

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

PRE-WAR YEARS

The completion of six years of war constitutes an appropriate occasion for a brief resume of Intelligence activities in Queensland, with particular reference to personnel associated therewith.

During the period under review the Queensland Headquarters underwent a number of changes of designation. Beginning in the pre-war days as Headquarters 1 District Base, it in turn became Headquarters 1 Military District, Headquarters Northern Command, Headquarters Northern Command Base, and Headquarters Queensland Line of Communications Area.

At the outbreak of the war in September 1939, 1 Military District comprised the whole of Queensland, Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, and, for general administrative purposes, the British Solomon Islands.

From the end of the war of 1914-1918 until 1927, little, if any, Intelligence work was done in Queensland. At the end of 1927 Capt A. King (now Brig. R. King, D.S.O.) an officer of the Australian Staff Corps, was appointed Staff Officer Intelligence and General Duties for 1 Military District and retained that posting until June 1931. During that period a beginning was made in the compilation of Economic Intelligence, but on the re-posting of Capt. King this work was allowed to lapse. From June 1933 to August 1934, Major W.A.S. Dunlop, Australian Staff Corps, was General Staff Officer, 1 District Base, and while he undertook little intelligence work as such, he compiled a partial register of leaders of the Communist Party resident or active in the Brisbane area.

In December 1935, two Militia Officers were appointed as Intelligence Officers seconded to Intelligence Section, General Staff, 1 District Base. Major C.H. Wilson, who was seconded from RAA (M) (Fd) was commissioned in the Field Artillery in 1924 and was a solicitor by profession. Capt G. Morton had previously served with the British Army in The Prince of Wales (North Staffordshire) Regiment and the Machine Gun Corps. During the war of 1914-1918 he was wounded three times and was awarded the Military Cross. At the time of being appointed as Intelligence Officer, 1 District Base, he was seconded from 9/49 Battalion and civil life was a journalist.

These two officers laid the ground work on which Intelligence in Queensland was subsequently based. They established a chain of Military Reporting Officers (see Pt 8) throughout Queensland and commenced the compilation of topographical and economic records from which the Queensland Military Directory (see Pt 3) ultimately grew, and in conjunction with the Commonwealth Investigation Branch they prepared lists of suspects (see Pt 4) according to nationality or country of origin.