

# Central Bureau Intelligence Corps Association

Newsletter: No. 2 1990

May

## 24 APRIL 1990

There is a slight breeze and the temperature is mild and comfortable; almost a balmy Autumn evening with a scattering of poplar leaves on the pavement of Martin Place. The sky, so much as is visible between the buildings, has a velvety blackness which contrasts with the sunset some minutes before.

Not many people about. Some citizens and visitors are respectfully reviewing the wreaths on the Cenotaph and one or two pipers somewhere in the distance are creating that inimitable sound. But there is not the usual number of ex-service people. Then some familiar faces appear and there are signs of recognition and greetings and C.B.ers once more band together. It's very pleasant to chat in this familiar Martin Place atmosphere but time goes by and the C.B. group is still alone.

With the agreement of the Custodian we are marshalled by Allan Osborne and with proper military discipline acquired all those years ago we march to the Cenotaph. President Jim Williams places a wreath. In the following two minutes silence C.B.I.C.A. representatives pay solemn tribute.

### ON PARADE.

Bob BEVAN Madeline CHIDGEY Alf DAVIS Gordon GIBSON Norma KEELING Joy LINNANE Lach McNAUGHT Dennis MOORE Allan OSBORNE Jim WILLIAMS

There is always a loyal support group and this time it was Associate Member Ron CHIDGEY and daughter Margaret from Alice Springs, Meg Osborne from Mudgeeraba and Norma's daughter Claire and Claire's husband.

## 25 APRIL 1990.

Weather conditions were nigh perfect for the Anzac Day march. Sydney residents will understand any preoccupation with weather conditions as there were some well founded anxieties in the earlier weeks of April that we would be marching in rain gear.

Thirty three members and prospective members assembled at the corner of Elizabeth and Hunter. We were joined by two Venturer scouts, Patricia Hagan and Ben Engel from Pittwater House

Grammar School who, after an intensive training session with Allan Osborne did a first class job in bearing our standard for the duration of the march. Unlike last year the banner held together and indeed had good T.V.coverage lasting several seconds with Norma Keeling featuring in the right of the picture. Measuring such intagibles as goodwill is always difficult but there seems to be increasing goodwill between the marchers and the very large and enthusiastic crowds who line most of the route. Participation in the march in these circumstances is a rewarding experience.

### The Marchers.

Ivan AUPRINCE Jack BENNETT Bruce BENTWICH Bob BEVAN Keith CAROLAN Syd CAREY Lawrie CRANER Allan FARMER. Dave GEYER Gordon GIBSON Earl HEAP Frank HUGHES Norma KEELING

Stan KING Jim KENNEDY John LAIRD Noel LANGBY Vic LEDERER Bob LEONARD Bill LUDWIG Doug McNALLY Doreen MacPHERSON Geoff MILNE Dennis MOORE Reg MURPHY Allan NORTON Allan OSBORNE Roy PERRY Keith PHILLIPS Gordon SWINNEY Athol WHYBURN Jim WILLIAMS John WOOD

Leave passes for Anzac Day were sought by MCasey, J.Chessire, F.Cureton, G.Day, J.Davis, R.Eddolls, J.Grace, A.Hale, K.Hertzog, C.Hinds, S.Hinds, A.Langdon, B.Lovett M.Maroney, A.Marsland, J.Sanders, J.Shoebridge, C.Stephens, R.Tabley, J.Warmington, H.Williams, and S.Winn.

After the march, as did that famous general of World War II, we returned; not to the Philippines but to Phillip's Foote. It was a happy reunion in every sense. The sign in the entrance said 'Phillips Foote welcomes the Central Bureau Military Intelligence Organisation and a very special welcome to Les McClean of The Merry Mac and the C.Y.C.'

Members and guests settled in for some pleasant eating, drinking and talking. Information changed hands at a great rate. One shouldn't be surprised, but one is, at the new insights gained at every reunion about what we were all doing all those years ago. For example, at this reunion it was discovered that the Strippers in C.B. were not necessarily entertainers and there were W.A.A.AF. Kana operators and some Kana operators only got to monitor base to base traffic rather than the sometimes exciting base and aircraft or base and ship traffic.

Sixty one members and visitors signed on including guests from Austria and Russia. Some sixty four people were identified and apologies are extended to anyone present and not listed.

Madeline & Ron CHIDGEY Gwenda & Aub. ROBERTS  
 Norma KEELING Mona OWEN Geoff MILNE Keith  
 CAROLAN Doug McNALLY Gordon SWINNEY  
 Jacqueline KEELING Roy PERRY J. KENNELLY John  
 WALSH Les McCLEAN Laurie CRANER Jim WILLIAMS  
 Elma & Jack BENNETT Reg MURPHY Bruce  
 BENTWITCH Noni & Lach McNAUGHT Joy NOWLAND  
 Verna NOWLAND Margaret McCAFFERTY Joy  
 LINNANE Clare & Ken STEGGA Joanna & Brian  
 McDONALD Florence & Bill ESTEP Daisy BOBIN Ruth  
 MacDONALD G. KAZH Sopke M. RUEF Frank HUGHES  
 Sue & Gordon GIBSON Norma SCHNEIDER Marion  
 WINN Sheila GREGORY Meryl & Allan OSBORNE  
 Robert OSBORNE Lisa OSBORNE Dave GEYER  
 Frances GEYER Brett BARGALLIE Norma & Syd  
 CAREY Ruth & Keith PHILLIPS Pam & Bob LEONARD  
 Margaret & Len CARRIGG Michael FERTER Peggy &  
 Dennis MOORE Knobby CLARKE Vic LEDERER Bill  
 KALBFELL.

## AN EVENT WORTH ANTICIPATING.

If you enjoyed Brisbane in 1988 and Melbourne in 1989 Sydney is the place to be in November 1990. If you missed the Brisbane event and the Melbourne reunion don't miss the chance to spend some quality time with C.B., A.S.W.G. and W.U. colleagues. Join us in Sydney in November for the second C.B. and RAAF Wireless Units combined reunion.

We will barbeque some steak and chops and sausages in the wide open spaces of Centennial Park on the City's doorstep on Saturday, November 10. On Sunday, after a wreath laying ceremony at the War Memorial at Hyde Park we will gather at the Opera House and board the superbly comfortable "KATIKA" to cruise the harbour for four or five hours. Your first class buffet lunch will be served on board against a background of harbour views and the Sydney skyline.

When you disembark the fun won't be over -----you will be at Darling Harbour which has become a "must visit" place on the itineraries of interstate and overseas visitors. In case you do not have anything to do on the Saturday evening participants in the reunion will be warmly welcomed at the Eastern Suburbs Leagues Club at Bondi Junction.

C.B.I.C.A members, members of Wireless Unit Associations based in other States and, of course, relatives and friends are all most welcome. Our Wireless Unit Association colleagues in Melbourne already have foreshadowed a strong presence in Sydney for the November activities. You will help the Executive to plan effectively for the weekend if you complete and return the enclosed slip at an early date to let Secretary Gordon Gibson know that you will be coming.

## EXECUTIVE NEWS.

**From the President's Desk.**

The Great Architect was certainly kind to us in ensuring wonderful weather on Anzac Day. It has been reported that the crowd and marchers were the largest for many years.

Our "old" stalwart Bob Bevan came all the way from North Rockhampton to be with us. Unfortunately he had a slight turn after the march and was not one hundred percent for the remainder of the day. Still, you can't keep a good man down and Bob was still there at the finish.

Our only Western Australian member was with us, viz. Joy Nowland. I hope I met her. If I didn't I apologise and give her a hearty welcome to our ranks.

I can inform members that we are well on the way with our arrangements for our social "get together" on 10th and 11th November this year. We are hoping for a good response from our members and also from the RAAF Wireless Unit Associations in Queensland and Victoria.

Jim Williams

### **Treasurer.**

I wish to thank members who paid their 1990 sub promptly and for the donations given which are appreciated and now I look forward to receiving monies from members who will be attending the reunion here in Sydney in November. It would be helpful if members and their friends could pay me as soon as possible so we can budget for this occasion.

I receive many attached letters with subs. which I enjoy reading and hope to be able to have a Treasurer/Members communication column in following Newsletters.

So many members have written saying how they enjoyed the Melbourne reunion and send their good wishes and Maurey Coombs from the U.S.A. hopes to be in Australia in 1991 and sends his regards.

Phyl McLeod from Gympie tells me she marches in Gympie's small Anzac Day procession to the local park where an open air service of commemoration is held and then all exservice personnel are treated to a free luncheon at the Civic Centre, paid for by the local Shire Council. Does anyone know of any other council which does this?

I attended the wreath laying ceremony at the Cenotaph both for C.B. and the WAAAF on 24th April and then the Dawn Service which brought a very big crowd to Martin Place and then marched in the Anzac March ending up having a very happy time at Phillippe Foote made possible by the help of Les McClean. Thank you Les.

A little verse from a book called "Think Again" to end my report:-The best way to escape from your problem is to solve it.

Norma Keeling

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## PEOPLE

Condolences are extended to Dave GEYER who lost his wife Elizabeth in March. It was good to see Dave on Anzac Day with his daughter Frances in support.

Politicians, public servants and some journalists are known to equivocate when speaking on the record. The last Newsletter carried the unequivocal statement that at age 85 Paddy PATRICK was the oldest-----and then our reporter met John WALSH. John was the second adjutant of 1 W.U. after Cliff Adams and before Frank Ward.

He served in Darwin, Townsville and Brisbane before travelling to the Philippines with a party which included Reg Murphy. When talking about the early war years John says that service in the W.U.s. was "a bit like pregnancy---nine months was long enough". Anyway to the point of the story---John says he is eighty eight.

Connie CARPENTER is ex 1 W.U. and therefore was most likely one of those original WAAAF Kana operators. Connie made the long trip from Buderim in Queensland to participate in the Melbourne reunion last year. Since then she has spent some time in intensive care in hospital. It is good to know that according to our reporter Connie now is feeling very much better.

Long term smokers who want to kick the habit should contact Allan OSBORNE. He knows all about it and is about three or four months down the track on the way to being a reformed smoker.

Lester TRUEX and his wife, missing from our get together, are travelling in Asia and Mac MARONEY who also hails from Victoria is undertaking extensive overseas travel covering the three major continents. Mac has guaranteed to be in Sydney for Anzac Day 1991.

Brian BOMBELL is a long term contributor to the well being of C.B.I.C.A. and operates well and truly behind the scenes. Nevertheless his work in printing the Newsletter year after year is indeed appreciated and his name deserves to appear on the "credits list" every so often so that we don't forget.

## RECOLLECTIONS

This months recollections column is contributed entirely by Geoff BALLARD.

### "ON 'ULTRA' ACTIVE SERVICE"

The story of Australia's Signals Intelligence operations during World War II.

*"On 'Ultra' Active Service" tells the gripping and hitherto Top Secret story of the Australian Signals Intelligence effort during World War II. It is a unique story, never having been told publicly before. It is not a "regimental history" in the normal sense of the term, but rather a story about the people of the "Sigint" organisation - the human and personal aspects, anecdotes, humour, interaction between members, sketches, poems and any other original work by them - as well as the complexity and significance of their duties. It is the story of our "Sigint" members against a substantial operational background.....The story is illustrated by a remarkable series of photographs embracing many aspects of the "Sigint" organisation's life, as well as copies of German and Japanese codes, actual messages, Intelligence Items, etc., etc...."*

The above is an imaginary "blurb" which might appear on the cover of "our book". Yes, it's finished and at the present time, is being reviewed by commercial publishers. The comments so far have been favourable, but predictably, publication has not proceeded on the grounds of "narrow readership interest". This means that whilst former members of the organisation would want to buy the book because of their own involvement in it, the general public would not - or not in sufficient numbers to make it a "commercial proposition".

If no commercial publisher can be found within the next few months, I intend to proceed with publishing the book myself, using my own resources. I have already had a brief discussion with Steve Mason about this eventuality.

The book opens within the context of my own enlistment and early army service, then moves to the Middle East, covering the operations of 4 W/T in the campaigns in Greece, Crete and Syria.

On the unit's return to Australia, the story widens to cover the formation of ASWG and Central Bureau and tells the story of those organisations in the Pacific war. There are detailed accounts of both the interception and code-breaking sides of the operations, as well as the translation and interpreting tasks. Next, come the histories and adventures of the Army Wireless Sections, the RAAF Wireless Units and the American Radio Intelligence Companies - with additional information on the US and British ship-board intercept units - where they are related to our activities. This part of the story covers Darwin, New Guinea, New Britain, the Admiralties, the Solomons, Morotai, Borneo, the Philippines, Ceylon, India, etc., etc...

As well as covering operations, the story is intensely "personal" as it includes contributions by more than

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100 members - both men and women - of the "Sigint" organisation. Anything that concerns or motivates people - feelings, views, experiences, wounds, illness, culture, music, religion, sex, politics, sport, scenery, travel, history - as well as training and doing the job - is to be found there and much more besides. There are also photographs, poems, descriptions and sketches.

It seems to me that the typescript throbs with the spirits and personalities of all those members who are part of it! Well - that's the story so far - and I'll keep you posted about future developments as soon as they occur.

March 10, 1990

Geoff Ballard.

## EDITORIAL

C.B.I.C.A. was born about fifteen years ago. Not all that long ago in terms of most of our lifetimes. Have you ever wondered what C.B.I.C.A. will be like fifteen years into the future? Perhaps it may have passed into history through lack of active support ----and present indications suggest that it won't even have left a "headstone" to mark its existence. And perhaps it doesn't really matter all that much if it doesn't leave any mark.

On the other hand C.B.I.C.A. is a unique ex-service organisation. "Newsletter" doesn't have expertise in military history but it is probably fairly accurate to say that in the world's long preoccupation with war and warlike activity C.B. itself didn't have any predecessor; it was a first. It was a unique melding of inter-nation and inter-service entities. It represented very early and primitive attempts at electronic surveillance and the analysis, interpretation and injection of data gained from electronic surveillance into military decision making. This was attempted against a background of a two nation partnership; albeit with one of the partners dominating.

Perhaps you believe that the ongoing D.S.D. has ensured C.B.'s immortality or that Geoff Ballard's book is all that needs to be recorded for posterity. Neither of these, however, would be concerned with C.B.I.C.A. itself. Our founders were far sighted and created a worthwhile ex-service organisation which is currently alive and well and growing. Some of those founders have passed on and some of the opportunities for first hand stories have been lost already.

If you feel that C.B.I.C.A. should have a "headstone" then we need to do something about archives. We need written evidence and original documents to show that we existed, who we were

and what we did. We need to identify what paper and documents we have that are worth keeping; we need to identify what we may be able to collect and keep.

We need to identify where records should be kept and who should keep them ---- in other words we need to do something about "archives management". There are documents relevant to C.B.I.C.A.'s short existence but they are scattered and there doesn't seem to be any plan for their ongoing security or preservation.

Then again, if members generally do not believe that C.B.I.C.A. is worth a "Headstone" we don't have to do anything.

Do you have any opinions about this? You can always write to "Newsletter" or contact your favourite member of the Executive.

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