

# THE STORY OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE IN QUEENSLAND SEPTEMBER 1939 - SEPTEMBER 1945

## 1940 - ITALY COMES IN

The two major events of Intelligence importance which occurred in 1940 were the escape in February that year from the Internment Camp of Kurt Herbert Wnuck and Hugo Hillebrand, and the declaration of war by Italy on 11th June, 1940.

### Escape and Recapture of Internees

Wnuck and Hillebrand escaped at night, and subsequent investigation showed that they had been assisted by another internee, Robert Pallaser-Hohenstein. The escape had been made possible by the sluicing by Hillebrand of a hole under the barbed wire fence where it adjoined a vegetable plot of which Hillebrand was the gardener.

Prolonged interrogation of Pallaser-Hohenstein disclosed the intention of the escapees to make for Fraser Island, and thence to set sail for Northern Queensland, where they proposed to hide in the vicinity of Iron Range.

Capt. Morton, in the guise of a pig buyer, and accompanied by Sgt J. Christie (Cipher Section), Cpl J. Court ("I" Registry), Cpl E. Taylor (Field Security Wing), Cpl J.G. McClellan (Field Security Wing), all of whom dressed as swagmen, made an extensive search of the Maryborough district. Wnuck was discovered and arrested at Urangan, and two days later Hillebrand was arrested on a back road between Gympie and Maryborough.

It is of interest to note that all four "swagmen" subsequently received commissions. By September 1944, Sgt Christie had become Capt J. Christie, Cipher Section, Signals, LHQ, Cpl Taylor had been commissioned with 8 Australian Division and became a Prisoner of War in Malaya. Cpl Court had seen active service in the Middle East and New Guinea and had become Major J. Court, Air Intelligence Liaison Officer, 9 Division, and Cpl McClellan had been commissioned in Field Censorship (see Pt 5) and subsequently returned to civil life.

### Italy Declares War

Some time prior to the declaration of war by Italy, arrangements had been made against such an eventuality. Lists of Italian aliens and Naturalised British subjects of Italian origin in respect of whom there was sufficient evidence of disaffection to justify their internment, had been prepared by Intelligence.

Within six hours of the declaration of war by Italy, between 400 and 500 had been arrested in Queensland. Again as in the case when Germany declared war, the leaders were the first to be arrested, and the rank and file being left without leadership for the time being at any rate, were impotent.

One of the highlights of that period was the attempt by Intelligence to delay the sailing of the Italian liner S.S. "ROMOLO" which was carrying a cargo valued at more than #1,000,000. By various means Intelligence succeeded in holding up the sailing of the vessel by nine days, but finally all means of delaying the vessel having been exhausted, the ship was allowed to sail under escort with a cruiser. A day or two later when Italy declared war, the cruiser was about fifteen miles distant from the "ROMOLO", the crew of which immediately set fire to the ship, opened the sea cocks and took to the boats. The whole of the crew and the passengers were picked up and eventually were brought to the Internment Camp at Gaythorne.

## Mapping - Queensland

At the outbreak of war there were only 13 Military Survey maps available covering 1 Military District, which at that time included Queensland and New Guinea. These were on the scale of 1 mile to an inch and covered an area bounded by Caboolture-Redcliffe on the North and by Warwick-Tweed Heads on the South. The information on which these maps were based was correct only to dates varying from 1922 to 1937, and in addition all bore the old British grid.

In the first two years of the war, I(a) Sub-Section undertook several mapping schemes. The coastal area of Queensland from Mackay to the New South Wales border was mapped, first on 4 miles to the inch and then on 2 miles to the inch, compilation being based on the Queensland Lands Department County, Parish, 4-mile and 2-mile series maps. A start was then made on the area between Mackay and Cairns, but this later was discontinued.

Later, arising out of discussions with the Queensland Lands Department, it was agreed that the Queensland Lands Department would be able to supply serviceable maps of Queensland in an emergency by printing their 4-mile and 2-mile series maps with unwanted details painted out on the negative and certain necessary information drawn in or over-printed.

There were, however, still large areas of Queensland not covered by these 2-mile series maps, including practically the whole of the coastal area north of Rockhampton. I(a) Sub-Section filled all these gaps with a series of maps, uniform with the State maps, save that they gave additional military information.

## Movement of Officers

During 1940, six officers ceased Intelligence duty with 1 Military District, and 14 officers were appointed for duty.

Major Wilson transferred into the AIF in May 1940 and subsequently saw active service in the Middle East where he attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and commanded a Field Artillery Regiment.

The imposition of Passport Examination Service was carried out by Capt Morton, but by the end of the year this had grown in magnitude and it was therefore necessary to bring in another officer.

Lieut R.W. Fletcher, M.C., who, in civil life, was sub-manager of the Aberdeen and Commonwealth Line, and was at that time serving with 1 Garrison Battalion, was transferred for duty as Passport Officer. (*In the original manuscript, author had this officer as RD Fletcher*)

Owing to pressure of work and indifferent health, Capt Stumm found himself unable to continue as Intelligence Officer, Rockhampton, and in January 1940, he ceased duty and was replaced by Lieut E.A. Jolly, who had served in the AIF in 1914-1918.

On account of his linguistic qualification Capt Crawford was transferred in July 1940 to the staff of the District Censor (see pt 5) and was appointed Assistant District Censor, Townsville.

Owing to the pressure of other duties, Lieut Dale transferred to the Reserve of Officers in August 1940.

In October 1940 Lieut Lockyer and Lieut Wills transferred to the AIF.

Lieut Lockyer saw service with 9 Division in the Middle East and New Guinea where he was mentioned in despatches. He became DAAG, 9 Division but owing to ill-health was transferred to the Reserve of Officers about the middle of 1944.

Lieut Wills also saw service with 9 Division in the Middle East where he too was mentioned in despatches. On his return to Australia he held several appointments, including that of Senior Instructor of the LHQ School of Military Intelligence. In June 1944, with the rank of Major, he was appointed GSO II (Int) for duty with the Control of Germany Commission, and was sent to England.

Of the officers appointed for Intelligence duties, Capt H.L. Swain, M.C. was appointed from the Regimental Reserve List of 9/49 Battalion. During the previous war he had been the Adjutant of an AIF Battalion. In the middle of 1942 Capt Swain was transferred to the Security Service.

Lieut H.R. Langford, M.C. who, in the last war had served in the Royal Horse Artillery and had been awarded the Military Cross and Bar, served with Intelligence for a few weeks and subsequently was appointed to the General Staff. Ultimately he became Commander, Torres Force, where he attained the rank of Colonel, and was awarded the OBE.

Lieut C. Ware, M.M., was appointed from 1 Garrison Battalion. During the previous war he had served with the AIF and also with the Australian Flying Corps. In August 1940 he transferred to Australian Army Ordnance Corps, with which Corps he served in New Guinea, and was awarded the MBE.

Lieut R.H.V. Jensen, who served with the Light Horse 1914-1918, was appointed from the Reserve of Officers for Intelligence duties in July 1940. Subsequently he was posted as Intelligence Officer, Townsville, and for a short period as Intelligence Officer, Cairns. Owing to ill-health he retired in September 1943, with the rank of Captain.

Lieut C.M. Wrench, M.C. who served in the AIF 1914-1918, was appointed to Intelligence duties in July 1940. In 1941 he (was) seconded for duty as DAQMG, and in 1942 he attained the rank of Major.

Lieut J.T.T. Stevens, who, in civil life, was a Public Servant, was called up from the Reserve of Officers for duty in I(b) Sub-Section. Subsequently he was transferred to (the) Security Service.

In the same month, Lieut E. Lawton, was also called up for duty in I(b) Sub-Section, and in 1942 he was transferred for duty with (the) Security Service.

Lieut T.H. Hilder, a member of the New Guinea Civil Administration, was called up for duty as Intelligence Officer, Port Moresby, in August 1940, and remained under command of 1 Military District until 8 Military District became a separate entity in September 1941.

Lieut J.D. Brown, who, in civil life was a journalist, was called up for duty at the end of August 1940. He had served with the Field Artillery in the AIF during the years 1914-1918. At first, Lieut Brown was engaged in I(b) duties, but latterly was engaged in duties of I(c), and subsequently, with the rank of Captain, was transferred to 1 Aust Field Censorship Company in August 1943.

Lieut N.R. Fogarty joined Intelligence in October 1940, and after a short period in I(b) duties he was transferred to I(c) Sub-Section. In June 1941, he was transferred to 1 Labour Company. During 1914-1918 Lieut Fogarty served with the AIF and lost his left arm.

Lieut M.T. Raw joined Intelligence in December 1940, and was posted Intelligence Officer, Thursday Island. He was transferred to the Reserve of Officers in January 1942.

In December 1940, Lieut C.W. Johnstone, commenced duty with Intelligence. After a period with I(b) Sub-Section he was appointed Intelligence Officer, Maryborough. Later he was appointed GSO III I(a) and in June 1943 was appointed Intelligence Officer, Townsville.