desmond Ball, mentioned in our December 1991 Newsletter, claimed that monitored Indonesian communications, would have informed DSD about affairs in East Timor —another matter entirely.]

The early part of "Breaking the Codes" mentions many CB names — Nave, Sandford, Steve Mason, Ryan, Sherr. Desmond Ball and David Horner have worked on the book since the 1970's. Professor Ball has much to tell us. Where is the history of Central Bureau? With DSD, he says. He adds, too, that a copy of Captain Eric Nave's autobiography is also there. Professor Ball's talk should be worth hearing. Get there if you can, not only to meet him but to meet old friends. Please bring those name tags, and please let us know as soon as possible, if you're coming.

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NORMA.

Two thousand two hundred and fifty receipts, carefully handwritten and stamped, one hundred trips to the bank with meticulously prepared deposit slips, one thousand minutes of waiting time in Westpac Bank queues, fifteen annual statements of account prepared, two thousand envelopes collected from the mail box and opened; just some of the tasks carried out by Norma Keeling (formerly Norma Scarfe, WAAAF) in her role as Treasurer, Central Bureau Intelligence Corps Association Inc. What other tasks could there be? Well, for example she made out dozens and dozens of cheques for suppliers of services to CBICA; for reunion functions and for all of our other costs. What has been listed above were just the routine parts of her job.*

During her fifteen years of service to members of our Association Norma took seriously those matters of principle which should concern all people entrusted with the care of the funds of others. She showed resolution and strength of character. She never shirked her duty nor took the easy way out. When asked to write a cheque for some non-routine expense Norma insisted that the case be made that the expenditure was in accordance with our rules and was in the best interests of the majority of our members.

Not bad for a senior citizen who was well on her way to seventy years of age when she took on the job of Treasurer fifteen years ago.

Thank you, Norma, for a job well done on behalf of the members of CBICA.

(* The numbers in these paragraphs may not be statistically accurate but they are not wild guesses, either. Lets say they are conservative estimates of the volume of work accomplished by Norma, based on a limited review of the evidence.)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

Dear Fellow CBers,

After having survived yet another setback, namely a four-week bout of what I imagine to be "Sydney flu", I should now like to return to a further discussion of the Yamamoto message.

When I first quoted the message in the September 1997 CB Newsletter, I deliberately omitted the word "shitaku" (literally "get ready"). This I did in the expectation that some kind soul would point out my omission. However, no such "correction" was forthcoming.

The message should now read: YAMAMOTO GENSUI, date, time, RABAURO TOUCHAKU YOUTEI (.) BUTA SUKIYAKI NO SHITAKU YUI KOU.

It is quite impossible that this is some figment of my imagination. It is a skilfully executed fragment of a poem in the best - or worst - samurai tradition.

"Buta sukiyaki" is perhaps as meaningful as "hens' teeth". Suki-yaki must be shaved razor-thin. Try doing this with pork! So, ruling out pork sukiyaki, what do we have left? We have: "Request you get ready (prepare) to slice and roast the pig".

This would seem to be an odd request for the Army to have made if it meant dealing with the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy. But it was no secret that Admiral Yamamoto, at the Emperor's command, had consistently opposed non-acceptance of the terms of the Washington Treaty upon which the Army clique insisted. Also at the Emperor's command, he had opposed concluding the tripartite pact with Nazi

Germany and Fascist Italy.

Attempts had previously been made on his life. If we look at the state of affairs in the Pacific at the time of Yamamoto's assassination, it is apparent that the game was up for Japan, and there is a strong school of thought for the proposition that on this occasion Yamamoto had come to this part of the world to negotiate a peace. As to the merits or demerits of any such discussion, it is of course impossible to adjudicate at this stage.

Like Joe Richard, "I would have thought" the Japanese Navy might have been able to look after Admiral Yamamoto and arrange his dietary requirements. But this was apparently not its intention, which was in fact to enlist the support of the United States Navy as its executioner.

Nobby Clarke

"YOU'LL BE SORRY!"

Did people say those words to rookie AWAS and WAAAFs? They certainly gave due warning to young Army and Airforce recruits. Perhaps on the way to the Recruit Depot or to the Initial Training Camp bystanders, or your so called mates, would say with some delight, "You'll be sorry!"

Whether you were volunteering as a patriotic duty or you were enlisting to partake of adventure and excitement in exotic places it didn't matter. You may have joined up because, if you didn't, you would have been conscripted any way; or it may have been that you waited until conscription caught up with you—— whatever—— it didn't matter; the warning was the same "You'll be sorry!". What some recruits did not really comprehend was what we were going to be sorry about.

Most of us knew about the hazards of being in combat zones. We knew how dangerous it would be to be under attack from German forces and we had no illusions about the ferocity of Japanese warriors. The hardships of war in deserts and in tropical jungles were well publicised. All of these things were contemplated

and indeed expected. Those of us who were honest with ourselves expected to experience fear; but not necessarily to be sorry.

The bystanders may have known something that young recruits, especially those who were to become trainees, did not know. **Our own Military Establishments would be the ones making us sorry.** This writer's experiences and the anecdotal evidence of contemporaries suggests that our own services set out to subdue and humiliate recruits and to be especially reactive to any individual or group which did not conform to some predetermined and rigid pattern of behaviour. The class system was well defined with structures and layers——raw recruits and trainees were right down at the bottom of the pile; as low as could be. That was the way it had to be: "you have got to have discipline" they said, "otherwise it would be a rabble. We had the British example to follow——our services were moulded in the British tradition."

Autumn 1944; RAAF Signals School, Point Cook, Victoria.

After a long day of being assailed through earphones with repetitious dits and dahs, just like one hundred or so other days, the trainees are paraded and drilled. They are marched up the Burma Road, from the huts on the salty foreshores of Port Phillip Bay.

The destination is a group of spartan, unlined, unfurnished, bare floored dormitory sheds further away from the shore. The trainees shuffle, rather than march, in ranks and files, their heavy steel capped and iron heeled boots scraping on the asphalt. These human forms are dark and shapeless in navy blue overalls, aptly referred to as 'goon skins'. Heads are covered in navy berets. The deepening late evening autumn gloom is fouled by the smell from the Werribee Sewerage farm, not so far away. The trainees are ordered to dismiss near the sleeping quarters for some brief respite before the parade and procession starts again, early next morning, down to the shore for some more dits and dahs.

The first trainees to reach the top step open their hut door and are stunned and silent in their dismay. The once neat interior is a complete and utter shambles. Palliasses hang haphazardly from the rafters, dozens of blankets are mounded in a crumpled pile on the bare board floor. Blue RAAF kitbags are scattered about in

random disarray and the personal contents once so carefully stowed away are similarly scattered. It is sheer vandalism, not perpetrated by 1940's style teenagers but by one of the layers of the RAAF hierarchy.

When the trainees left the hut in the morning the pitifully thin palliasses were folded in the regulation "S" fashion on the floor. Blankets were arranged according to the unique RAAF folding rules, on top of the palliasses; kit bags were placed on the floor in front and each individual's little collection was in a near perfect straight line with every other. That was how it had to be, every day. Perhaps on this particular morning one trainee had folded a blanket with the blue line in the wrong place or maybe a palliasse was two inches out of line. That is all it took to provoke such a humiliating reaction in the name of discipline.

Such was the Sigs School attitude towards trainees; an attitude reflected in so many other ways. Maybe the idea was to encourage the kids to complete the course as quickly as possible in order to escape from the misery of Point Cook. My recollection is that the Officer, Second in Command at the RAAF Signals School wore the lighter blue uniform of the RAF.

Things did get better when we 'passed out' and lost the trainee tag. Although still at school at 21 Henry Street there seemed to be a much more civilised relationship between those with power and those without.

A NOTE FROM NORMA.

Hi there, everyone! I'm not up to writing a column for the Newsletter this time. But I do want to let everyone know that I enjoyed working for all of the CB members. I really did enjoy my contacts with Cbers all over Australia and overseas, by letter and in person, and I shall miss responding to you all in my regular column. Anyway, I just have to accept that. I hope that I can keep in touch with the Association and its members

Norma Keeling.

FOR THE ENIGMA ENTHUSIASTS.

CB member Norma Smith monitors the news media. This headline caught her attention.

"Stiff upper lip quivers at insult."

The DAILY TELEGRAPHS's London correspondent has discovered that Hollywood is to make a film about the capture of an "Enigma" machine. HMS Bulldog captured a U-boat. The British skipper, Captain Baker-Cresswell decided to have his crew board the sub. and "strip out every moveable piece of equipment they could find".

The equipment included the sub's Enigma machine. The film says the u-boat concerned was U-571. The Telegraph says it should have been the U-110.

According to the Telegraph man, the Americans, rather than the British will be the heroes, though they had not even joined the war at the time. Even Universal Studios, through a spokesperson, admits that "although this is based on real events, we are not promoting it as fact".

The son of Captain Baker-Cresswell is quoted as saying "Its just a bit of tinsel town rubbish". He goes on to say that if the British want to counter the tendency to pass off distortions or downright untruths as history they should make such films themselves.

"But we haven't even got a film industry and it's very sad" he added.

The Telegraph says that King George VI presented a medal to Capt. Baker-Cresswell for his contribution to winning the war.

According to Bletchley Park man, Ralph Erskine (The Enigma Symposium 1995; published by Hugh Skillen) the British received an Enigma machine and rotors 1 to V from the Poles in August 1939. The German Army used the machines with the 1 to V rotor system. The German Navy used machines with extra rotors——VI, VII and VIII

The British recovered rotors VI and VII from u-boat U-33 on 12 February, 1940 while rotor VIII was captured in August, 1940. Ralph Erskine did not know where it was found.

According to Erskine U-110 does not come into the picture until 9 May, 1941 when it yielded up 'indicator books' which assisted in developing a method of determining in which order the rotors should be inserted into the Enigma machine.

Getting confused? The message is to sieve what you read and see through a fine mesh of scepticism.