

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

## 1944 - FIFTH YEAR OF WAR

During 1944, the events of major importance in Queensland from an Intelligence viewpoint were the relaxation of Unit Censorship (see Pt 5), the formation of Prisoner of War Control Centres (see Pt 6), the great increase in the number of Japanese Prisoners of War arriving in Queensland, the investigation of Intelligence work at the Queensland Headquarters by the Order of Battle Investigation Committee, and the closing down of the Secret Line of Communication (see Pt 2).

### Relaxation of Unit Censorship

The war situation in Australia in March 1942, had necessitated the imposition of Unit Censorship (see Pt 5) on all personnel rationed and quartered by the Army, both in Australia and overseas.

The difficulties this created were many, the troops being hostile to a scrutiny of their internal mail, whilst civilian mail was sacrosanct. This hostility led to numerous methods of avoiding Unit Censorship, the most prevalent being posting in civilian posting boxes, against little could be done, as such mail immediately and automatically became the property of the Postmaster-General.

At the end of 1943, it was decided that the war situation no longer necessitated constant supervision of the mail of all troops, and a General Routine Order (G835/43) was promulgated relaxing Unit Censorship from all internal mail or troops stationed in Australia, with the exception of those in the restricted or declared areas. These would comprise:-

- (a) that portion of Western Australia north of 200 south latitude;
- (b) the Northern Territory of Australia; and
- (c) the Shire of Barkly Tableland, and the districts of Haslingden, Heywood, and Mt Isa in Queensland, and the Area of Queensland North of the Northern boundaries of the Shires of Cloncurry, McKinley, Wyangarie, Flinders, Dalrymple and Thuringowa.

Another exception was made in respect of troops under warning order for movement to an operational area, who were made subject to Unit Censorship, irrespective of their location.

The relaxation of Unit Censorship threw a greater volume of work upon the I(c) Sub-Section at Headquarters Queensland Line of Communication Area, for it necessitated a constant censorship check of unit mail in order to ensure that troops were not abusing the privilege which had been granted them. These checks revealed much slackening of security in many units of the units, and strong disciplinary action was taken to bring the units to the requisite standard of security-mindedness. In addition, it was necessary to police Unit Censorship among the units warned for movement to operational areas, not only to ensure that Unit Censorship was imposed, but also that franking officers were doing their work correctly. Although these Censorship checks entailed added work for Intelligence, this was offset by the value of the information which General Staff Intelligence, Headquarters Queensland Line of Communication Area was able to furnish regarding security, morale, command, discipline, etc. to the various formations and units.

## **Prisoner of War Control Centres**

The establishment of Prisoner of War Control Centres (see Pt 6) was a feature of 1944. At the end of 1943, one Control Centre had been established at Stanthorpe, and during the following year Control Centres were set up at Nambour, Gympie, Gayndah, Texas, Home Hill, Kenilworth, Kingaroy, Monto and Boonah, the total quota for a centre being fixed at 1255 prisoners of war.

The establishment of these Prisoner of War Control Centres naturally resulted in a considerable volume of additional security work for Intelligence, as not only was it necessary to prevent prisoner of war mail from being posted through other than the proper official channels, but it was also imperative to ensure that personnel who would be associated with prisoners of war while released on parole for agricultural employment were suitably investigated from a security angle.

## **More Japanese Prisoners Arrive**

Prior to the beginning of 1944 very few Japanese permitted themselves to be taken prisoner, and consequently the number reaching Queensland was very small. As the Allied advance in New Guinea continued, and particularly from April 1944, onward, the number of prisoners taken increased very substantially, and all were cleared through the Queensland Prisoner of War Camp at Gaythorne. This camp was virtually in the nature of a staging camp, where prisoners were interrogated and all necessary documents, relative to them, were prepared before they were sent to Prisoner of War Camps in the South.

With an increasing number of Japanese prisoners being taken, the capacity of the Prisoner of War Camp at Gaythorne was stretched to the limit, there being rather more than 1000 Japanese Prisoners of War in the camp at the beginning of September 1944. With a view to relieving the position, an additional compound capable of holding 500 Prisoners of War was built alongside the existing Prisoner of War Camp.

General Staff Intelligence, Headquarters Queensland Line of Communication Area was responsible for advising on all security matters relative to the Prisoner of War Camp. Certain recommendations, such as the installation of an emergency lighting plant, provision of additional guards, the arming of all guards with automatic weapons had been made by Intelligence, but owing to shortage of manpower or materials and stores, the recommendations had not been implemented. When more than 900 Japanese prisoners of war attempted to escape from a Prisoner of War Camp in the South in August 1944, as a result of which 284 were killed and 108 wounded, immediate steps were taken to put into effect the recommendations made by Intelligence.

## **Fresh Duties Assigned**

Consequent upon the Government's policy of releasing from the Army to essential industry the maximum number of all ranks consistent with the maintenance of military efficiency, Headquarters Queensland Line of Communication Area was visited by the Order of Battle Investigation Committee. In common with other branches and services of the Headquarters, the work of General Staff Intelligence was fully investigated, and all members of the Section were closely interrogated regarding the work they were doing and its practical value to the war effort. As a result of this investigation, one Field Security Section which had been attached to the Queensland Headquarters was re-allocated, leaving three Field Security Sections under command of Headquarters Queensland Line of Communication Area.

The issue of passes to controlled and prohibited areas had previously been handled by the General Staff, but the Investigation Committee decided that this was rightly a function of Intelligence and the issue of these passes was transferred to General Staff Intelligence.

## **Secret Line of Communication Closed Down**

In view of the fact that the threat of invasion of Australia had passed, it was decided to close down the Secret Line of Communication (see Pt 2) in North Queensland and to demobilise the personnel.

The services of Lieut H.B. Beaman, who had established the Secret Line of Communication, were secured from First Aust Army, and in May 1944 he set out to visit every location, where he collected the teleradio sets and other items of equipment and forwarded the personnel to General Details Depot for discharge. So scattered and isolated were the posts that it took Lieut Beaman approximately three months to visit all posts and complete the closing down of the Secret Line of Communication.

Although the work done by the Secret Line of Communication had not been spectacular, it had called for a very high standard of devotion to duty, and in the event of an invasion, would have proved an invaluable source of information to the High Command. Living conditions on the posts were of necessity most primitive. For long periods some members of the Line saw no other human being, and were thrown entirely on their own resource. None of the personnel had any previous knowledge of radio, and it speaks volumes for their ingenuity, initiative and ability that during the period of the Line's existence, only on a very few occasions, and then only for short periods, were any of the stations off the air. On several occasions the GSO 1 (Int) visited the posts and tested the communications.

The work done by the members of the Secret Line of Communication was the last major activity of General Staff Intelligence, Headquarters Queensland Line of Communication Area prior to the fifth anniversary of the outbreak of war.

## **Organisation and Personnel**

During 1944, only one officer joined Intelligence on the Queensland Headquarters up to September of that year.

He was Capt J.F. Rooney, who was appointed from 12 Australian Division Section, Australian Intelligence Corps, in February 1944. In civilian life Capt Rooney had a sound knowledge of North Queensland, and this knowledge was utilised in Intelligence by his appointment as Intelligence Officer, Cairns.

In June 1944, Lieut E.L. Edwards rejoined Queensland Line of Communication Area Section, Australian Intelligence Corps, after having been seconded to Northern Territory Coastal Reconnaissance Unit from April 1943. Lieut Edwards was posted in charge of I(b) Sub-Section.

The organisation and personnel of Military Intelligence in Queensland as it existed at 4th September, 1944, is shown in the accompanying diagram.

**QUEENSLAND L OF C AREA  
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE**

**ORGANISATION OF PERSONNEL AS AT 4 SEP 44**

GSO 1  
Lt-Col L.F. Wilkinson

GSO 11  
Major G. Morton

Confidential Typiste  
Miss K. Casey

<u>I(x)</u>	<u>I(a)</u>	<u>I(b)</u>	<u>I(c)</u>	<u>Local IOs</u>
	Map Prep & Distribution	Security	Censorship	
Capt W.F. Nixon-Smith	Capt L Peterson Lieut H.V. Greenfield	Lieut E.L. Edwards	Lieut D.B. Casos	
<u>Clerical Staff:</u> WOII Coghill J. S/SGT Cook B.N. SGT Brook W.E. SGT Tritton W. CPL Rennet M.H.	<u>Clerical Staff</u> S/Sgt Coghill, T.W. SGT Walsh, A.H. SGT Gordon L.F. Pte Nicol J.	<u>Clerical Staff</u> WO1 Stevens I.F. CPL Abbott A.H.	<u>Clerical Staff</u> Sgt Walsh J.W. Cpl Birk V.J.  <u>Typiste (AWAS)</u> Pte Wall, A.C.	<u>Rockhampton</u> Capt J.F. Rooney Cpl Todd C.K. Miss A.L. Rae  <u>Townsville</u> Capt C.W. Johnstone Cpl Stovell W.W.  <u>Mackay</u> Lieut A.C.S. Clarke Cpl Holdsworth R.J.H.  <u>Rockhampton</u> Capt E.A. Jolly Cpl Kooymans E.  <u>Maryborough</u> Capt G.E. Carrier Cpl Smith H.L.
<u>Typiste (AWAS)</u> CPL Dwyer M.D.	<u>Draftsmen</u> S/Sgt Hockaday L. SGT Robertson A.			
<u>Orderly</u> PTE Pryme A.C.				
<u>Drivers MT</u> PTE Lancaster L. PTE Hodkinson C.	<u>Civilian Typiste</u> Miss B. Smith			
<u>Civilian Typistes</u> Mrs E. Mulcahy Mrs E. Colledge				

Field Security Sections (Attached)

<u>"L" Aust FS Sec</u>	<u>"R" Aust FS Sec</u>	<u>32 Aust FS Sect</u>
Lieut J.E.L. Garnsey WOII Stuckey F SSgt Lodge F.W. Sgt Morgan A. Sgt Brocklehurst F.W. Cpl Peters H. Cpl Kelly R.S. L/Cpl Gursansky P. L/Cpl Porter R.S. L/Cpl Liddy F.J. L/Cpl Garnock W.G. L/Cpl Ellis R.J. L/Cpl Mahony J.P. Dvr Darby C.N.  Cairns, Atherton, Innisfail	Capt N.T. Mellett WOII Ward R.K. S/Sgt Waller N.E. Sgt Hoeppe G.F. Cpl Chester E.N. Cpl Roberson N.A. Cpl Rogers W.H. L/Cpl Norrie C.N. L/Cpl Shanks T.A. L/Cpl Eggins S.W. L/Cpl Robertson D.W. L/Cpl Shepherd J.F. L/Cpl Page R.N.  Brisbane, Toowoomba, Tenterfield, Maryborough	Capt D.W. Miell WOII James W.D. S/Sgt Adey L.T. Sgt Burton, M.J. Cpl Biele, K.W. Cpl Leach, R.J. Cpl Robertson, N.L. L/Cpl Upson N.F. L/Cpl Trevor G.W. L/Cpl Wolnizer J. L/Cpl Hennessy G.L. L/Cpl Leaver R.L. L/Cpl Smith E.G. L/Cpl Brown C.  Townsville, Proserpine, Charters Towers

Field Censorship Sections  
(Attached)

<u>Brisbane Detachment</u>	<u>Townsville Detachment</u>
Lieut A.V. Hitch WOII Murphy V.T. S/Sgt Munro H.J. Sgt Vance G.R. Sgt Hamlyn Harris J L/Sgt Newland S.G. Cpl Critchton R. Cpl Munton L.A. Cpl Blake D.W. Cpl Ralph M.F. Cpl Wilkins L.E. L/Cpl Nancarrow L.F. L/Cpl Newcombe J.T. L/Cpl Brosan J.F. L/Cpl Grinstead A.J. L/Cpl Johnson H.R.W. Pte Piffero F.  WOII Garling, D.M. Sgt Douglas G.S. Sgt Reid H.T. Sgt Burchill S. Cpl Sorenson J.H. Cpl Miller A.W.D. Cpl Pettman P.A. Cpl Davison W.H. Cpl Fisher A. A/Cpl Lynch R.T. L/Cpl Brown W.H. L/Cpl Gregory E.T. L/Cpl Kludge W. L/Cpl Gowlett W.R. L/Cpl Tait T.W.R.	Lieut D.F. Dobbyn Sgt Hardy A.H. L/Cpl McEwan J.L. L/Cpl Mawson J.L.