

CHAPTER 6

SECURITY SERVICE – FUNCTIONS

1. Until July 1942, responsibility for all civil security rested with the Army. As from that time responsibility was accepted by the Director-General of Security (acting on behalf of the Attorney-General) for all matters concerning the apprehension of subversive persons, appeals and releases of local internees.

2. The line of demarcation between civil and military security was difficult to define and it was essential, therefore, that there should be consultation and close collaboration between Security Service and the Army. The Minister for the Army retained responsibility for security in the Army and the security of military establishments, equipment, etc., including Internment and Prisoner of War Camps. Army was also responsible for all questions of security in Areas in which National Security (Emergency Control) Regulations applied. Members of Security Service in such areas were bound to comply with the directions of the senior military officer in the area who was responsible for the administration of those Regulations, in matters relating to Security in the area. Army also remained responsible for all questions of security in that part of Western Australia north of the Tropic of Capricorn, and for all questions affecting the release of overseas internees, whether for transportation overseas, for enlistment in labour units, or for residence in Australia.

3. Where investigation or action undertaken by Security Service touched on any matter of security for which Army was responsible, or which had a bearing on operational requirements of the Army, it was the responsibility of Security Service to advise Army accordingly. Similarly, when investigation or action undertaken by the Army touched on any of the responsibilities of Security Service, or where the operational requirements of the Army called for action on the part of Security Service, it was the responsibility of the Army to inform Security Service.

4. Apart from general security responsibilities, the following were the main responsibilities of Security Service in regard to internees: -

- (a) Investigation and action e.g., surveillance, prosecution, restriction or internment, to control hostile, alien, subversive and pacifist individuals, classes of individuals, or organisations.
- (b) Furnishing of information to Army (in the form of precis of dossiers) for the information of Camp Commandants who had to hold and control interned civilians.
- (c) Handling of all questions relating to arrangements for the custody and/or administration of the property of internees which was not taken with them to their camps or received by them at their camps.
- (d) Handling of all questions affecting the appeals of internees, whether they were interned under authority of the Minister for the Army or the Attorney-General. This included the appointment of the members of Aliens' Tribunals and Advisory Committees, and the venue of the hearing of internees' objections.
- (e) The granting of approval for release of internees, except those expressly referred to in para 2 of this Chapter as remaining the responsibility of Army.
- (f) The supply to Army of such information concerning proposed programmes of internments as would permit of the provision of adequate accommodation facilities.

5. In respect of local internees, it was therefore found necessary to issue comprehensive instructions regarding arrangements to be made by Commands concerned with their local Deputy Directors of Security. Action was taken along the following lines:-

(a) INTERNMENTS:

Appropriate arrangements were made by Commands for taking into custody any person handed over by Security Service with a Detention Order. The actual place of handing over was normally at a staging camp or temporary camp near a capital city. Detention orders handed over with internees were to be perused as soon as practicable by a Legal Officer.

(b) APPEALS:

On the written request of a Deputy Director, internees could be transferred under standing instructions (vide Chapter 18, para 7) in order that their appeals could be heard in another State or a Capital city. In this connection, Security Service was asked to ensure that there were no delays in the hearings of appeals and that movements of internees and guards be restricted to a minimum.

(c) RELEASES:

Releases were effected on delivery by a Deputy Director of Security of an appropriate release order, and Commands were to inform Deputy Directors of the fact and date of release.

(d) PROPERTY:

The arrangements in regard to property of internees not held at their camps are dealt with fully in Chapter 7 of this report.

(e) OFFICIAL VISITORS:

Official visitors were notified of the functions of Security Service and were informed that if any matters within those functions were included in their reports, such matters would be referred by Commands to Deputy Directors of Security with a request that the Official Visitors be advised thereon. In many cases, the Official Visitors themselves referred such matters direct and noted such reference in their reports.

6. Security Service rendered valuable assistance to Intelligence Officers at Internment Camps in the supply of information regarding internees. It was appreciated that the clerical work involved in supplying summaries of evidence in respect of all local internees would be considerable. On the other hand, without such summaries (viz. Without knowledge of the security records of the internees prior to internment) the value of information subsequently obtained could not be adequately assessed. While the summaries were being prepared, arrangements were made that Intelligence Officers could see any Security Service dossiers and make extracts from there.

7. Practical application of the arrangements between Security Service and the Army led to very few real difficulties, although it was necessary for constant care to be exercised to ensure that all information available was properly available to both parties. The Directorate fostered this by keeping in constant touch with a Military Liaison Officer at Security Service in Canberra, and this officer kept Army well informed of all action proposed or taken by the Director-General of Security in respect of internments etc.