

CENTRAL BUREAU INTELLIGENCE CORPS ASSOCIATION September 2003.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

V.P. Day

Your President again received "a most cordial invitation" from the New South Wales State President of the Returned and Services League of Australia "to attend and participate in the official wreath laying at the V.P. Day Ceremony at the Cenotaph, Martin Place, Sydney Friday 15th August 2003 at 11.00am."

This invitation was again accepted and when duly called upon to do so "Mr Gordon Gibson" laid a wreath "on behalf of the Central Bureau Intelligence Corps Association." I record this event because I regard it as a singular distinction for CBICA, especially when you are aware, as I am, of the high ranking dignitaries who precede me in the wreath laying and of the numerous representatives of other associations who attend and lay wreaths on a general invitation do so following the official party.

Keith Hall (State President of the Returned and Services League of Australia), unlike his predecessor Rusty Priest, is a man of few words. Governor of N.S.W. Marie Bashir, in her address, adequately summarised the key events of the Pacific War and paid tribute to the heroes of those engagements not forgetting to acknowledge our indebtedness to the United States of America for the final victory. My personal thanks to Frank Hughes for attending the ceremony and for the cuppa and pleasant chat after it.

Unit History

At last count, contributions to the appeal stood at \$40,000. Although we have not yet reached the *magical goal of \$50,000, which will allow the commencement of full time research, Chris Clark has already begun interviewing members for anecdotal material and memorabilia. Chris has

been given a complete list of all members and I know he can be sure of your full co-operation if and when he contacts you.

Frank Hughes and Bill Rogers are continuing their lobbying in wealthy and influential circles, including the Hon Danna Vale, Minister for Veteran's Affairs, Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, and who knows when a major breakthrough may occur? Following the receipt of some very helpful suggestions from (Group Captain) Arthur Skimin, the Association has again written letters to the Chiefs of the Army, Navy and Air Force, and the National Presidents of the R.S.L. Naval and R.A.A.F. associations updating them on the present position and inviting their assistance. Another possibility we have followed up is the R.A.A.F. Memorial Redevelopment Committee. Arthur has also indicated that he will be available to assist Chris in "the real hard slog research phase."

Mini Reunion 11th November

Don't forget this event, which will take place at the Roseville Memorial club, which is very handy to the Roseville Railway Station. I again apologise for the way the last mini reunion developed into a mini committee meeting and promise no repetition. A totally informal get together will be the order of the day.

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* Turn to page 8 –we have reached the goal !!!

HON. SECRETARY'S PAR

Hello everyone - I hope you all had a good look at Mars; it was quite spectacular rising on 27 August; bright red and throwing out rays of light. Sadly, now fading and heading back to base.

A propos things astronomical, I recently stayed with old New Guinea working colleagues at Tooraweenah, the drought-stricken but still very beautiful area of the Warrumbungles. Whilst there, we joined a viewing session at the giant telescope at Siding Springs. I was quite stunned to be able to see Jupiter's moons (well, 2.1/2 of them); also in an apparently black area of the Milky Way were millions more stars. How wonderful.

Back to taws...It's been a busy time lately but I'm not going to pre-empt anyone else's report. With correspondence out of the way, I'm assembling the reminiscences and photos you sent, to have them ready for the Historian. Thanks again for your assistance.

I've had a few chats with Doug Pyle whose book is coming out in early 2004 - "The Ultra Experience" (unless Australian Military History Publications decide to change the title). He also mentioned recent interesting contact with Val Claude (anglicised from Vladimir Klodinski). Does that ring a bell with any of you W.U. types?

In response to a news flash from Eve Scott (Kana op.) I sent off a congratulatory note to the President of the RAAF Association, Pine Rivers Branch, Murrumba Downs. The Air Cadets Museum there was to have been opened on 27th this month (Sept) but now deferred to January 2004. Eve has arranged for a paratrooper to "drop in" to add to the general excitement. She has been a staunch supporter of the Cadets for many years.

Please note Bruce's advice re the mini-reunion and ring him if you can make it; it would help the Club to have some idea of numbers.

That's my lot for now. Hope to see you at Roseville on 11 November. Keep well.

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HON TREASURER'S REPORT

Last year when in hospital I had a bone density scan, which, to my surprise, revealed osteoporosis (in porous bones) in my right hip. Since then I have visited the hospital every three months for a two-hour treatment (aredia).

Recently some others and I have received a letter from the Department of Veteran Affairs together with leaflets - the subject being control and prevention of osteo. Often people do not know of osteo until a fall, resulting in bone fractures or break.

To prevent the onset of osteo one or more of the following steps are suggested:

1. Change diet to include more calcium and vitamin D.
2. Increase physical activity (half hour daily walk).
3. Discuss hormone replacement therapy with your GP.
4. Stop smoking.
5. Reduce alcohol intake.

Your local GP should have a copy of the letter if you have not received one yourself.

Mini Reunion As mentioned in the previous Newsletter we are having a reunion on Tuesday 11th November at Roseville Memorial Club, commencing 12 noon. Address is 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville.

When leaving Roseville train station turn right, cross Pacific Highway at the lights, then turn left. The club is then about 100 metres level walk. Trains to Roseville from the city or Hornsby are every few minutes. Bistro meals are in the range of \$6 to \$16 mains.

So that we will have an idea of the number attending please let me know by telephone by late October.

Best wishes, good health, and we hope to see you in November.

Bruce Bentwitch

Hon Treasurer

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"A MARVEL OF ACCOMPLISHMENT"

These words, written by Major General Spencer B. Akin, Chief Signal Officer for General MacArthur, refer to the Sigint achievements of Central Bureau, of which he was founder and director.

They come from a paper entitled "MacArthur's Signal Intelligence Service." It is held in the MacArthur Memorial Military Archives at Norfolk, Virginia, USA.

An attached "note to the Reader", signed B.H. Pochyla, Major General, USA, Ret., says: "The attached manuscript is believed to be the final draft of a paper prepared by Major General Spencer B. Akin, USA, Ret. ... General Akin died in October 1973, prior to having the paper published." He was 84.

The paper, only 16 1/2 pages long, seems curiously incomplete - roughly typed, with pencilled alterations, and with gaps left for insertion of distances and measurements. For instance:

"The Theatre of Operations of the South West Pacific Area over which Central Bureau's Field Agencies had to operate, carrying out their radio goniometric and intercept missions... was an area extending miles from East to West and miles from North to South, an area approximating....."

To quote General MacArthur, the area was one "in which the terrain embodied the worst hazards and obstacles of which nature is capable, together with large areas necessitating amphibious operations."

General Akin declared: "Central Bureau's field operations in placing and maintaining radio intercept and radiogoniometric stations in the localities in which technical considerations required them placed, and in providing the large volume of intercepted traffic to be transmitted rendered the activities a real marvel of accomplishment."

Akin was a First War man. In that war he had seen the importance of a Signal Intelligence Service allied to a Military High Command. This was best exemplified (says Akin's paper) when General Erich von Ludendorff's German Army defeated Russian forces at the Battle of Tannenberg in August 1914. In that East Prussian campaign "the Russian signals

were easily read by the Germans who had absolutely accurate information as to their opponents' dispositions and intentions." The Encyclopaedia Britannica, from which that last sentence is taken, adds that the Germans captured 125,000 Russians and seized 500 guns.

At the start of his paper (which is undated), Akin, who refers to himself as "the writer", explains that it is necessary for him to present his own background in Signals Intelligence before describing MacArthur's Signal Intelligence.

Just before World War 11, Akin became Assistant Commandant of the US Army's Signal School. Part of the officers' course at that school included a section dealing with cryptography/cryptanalysis. "One of the world's greatest experts in this field" was to conduct this section, writes Akin who leaves the expert unnamed. (Was it Friedman?)

Just before the course began, the US State Department told Akin that a Japanese Major wished to attend. Akin had served in the Philippines and had noticed how assiduously the Japanese were mapping the area. He was suspicious of the Major and checked his credentials, finding that the course, with the exception of cryptography, would be elementary for the Major, who belonged to the Japanese Army Signal Service. The visit of the Japanese officer went ahead. He attended the signals course, but the cryptography lectures were delayed deliberately. They went ahead only after the Major had left.

Years later, after Japan's surrender, and when that country was under occupation, General Akin and the Japanese Major met again. By now, the Major had risen in rank, and was a Lieutenant General. He presented his sabre to General Akin "in token of surrender," and Akin was to find this now unemployed officer "a salaried position with the (Japanese) government in a field for which he was well qualified."

From August 1939 to April 1941, Akin was in charge of the Signal Intelligence Division in the office of the Army's Chief Signal Officer. The division's most important mission was to solve the Japanese diplomatic cipher system. It obtained copies of enciphered messages delivered by the Japanese embassy in Washington for transmission

to Japan. It also received the English text of records of conferences held between Japanese diplomatic representatives and the corresponding US officials. Eventually the cipher was solved, and translated copies of what the Japanese ambassador (Mr Nomura) had sent to his government were forwarded by special messenger to President Roosevelt.

Japan's plans for the Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere for Southeast Asia were going ahead.

It was essential that the US Army's Signal Intelligence Service should expand, that Japanese language translators should be found, that people should be trained.

Akin writes: "Some difficulty was encountered when some of the very desirable applicants declined the position when it was discovered that the imagined glamour resulting from being employed by such a highly secret activity lost its attractiveness when they were told that secrecy regulations prevented discussion of duties and activities....and that the duties would require much hard work.

"This particular phase is mentioned because of its contrast with the attitude of the very high class Australian women when they were being recruited for employment by the Central Bureau. They were a most enthusiastic, loyal and highly effective group."

Eventually, says Akin, the Washington office of SIS found the right type of personnel - "all that could be desired."

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Late in 1941 MacArthur asked Akin to become Chief Signal Officer of his Philippine Forces. On arriving in Manila he found there a Signal Intelligence Intercept Section that he had assigned to the Philippines.

But on December 7, 1941, "the Japanese started the war with their sneak attack at Pearl Harbour, followed by similar attack on the Philippines," says the Akin manuscript. MacArthur, in the sixth year of a ten year plan for the defence of those islands, was "forced to improvise by fighting a delaying action" - defending the Bataan Peninsula and the

Island of Corregidor. Hong Kong and Singapore fell, but Bataan held on.

General Akin maintains that this disrupted the Japanese plan for quick conquest, that "because of Bataan the Japanese never managed to detach enough men, planes, ships and material to nail down Guadalcanal...nor did they ever succeed in mopping up New Guinea or seizing a foothold in Australia."

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Akin says: "History records that in March 1942 MacArthur and a selected number of his staff (including the author) were ordered to Australia for duty in connection with the command of that area."

MacArthur, resentful of this order, nevertheless obeyed under protest. He left Corregidor on March 11 by PT-41. This boat with three others set off at night, travelling without lights and in radio silence through Japanese minefields and over 500 miles of open sea to Mindanao.

In PT41 with MacArthur were his wife Jean, their four-year-old son Arthur, and staff members. (The reticent Akin does not say in which boat he travelled.) From Mindanao a Flying Fortress flew the party to Australia - a 10-hour trip. Because Darwin was being raided the aircraft could not set down there but went on to Batchelor.

A quick change to a B17, and they got out just before the Japanese strafed that airfield. Then it was Alice Springs, a grindingly slow train trip to Adelaide, and another to Melbourne. At Spencer Street station thousands waited to greet them. It was March 21 ... the day on which MacArthur made his famous "I shall return" speech, which, in retrospect, seems highly optimistic.

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In the Philippines, writes Akin, the Army Signal Intelligence Service could not be spared for the purpose - "it was difficult enough to scrape together enough signal communications specialists to barely meet the combat needs of the command."

Now, in Australia, Akin was confronted by a new task. He writes: "Upon finding that a Signal Intelligence Service did not exist, the author set about the organisation and development of one. The Ground and Air Force of General MacArthur's command, when queried by the author, indicated

the need and desire to have such a service organised and operating. *The Navy component was apparently doing some work of this kind and declined to be included in the proposed activity.*

"In conformity with this idea, and the specific approval of General MacArthur, an organisation known as the 'Central Bureau' was set up and placed in operation with its first station in Melbourne, Australia."

(For the usual space reasons, Newsletter cannot print the full text of Major-General Akin's paper. The first part - edited and abridged - appears above. The second part is held over for a future Newsletter. Out thanks to Dr Peter Donovan for obtaining the paper for us.)



Major General S. B. Akin.
Reproduced from SIS Record

IN BRIEF

Apologies for the brevity of this issue's "In Brief". Newsletter has no lack of wartime reminiscences - and these are important - but needs news from Cbers as to what is happening now. Can you please send short notes, telling us if you're well, or ill, or if you're involved in something interesting. This is the only way in which Cbers can keep in touch.

You can also ring Helen Kenny on (02) 9954 0940. Thanks to Telstra's free 101 service, messages will be taken if she's not at home. Do help to compile a longer "In Brief."

After this appeal come a few items of news:

Fred Frank, of Yarralumla, ACT, came to the Anzac Day lunch, and afterwards sent a note of appreciation - and some good photographs of the March - to Gordon Gibson. He said the lunch was

most pleasant and that he found "ready acceptance by the valiant who maintain the ideals, dedication and friendliness in a rapidly changing world."

Mac Jamieson, Hon Secretary of the Wireless Units Association, tells of the reunion held at the Irish Club, (Brisbane) on July 19. Their Newsletter says that 27 turned up, mostly Queenslanders, but with interstate visitors Mick Manestar and Harold Jones (from Victoria) and Jack Lothian (Richmond, NSW). Harold Cook, after an extensive operation, is recovering well.

Melba Douglass of South Maroota, NSW, wrote to say that her husband Jack has been gravely ill. Our wishes to him.

Some of you might have heard the Hindsight interview on the ABC some months ago. It's now on CD. Journalist Kathy Prior interviewed some Cbers for this and you'll hear familiar voices. It's called "Codebreakers" - and speakers include Don Robinson, Judy Carson and Gordon Gibson.

Frank Hughes was asked to talk about CB by the Canberra Times, and the resulting article was published on September 20. Canberrans will have seen it. Frank is sending a copy.

HITCH-HIKE TO JAPAN

By
Mike Casey

The other day two friends and myself decided to hitch-hike to Japan. We were determined to see Japan and especially Tokyo at any price. With a five-day leave pass in our pockets and plenty of confidence we set out. But when we reached Clark Field a typhoon was blowing across Okinawa and all communication had been cancelled.

We stayed around the airstrip all the next day, and talking casually to an American pilot I learned he was going to Okinawa, leaving next morning in a B24 Liberator Bomber. Our luck was in. The purpose of the pilot's mission was to search for a wreck over Formosa. Making myself useful I volunteered to go to the rear of the ship and look through the rear turret. It wasn't long before I was overcome with airsickness. The pilot told me that was the worst place to ride and sent me to the cockpit, to look from there with the co-pilot, while he went to the rear end. There I rode in perfect

harmony and at times had control of the heavy bomber.

We touched down at 4.30pm, and left the next morning by C-46 transport, and at 1.15pm on 17 September crossed the Japanese coastline. The famous mountain of Fuji came into view - and the view was perfect. We finally set foot on Japan at 1.40. Our ambition had been achieved. As it was late in the day by the time we cleaned up and showered, we limited our sight seeing to the area around the airfield and the town of Tachikawa. We were unarmed and didn't wish to be in public during the hours of darkness. We learned later that one could wander through the streets at night with perfect safety.

Next day we were up early and into Tokyo by 9 o'clock. We travelled by electric train. The Nips certainly know how to pack to capacity ...From Tokyo railway station, which is a huge stone building with no roof and the wall blackened by fire, we went to look at the moat surrounding the Imperial Palace. In the moat were enormous fish about three feet long and resembling carp - the Emperor's Holy Fish. The palace itself is not visible from the street, but the boulevard nearby is untouched by bombing. In one of these magnificent buildings is General MacArthur's headquarters.

The Japanese people suffer two great defects - their curiosity and an inferiority complex.

You stop to ask policeman directions and you are immediately mobbed by curious Nips. A great joke amongst Allied troops during the early days of the occupation was to get a crowd around and let out a blood-curdling yell. This sends them half hysterical. Apparently their nerves are still on edge as a result of the bombing. Their inferiority complex was one of the reasons why Allied prisoners were so ill treated. They couldn't bear to see themselves dwarfed against the massive six feet of an Allied soldier. The men have their legs encased in puttees and wear the military style cap ...they look like a nation of bus drivers. The women have rosy cheeks and glossy black hair. I learned that they achieve such colour of the face by scraping it. For the most part women wear kimonos of the purest silk ...nothing can persuade them to trade one of these garments.

Nowhere is there the spirit of a defeated people. One feels that beneath all this bowing politeness lies a calm imperturbable steadfastness of mind and in some cases underlying contempt for the conqueror.

The Yanks are treating them with their traditional hail-fellow-well-met approach, drinking whisky with the men, making eyes at the girls and pampering the children. As one war correspondent wrote: "The occupation troops are on a huge shopping expedition." Our greatest moment came when we approached the Imperial Hotel with the intention of dining there. A sign at the front entrance said "Field Officers only," but as we filed through we each received a perfect salute from the American guards. The food was excellent and the service excellent."

(Mike, no field officer, but an NCO, must have relished this.)

In the capital of Japan one looks around and sees the result of the air raids...the precision and fire bombing...for every building untouched there is a ruin beside it. Some buildings appear intact but the interiors are blackened charred ruins.

During our first day in Tokyo we met three Australian Navy men and went to their ship for the night. Their ship was the destroyer "Nepal." It was on this ship that I met a former resident of Bellingham. They say it's a small world, but this beats the lot, meeting an acquaintance in Toyko Bay.

In order to get to the Bay we had to go to Yokohama. I think the area between the two cities is the most bombed space in Japan. Here were all the big aircraft factories and generally the industrial centre of Japan. Yokohama, like Tokyo, had been systematically bombed.

Travelling by train one night we met a student of the Imperial University, dressed in a tight fitting black uniform and black peaked cap. He spoke English flawlessly and was distressed at the way the military clique had brought disaster to Japan. He, himself, was a Japanese Methodist, and had lost an uncle in the bombing of Tokyo. It is remarkable how the people's faces fill with horror at the mention of B-29.

"Remember," he said as we parted, "we Japanese are a peaceful people."

I could not help but wonder.

(Mike Casey set down these recollections in 1945. They were written when he was a very young soldier, serving with CB in the Philippines. His story has been shortened slightly for Newsletter. Mike, a founder of CBICA, and a former president, died several years ago. He is well remembered by his friends, one of whom, Frank Hughes, passed on the "Hitch-Hike" story to us.)

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CUTTING THE WIRES

Australians are serving in Iraq today, but they served there in 1915 when Iraq was Mesopotamia, when it was ruled by the Ottoman Empire and when Turkey had come into the war on Germany's side.

A book "Guests of the Unspeakable - the Odyssey of an Australian Airman, being a record of his captivity in and escape from Turkey" by T.W. White tells an extraordinary story.

Thomas Walter White (1888-1957) was in the first batch of officers to train at Point Cooke (now spelt Cook), where the Commonwealth Government had set up a "military aviation school." It was the only one in the British Empire outside England, and in 1914 instruction was "decidedly primitive" to quote White - later Sir Thomas.

The school had two B.E. Biplanes and one "box kite" which could attain 45 m.p.h. The only instrument was a barometer and "the rush of air in the face told whether the climb or glide was at the right angle."

In 1915 White was appointed Captain, A.I.F., and adjutant of a small unit known as the Half Flight. At the request of India Australia was asked to send this unit to Mesopotamia for service, with the Indian Army. Four officers and fifty men were promised.

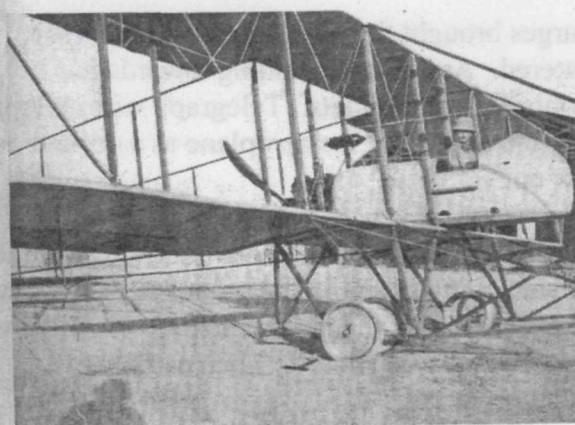
White published his book in 1928. It has a foreword by Monash, who says that in the most

easterly theatre of the War that "the foundations of these noble traditions of the Australian air fighters were laid."

White tells of the arrival at Basra, of the date palms, the heat, the mosquitoes.

Aeroplanes were so new that an Indian asked White for a photograph of one, saying "Otherwise my relatives in India will not believe me when I tell them I have seen men fly. They should know better for we have read how the same thing happened many thousands of years ago."

September 2003 marks the centenary of the Wright Brothers flight. White and his comrades who took to the air 11 years later flew Maurice Farman aeroplanes (known as Rumpetries) over the Mesopotamian front, using them for bombing and reconnaissance flights.



T. W. WHITE IN A MAURICE FARMAN "RUMPETY," MESOPOTAMIA.

(From "Guests of the Unspeakable" by T.W. White, John Hamilton Publishers, 1928)

Soon there were casualties. Lieutenant Merz, a medico and fellow graduate of the Flying School, was forced down in the desert through engine failure. He and his companion, Lieutenant Burn were surrounded by Arabs and died fighting. A search party found their aircraft hacked to pieces, but never the men, who lie somewhere in the limitless desert.

On Friday 13th November 1915 White and his observer, Captain Yeats-Brown flew off to cut the

telegraph line running westward from Baghdad, thus isolating the city's communications.

Baghdad was 60 miles away - and the aeroplane was capable of only three hours flight at 50 m.p.h. before refuelling. White and Yeats-Brown left their base at dawn and flew along the Tigris, seeing Baghdad with the "sun gleaming on the gold cupolas and minarets of the mosque. The city of the Caliphs was indescribably beautiful," writes White.

Yeats-Brown carried "necklaces of gun cotton" for the destruction of telegraph posts. White landed near the telegraph lines but a wind swept the aeroplane towards them. He decided to make a quick turn, to crash into a nearby canal rather than the wires. But the following wind was too strong. The plane struck a telegraph pole, smashing longeron and ribs. White jumped out to inspect the damage while Yeats-Brown ran off with a gun-cotton necklace to the nearest telegraph post.

Charges brought the pole down. Insulators shattered. Arabs came rushing towards the aeroplane, firing bullets. Telegraph wires whipped back and entangled the aeroplane as a second pole blew up.

Yeats-Brown, by then, had got back to the plane and was trying to swing the propeller. White, who had been firing at the enemy, felt the engine fire. Yeats-Brown was aboard. Then came the entangling wires.

White, who had orders not to destroy the plane, stepped down to surrender. He and Yeats-Brown were captured, bashed by Arabs, then taken into Baghdad by a Turkish detachment which showed - for a while - less brutality

White and Yeats-Brown were prisoners of the Turks and White found freedom only in 1918 when he escaped in Constantinople.

While in captivity he witnessed the suffering of British, Indian and Australian prisoners-of-war, and kept a miniature diary, which he concealed in the sole of his shoe. He records starvation, long marches, and says "it may be safely assumed that of 14,000 British and Indians captured by the Turks, not more than 3,000 survived their captivity."

Captain White, of the Australian Flying Corps, was Lieut-Col T.W. White, D.F.C., V.D. at the time his book was published.

He went into Parliament, was Minister for Air and Civil Aviation in the fourth Menzies ministry, and became High Commissioner to the U.K. from 1951 -1956.

Sir Thomas White's book tells of a time and events now almost beyond memory. As Monash wrote: "It is convincing in its simple diction - entirely befitting the modest and unassuming character of the man who has set down this record,"

\$50,000 GOAL REACHED !!!

At last – contributions to the Unit History Appeal have hit the \$50,000 target. An extra \$10,000 has come in, and "we've crossed the Rubicon," as Bill Rogers puts it.

He and Frank Hughes went to Canberra at the end of September. There were meetings, talks, and a sudden donation of \$10,000. Fiscal details and a donor will be named in the next Newsletter.

The Director of the Australian War Memorial, Major-General Steve Gower, AO, has written to President Gordon Gibson confirming the donation. He also confirms that Chris Coulthard-Clark can start work immediately on the CB history.