

# History of Intelligence Activities in Queensland from September 1939 to September 1945

## PART V CENSORSHIP

### CIVIL CENSORSHIP

#### Institution

With the imminence of war, Civil Censorship was instituted in accordance with National Security (General) Regulation 16, para 1, on 1 September 1939, and 1 Military District Censors office commenced to function with a staff of two, which increased to 29 in the first month of war, subsequently being further increased to over 200.

#### Authority

The authority for censorship was contained in National Security (General) Regulations 14,16, and 17, National Security (Emergency Control) Regulations, and in the Post and Telegraph Censorship Orders, Control of Overseas Postal Communication Order and Control of Overseas Postal Communication (Prisoners of War Order) made under the above named Regulation.

#### Application

Censorship was applied in accordance with Regulations for Censorship 1938; Standing Orders for Censorship in Time of War or Emergency; Army Headquarters Instructions for War (provisional) Censorship August, 1939, and Standing Orders for the Post and Telegraph Censorship.

#### Establishment

The appointment of censorship staff was originally carried out by the District Censor within the limits of the Censorship Establishment, and notified to this Headquarters through General Staff (Intelligence). This, however, proved unsatisfactory as the applicants were not always security checked before acceptance; and the procedure was altered in November, 1941 (Terms and conditions of employment of Censorship Officers Para 3), whereby the District Censor's recommendation was first submitted to this Headquarters for approval or otherwise after necessary enquiries had been made.

#### Selection of District Censor

It is considered that, as a matter of long range planning, a suitable person who is willing to act should be selected for appointment as District Censor in the event of censorship being imposed. It is further considered that the person selected should have a military background so that he may readily appreciate what matters are of importance from the military viewpoint. The District Censor Designate should maintain lists of suitable personnel for employment in censorship duties, and should also regularly acquaint himself with current Standing Orders for Censorship and any changes in policy in regard to censorship or instructions relative to censorship which may be issued by AHQ from time to time.

The need for implementation of the above recommendations was apparent in this Command at the outbreak of war with Germany in September, 1939. The then District Censor had served as District Censor during the 1914-1918 war, and although from early in 1936 this Headquarters had repeatedly urged him to make himself fully conversant with the requirements of Standing Orders for Censorship and other Censorship Instructions as

amended from time to time, he took no steps in that direction until a matter of some hours before the imposition of Censorship. Owing to the considerable changes not only in general policy but also in details of general administration which had been introduced by Army Headquarters between 1918 and 1939, the District Censor found that his preconceived ideas and the general censorship plan which he had in mind were not in accordance with current AHQ Instruction, and this led to considerable confusion. The fact that the District Censor had not maintained a list of suitable personnel, but was relying on the re-engagement of persons who had served in censorship during the years of 1914-1918, led to difficulties in regard to the staff position, as it was found that many of the persons whom the District Censor proposed to call up for duty were either dead or by reason of senility or infirmity were no longer available for duty. The lack of military background on the part of the District Censor frequently resulted in him not appreciating what matters were of urgent importance to General Staff (Intelligence).

## **Administration**

District Censors carried out their duties under the direction of the Chief Censor who in November, 1939, became Controller of Postal and Telegraph Censorship. Standing Orders for the Post and Telegraph Censorship were issued by the Controller under the authority of Commander-in-Chief AMF, and were supplemented by further instructions from time to time to meet the requirements of the period.

## **Scope of Censorship**

- (a) The work of the District Censor's Office was wide in scope, increasing from small beginnings in 1939 to all aspects after Japan's entry into the war. A censor was appointed at Thursday Island, and Sub-District Censor's office opened at Townsville, to obviate long delays caused by diversion of mails from those areas to Brisbane for censoring.
- (b) Japan's rapid advance towards Australia, and the return of the overseas A.I.F. Divisions to Australia, necessitated stronger security measures, in which censorship played a prominent part. Thereafter, Queensland became the training, refitting, and supply base not only for Australian Forces, but all Allied Forces, in addition to being the embarkation point for war in the Pacific. To keep within reasonable bounds the secrecy of all information thus accessible to the general public would have been a colossal task, even had full censorship powers been exercised, but, with the limitations imposed by political expediency, it became almost insuperable.

The position was relieved somewhat by the institution of Unit Censorship on all service mail, whether overseas or on the mainland, thus enabling District Censors Office to concentrate on other mail. Thus, with check censorship, spot checks, telephone monitoring, telegraphic and cable censorship, and blanket censorships, the coverage over the written word was kept within bounds.

## **Types of Censorship**

- (i) Censorship of overseas mail was carried out regularly with special emphasis on communications to and from neutral countries. All cable, radio and beam messages going out of Australia were first submitted for censorship, severe restrictions being imposed on the use of codes.
- (ii) The District Censor acted as Base Censor for the purpose of letters contained in privilege envelopes, and a high percentage of this type of mail was scrutinised.
- (iii) The presence of Field Units or Formations in areas adjacent to cities or towns necessitated special measures for the maintenance of

security. Spot censorships were made at irregular intervals of mail posted in civil post boxes, and any censorship information contained in letters from service personnel evading censorship was made available to Military Intelligence.

- (iv) Check censorships of Unit-censored mail were made to ascertain the efficiency of franking officers and the security-mindedness of troops.
- (v) On special occasions, when important moves were pending or taking place, a censorship blanket covered the area, and no communications were permitted outside a specified limit.
- (vi) Occasionally it became desirable to monitor telephone conversations, especially on public 'phones in staging camps and wharves during important movements.
- (vii) In rare cases, mail of suspected persons was placed on "XRD" or secretly opened list, and this was undertaken by the District Censor.
- (viii) Writing facilities for troops on leave in Brisbane were available at the various service hostels, and arrangements were made for such letters to be forwarded to the District Censor for censorship.

### **Use of Interpreters**

A staff of interpreters was maintained in District Censor's Office for translation of letters written in foreign language, and this type of mail included Prisoners of War and internee mail, recovered Indian Prisoners of War mail, and mail from North Queensland written in foreign language, after the imposition of Field Censorship in that area.

### **Liaison with P.M.G. Department**

Constant liaison was maintained between District Censor's Office and P.M.G. Department, whereby all doubtful telegrams could be referred for censorship, and mails diverted from any particular area for scrutiny without delay. This liaison was extremely valuable to General Staff (Intelligence) in Spot Censorships.

### **Confidential Official and Business Documents**

Confidential documents carried by business and official executives travelling overseas could be scrutinised by the District Censor and sealed, thus obviating the necessity for scrutiny at the port of destination.

### **Censor's Weekly Report**

A comprehensive report of the censorship with extracts from "letters of interest" was issued by District Censor weekly, and this proved very useful to General Staff (Intelligence).

### **Training of Field Censorship Sections**

The transfer of Australia's land forces to the Pacific theatre of war and the projected imposition of Field Censorship in certain areas of the mainland made it imperative that the machinery for a censorship organisation within the Army be set in motion. S.M. 7153 of 20th April, 1942, instructed, inter alia, Northern Command to raise and train three Field Censorship Sections, Nos. 1, 6 and 9 for this purpose. The sections were formed and trained in Censorship procedure by the District Censor, subsequently being utilised on civil censorship under the technical direction of the District Censor whilst awaiting forward movement.

## Censorship - North Queensland

The large proportion of aliens resident in North Queensland, and the presence on the Atherton Tableland of large bodies of troops, and military installations, airfields, etc, in addition to troop embarkations from Townsville and Cairns, warranted serious consideration for the placing of that area under military control for censorship. A censorship test covering postal, telegraphic and telephonic communications was carried out by a special censorship staff under the direction of the Chief Postal and Telegraph Censor, from 31st May, 1943 to 26th June, 1943. Censors were stationed at seven post offices of different grades for varying periods, so that a reliable report would be furnished embodying a gross section of Cairns and Tableland districts. As a result of the censorship test, 100% censorship was imposed on all postal and telegraphic communications outward from the area of Queensland North of the Northern boundaries of shires of Barkley Tableland, Cloncurry, McKinley, Wyangarie, Flinders, Dalrymple, and Thuringowa. In addition, all trunk line calls into or out of the area were prohibited with the exception of official or authorised calls.

To carry out this censorship, 60 service personnel were trained by the District Censor, and formed North Queensland Detachment of 1 Aust Field Censorship Company. This relieved the District Censor's office of a considerable volume of work, only the foreign language mail being forwarded for translation.

## Liaison

No direct working liaison was maintained between the District Censor's office and this Headquarters during the early period of the war, Commonwealth Investigation Branch having the direct liaison and passing relevant information to I(b). This position was not entirely satisfactory, and about September, 1941, General Staff (Intelligence) appointed one of the officers from I(b) to conduct a direct liaison. It was not, however, until I(c) Sub-Section was formed early in 1942, that continuity of censorship information was established.

A Censorship Liaison Officer was appointed, whose duty it was to visit District Censor's Office daily, scrutinise letters of interest, give decisions on referred letters, obtain necessary evidence of any serious censorship breaches by service personnel, examine the weekly report, and obtain reports of any "XRD", Spot Censorship, or Check Censorship. In addition, a direct telephone operated between District Censor and I(c), and this was manned at all times so that anything requiring urgent action could be dealt with at once. The effectiveness of this daily liaison was shown in the promptness with which censorship items were forwarded to the appropriate authority.

## Censorship Requests by General Staff (Intelligence)

Following are the various types of censorship asked for by General Staff (Intelligence), the reasons for them, and the methods of obtaining them:

- (a) X.R.D. Certain persons suspected of subversive activities whose mail if openly censored would provide a warning, were placed on the X.R.D. List, and information gained from such mail was made available to the Department requesting the scrutiny. Such letters were not mutilated by excising or deletions, but, in certain cases photostated and certified to by District Censor to furnish evidence if necessary at some later date. Requests for the placing of a person on X.R.D. List were made in writing, giving some indication to the District Censor of the reason for it, and were only made in extreme circumstance.
- (b) Spot Censorship. Personnel of units arriving in areas adjacent to large towns, often utilised the civil post boxes to evade unit censorship despite strict instructions forbidding the practice, and it became necessary to have the mail diverted for censorship. In such instances,

a written request was made for a 48 hour check of mail posted in the particular area. All such mail was opened X.R.D., and letters written by civilians were released immediately, those written by service personnel being stopped, and where the writer could be identified, forwarded by General Staff (Intelligence) to the Formation concerned for disciplinary action. Such checks also gave an indication of civilian security-mindedness.

- (c) Check Censorship. With the institution of Unit Censorship, the scrutiny of troops' mail became the responsibility of Unit Franking Officers. To test the efficiency of the franking, a written request would be made for the diversion of mail from a particular unit or camp. This was arranged by the District Censor with the Army Postal Service, and reports on any breaches were made by the District Censor to General Staff (Intelligence).
- (d) Blanket Censorship. On rare occasions, Blanket Censorship would be imposed on a certain area, and no communications permitted outside a given radius for the period of the blanket, which might be two or three days, and in one exceptional case 11 days. The procedure was to hold all letters for censorship, releasing official and business mail immediately, and private mail after censorship. All telegrams were censored, and in the "Schooner Force" blanket, covering the return of 6 Division, A.I.F. from the Middle East to Australia, 78,400 telegrams were dealt with in 11 days by I(c) in association with District Censor.

It was necessary to obtain the authority of Army Headquarters before imposing Blanket Censorship, as the holding of mail for so long a period was likely to lead to repercussions unless the importance of the projected movements warranted it.

- (e) Telephone Monitoring. Public telephones at Staging Camps and wharves were liable to be used by troops immediately prior to embarkation to inform friends and relatives of their projected departure. In order to ascertain whether certain phones were used of this purpose, the calls were monitored, and although no action was taken against the caller, the phones were placed out of bounds during the embarkation, or temporarily cut off. This was done by written request to District Censor who made the necessary arrangements with P.M.G. Department.
- (f) Translations. General Staff (Intelligence) made use of the District Censor's staff of interpreters in the translation of documents and letters in foreign language, especially those found on Prisoners of War, or brought back as souvenirs by our own troops.
- (g) Censorship Certificates. In the furnishing of evidence of censorship breaches, it was not always practicable to stop the original letter or to forward the original extract to the Formation for disciplinary action, and it became necessary to provide a certificate containing a copy of the censorable matter, signed by the District Censor as a Censorship Authority certifying that such matter had been contained in a communication sighted by him and giving full particulars of sender and addressee. The necessary legislation was passed to make these certificates admissible as evidence, although some Formations persisted in asking for the original letters.

## **Recommendations**

That there were shortcomings in the liaison was evidenced in the occasional differences of opinion between the District Censor and General Staff (Intelligence). These could be obviated by a clearer exposition by AHQ to the Chief Postal and Telegraph Censor of the purpose of censorship. When so many types of information can be classed as censorable,

they cannot all be contained in the written regulations, and each case must be gauged on its application to time, place and circumstance. An instance of this was seen in anonymous letters written to troops in forward areas, telling them of infidelities or extreme neglect of their children, on the part of their wives. This Headquarters took the view that such letters could not fail to have an adverse effect on morale whether the statements were true or not, and as such should be stopped. This view was not shared by the CPTC and all efforts by this Headquarters to have such mail stopped were unsuccessful. The question of what constituted matter "calculated to cause alarm or despondency amongst the civilian population" was another contentious point, as also was the question of Military Security. These latter matters worked out smoothly where District Censors had a military background or adopted the recommendations of General Staff (Intelligence).

District Censors carried out Base Censorship of privilege envelopes on behalf of Army Headquarters, but did not apply the principles of Field Censorship to such letters, merely working under Standing Orders of the Post and Telegraph Censorship. The position thus arose that although letters enclosed in privilege envelopes often contained breaches of Field Censorship Instructions, they were not treated by the District Censor unless they contained censorable matter under the Post and Telegraph Censorship Order. Thus glaring breaches of the provisions of LHQ Field Censorship Instruction No. 4 in respect of privilege envelopes were released, despite repeated protests by this Headquarters.

It is strongly recommended that in future Base Censorship be carried out by Base Censors selected from service personnel and appointed by Army Headquarters, and responsible to the Chief Field Censor. Privilege envelopes are issued only in areas where Field Censorship operates, and it is anomalous to have them immune from its provisions, as this leads to abuse of the privilege by the troops.

Great difficulty was encountered in obtaining the Weekly Censorship Report, the District Censor's Office taking the responsibility upon itself to judge what portions were of value to General Staff (Intelligence). It is considered that the whole of the District Censor's Weekly Report would be made available to General Staff (Intelligence).

Direct liaison was established by Formations in the area with District Censor, despite protests by this Headquarters, and the instructions embodied in Standing Orders for the Post and Telegraph Censorship, in addition to the provisions of Army Field Censorship Instruction No. 2. That these liaisons disrupted the smooth working of the censorship was evidenced in at least one historic instance where several thousand letters were held in a check on civilian postings at the request of a Formation in the area which had direct liaison, and on their rediscovery three years later, an attempt was made to place the responsibility on this Headquarters which had no official knowledge of the matter. This instance alone should indicate the necessity for a single liaison between the military organisation and the District Censor, and the routing of all military censorship requirements through the static headquarters which carries the responsibility for censorship in the area.

## **FIELD CENSORSHIP**

### **Field Censorship Sections**

The formation and training of three Field Censorship Sections in this Command for work in the field, was authorised by SM7153 of 20th April, 1942. War Establishment 111/81/1 authorised the following establishment for each section:

Lieutenant	1	
Clerks, WO2	1	
Clerks, Sergeants	1	
Clerks, Privates	8	Trade Group (III)
Batman & Reader	1	
Total	12	

Numbers 1, 6 and 9 Sections were formed and were trained at District Censor's Office, being retained for duties under the District Censor's technical direction whilst awaiting forward movement. Sections were formed in other Commands, and on 16 June, 1942, an order was made under National Security (General) Regulation 16,2A, appointing officers in charge of Field Censorship Sections as Postal and Telegraph Authorities. There were in all eleven sections functioning in the various areas and commands.

### **I Aust Field Censorship Company**

In June, 1943, the eleven Field Censorship Sections were absorbed into 1 Aust Field Censorship Company. War Establishment 111/81/2 (Provisional) authorised the following establishment:-

Major	1
Captains	4
Lieutenants	8
Total Officers	13
WO2	12
Sergeants	26
Corporals	32
Privates	57
Total ORs	127
Total all ranks	140

Of the eleven sections functioning, four were in this area, Nos. 2 & 9 at Cairns, No. 3 at Townsville and No. 11 at Brisbane.

### **North Queensland Detachment**

The imposition of censorship restrictions in North Queensland transferred the activities of Nos 2 & 9 Sections, now called North Queensland Detachment 1 Aust Field Censorship Company, from the supervision of the District Censor to Field Censorship. In view of the enormous increase in the amount of mail for censorship, special permission was obtained for the raising of a detachment of 15 officers and 45 other ranks supernumerary to establishment, to reinforce North Queensland Detachment 1 Aust Field Censorship Company. This detachment was to operate as a static unit - leaving personnel of North Queensland Detachment free for transfer or replacement to overseas detachments of the Company - and consisted largely of officers and N.C.Os who had service and were unfit for service outside Australia. The period of their attachment was six months or less according to their individual suitability for censorship duties.

On 10 February, 1944, War Establishment 111/81/3 provided for a total strength of 200 all ranks of 1 Aust Field Censorship Company, as follows:-

Major	1
Captains	12
Lieutenants	12
WO2	16
Sergeants	50
Corporals	40
Privates	
Batmen	14
Batmen-Drivers	10
General Dutymen	6
Intelligence Duties Trade Group 2	40
Total all ranks	200

This enabled the absorption of the supernumerary personnel into 1 Aust Field Censorship Company.

The authority of the O.C. North Queensland Detachment extended over all classes of mail and telegraphic communications, and he was the officer responsible for the execution of the Telephonic Communications Control Order issued by P.M.G. on 29 July, 1943.

### **Telephonic Communications Control Order**

The Telephonic Communications Control Order prohibited any except official or service telephone calls into or out of the area of Queensland North of the Northern boundaries of the shires of Barkley Tableland, Cloncurry, McKinley, Wyangarie, Flinders, Dalrymple, and Thuringowa. Although necessary in the interests of security, this caused much inconvenience to the population, especially the business sections. It was not however until October 1944, that the restrictions were lifted to the extent that private or business calls could be made out of the area, provided they were approved by O.C. North Queensland Detachment 1 Aust Field Censorship Company.

In the principal centres Chambers of Commerce provided lists of selected business houses which, after approval by O.C. North Queensland Detachment 1 Aust Field Censorship Company, were permitted to make calls out of the area without having each individual call approved, but all other applications required prior approval. Calls into the area from Townsville and other centres adjacent to the area, were first approved by O.C. Townsville Detachment 1 Aust Field Censorship Company, who also had a selected list of business houses permitted to make calls into the area.

All types of mail were subjected to censorship, and with Field Censorship in operation, evasion of Unit Censorship by posting service mail in civilian boxes was of little avail, as such postings were subject to censorship.

### **Command of North Queensland Detachment**

When Field Censorship was first introduced into North Queensland, the North Queensland Detachment was under command of First Aust Army and forwarded all censorable and informative matter to that formation for action. Reports were not forwarded to this Headquarters. Consequently the anomalous situation arose of this Headquarters being unable to furnish censorship information in respect of a large portion of the area and troops under its control.

The position was later remedied by the placing of North Queensland Detachment 1 Aust Field Censorship Company under command of this Headquarters on 20 November, 1944. This brought all Detachments in the area under command, and enabled this Headquarters to present a complete censorship picture of the whole area. It also permitted the reinforcing of certain sub-detachments by transfers from one to the other as occasion demanded.

### **Toowoomba Sub-Detachment**

During the period when First Aust Army was stationed at Toowoomba the large number of troops visiting the city on day leave availed themselves of the writing facilities at the various service hostels, and to discourage civil posting, First Army installed post boxes in each hostel, and collected the mail which was then scrutinised by Franking Officers. By arrangement with the District Censor, this Headquarters stationed a sub-detachment of Field Censorship Company at Toowoomba to deal with hostel mail, and this proved very effective.

### **Mobile Radio Detachment**

The use of pedal wireless and radio transmitting sets for the transmission of messages from and to the outlying stations in North-West Queensland and the Northern Territory, and the likelihood of their interception by the enemy, made it advisable to keep close check on this type of communication. A mobile Radio Detachment of 1 Aust Field Censorship (Company) was set up, complete with a special vehicle and equipment and was manned by trained personnel. The detachment operated from various selected centres, maintaining 24 hour monitoring of all messages and furnishing regular reports.

### **Administration of 1 Aust Field Censorship Company**

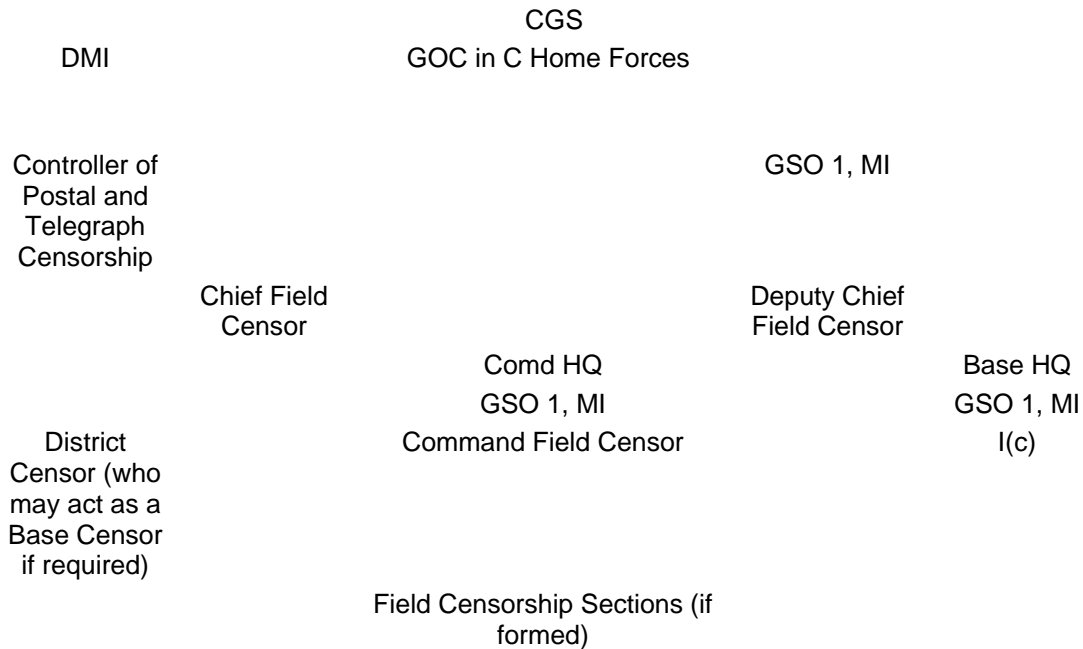
The policy of 1 Aust Field Censorship Company was directed from Adv LHQ which was located at St Lucia, and it followed naturally that much of the administrative and executive work was passed to this Headquarters. Close liaison existed between I(c) of this Headquarters and O.C. 1 Aust Field Censorship Company, who was also I(c), Adv LHQ. Stocks of censorship stationary such as censorship labels, censorship Form 1, etc with kept by this Headquarters and forwarded to detachments on the mainland and overseas as required. With censorship detachments in all areas on the mainland and overseas, great difficulty was experienced in administering the "Q" side. This was emphasised on the disbandment of the various detachments, when controlled stores requisitioned by detachments had been transferred from one to another without the necessary signatures so often that the stores could not be recovered nor could the person responsible for their return be ascertained.

It is recommended that, if at any future time a unit similar to 1 Aust Field Censorship Company is raised, the headquarters of the unit should be responsible for all "A" and "Q" matters in respect of detachments of the unit, and that such responsibility should not be passed to the Headquarters of the Line of Communication Area or Base Area in which a detachment is for the time being located.

### **Army Field Censorship Instructions**

Field censorship policy was directed from Army Headquarters in the form of Army Field Censorship Instructions issued from time to time. AFCI No. 1 was issued on 1 September, 1939, warning all ranks of the provisions of National Security (General) Regulation No. 17, relating to the classes of forbidden matter in correspondence, and intimating that Manual of Military Intelligence, Pamphlet 2, paragraph 10, 2, indicated the attitude to be adopted. AFCI 4 gave detailed instructions in respect of the treatment of Prisoners of War and internees' mail. The institution of Unit Censorship came with AFCI No. 7, issued on 27 February, 1940, which gave details for the franking of all outgoing correspondence from units. Although the instruction applied to all Australian Military Forces, irrespective of the theatre of operations, it was not to be applied to troops in Australia "until they were engaged in active operations against an enemy within the Commonwealth".

AFCI No. 19 was issued on 4 March, 1942, and detailed the censorship procedure to be adopted in the event of operations in Australia. The proposed organisation for Field Censorship in this command was:



AFCI No. 19 was not put into effect, but a revision of AFCI No. 7 was made and issued as AFCI No 22 on 29 March, 1942. This instruction brought under Unit Censorship all ranks of A.I.F. and A.M.F. except those of Headquarters or establishments the personnel of which were not rationed and quartered by the Army.

AFCI 4 was issued on 30 June, 1943, in book form and was a comprehensive and detailed manual for Unit Censorship. It was distributed to all units on the basis of one copy per company, and did much to clarify censorship problems of Franking Officers.

With the gradual advances made by the Forces in the South-West Pacific the need for security of location of troops on the mainland was relaxed, and troops were permitted to give their general location, such as Queensland, New Guinea, Dutch New Guinea, etc, after they had been one month in the area. The wisdom of this policy may be questioned, but it was more or less forced by the publicity given to the Australian operations at Lae and Salamaua when newspaper publicity mentioned the Divisions participating, and the New Guinea Force Order permitted troops to mention their participation in these and in operations in the Markham Valley and Huon Coast Areas.

### **G.R.O. G835/43**

Further relaxation of Unit Censorship was promulgated in G.R.O. G835 of 31 Dec 43 which restricted unit censorship to a "member of the AMF who is:

- i. outside the mainland of Australia,
- ii. within an area of the mainland which has been "declared" under National Security (Emergency) Regulations,
- iii. in that part of Western Australia North of 20 degrees South latitude other than that part of West Australia mentioned above,
- iv. in that part of Queensland, North of the Northern boundaries of the shires of Barkley Tableland, Cloncurry, McKinley, Wyangarie, Flinders, Dalrymple, and Thuringowa,
- v. writing to an address outside Australia,
- vi. irrespective of station, under order to move to an operational area, from the time of receipt of the warning order, or movement order.

Service personnel were still required to post their mail through Army channels, although only those referred to above were subject to Unit Censorship.

### **G.R.O. G371/44**

Further detailed information on prohibited information and articles was embodied in Parts C and D of GRO G371 of 13 Oct 44, and this GRO was amended on 13 July, 1945, by deletion of Part D, para 7, "Areas where Unit Censorship applies", and the substitution of the following:-

Para 7. All communications (other than Green envelopes and field service post cards) from members in any area outside Australia, and from members in the Territory of Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, are subject to Unit Censorship.

Para 8. dealing with Special circumstances in which Unit Censorship applied, was deleted.

### **GENERAL [STAFF (INTELLIGENCE) I (C) SUB-SECTION]**

#### **Functions of I (c)**

The functions of I(c) included the acquisition of censorship information (as described earlier in this part) and its dissemination to the relevant units, services and formations. Promptly and regularly, censorable matter was gathered, sorted, and forwarded to the Formation concerned, together with original letters or certificates in the case of serious breaches, for information and any action deemed necessary.

Where spot or check censorships had been conducted, a composite report was also furnished, giving particulars as to number of letters scrutinised, serious breaches and minor breaches, in addition to report on morale, conditions, etc.

A monthly summary of censorship information was compiled, and copies distributed to the staffs and heads of services in the Area. This summary was set out under several headings, as being of interest to "G", "A", "Q" branches. Matters dealing with security, morale, training, operations, etc. appeared under "G", whilst discipline, leave, finance, casualties, domestic difficulties, etc. were classified under "A". "Q" Branch matters included quarters, ration conditions, hygiene, postal services and ordnance, etc. The summary was much appreciated by the Staffs and services.

The records and filing system maintained by I(c) Sub-Section, whilst not cumbersome, made available immediate and accurate information on any censorship matter occurring in the Area. A record was kept of each censorship breach forwarded for action, giving date, nature of breach, and to whom forwarded, so that in the case of persistent offenders, a covering letter could be sent to the Formation giving details of previous infringements.

#### **Censorship of Parcels**

The censorship of parcels presented difficulties, especially those sent back to the mainland by troops overseas. Despite routine orders and warnings that firearms, explosives, articles of equipment (whether our own or enemy), etc. were prohibited, a constant stream of parcels containing such articles came into the area and had to be dealt with. In addition, cigarettes, tobacco, plants and bird of paradise feathers were stopped by the Customs Authorities.

National Security Regulations (General) Regulation 69AA, authorised the interception by a Censorship Authority or Customs Officer, of any article reasonably suspected of being a derelict or looted article, and the forwarding of such article to a Local Authority. Great care had to be taken in safeguarding articles in question whilst their ultimate fate was being decided, and for this purpose a special room was maintained by I(c) and a full record was kept of each article contained in each parcel.

In order that personnel would submit articles of enemy equipment for examination by Intelligence before enclosing them in parcels, provision was made in December, 1943 for the inclusion of such articles after examination, provided they bore a tag impressed with the "War Souvenir" stamps, which signified that they were not required by Intelligence. In the case of articles which were required, the member could appoint a nominee to whom the article would be delivered by hand after necessity for its retention had passed.

A difficulty arose in the interpretation by the C.P.T.C. of the procedure for the confiscation of items of Intelligence value intercepted in censorship of parcels, and this was reflected in an instruction from the District Censor to his postal sub-Sections which stated, inter alia, that parcels containing enemy equipment or items of intelligence significance should be referred to the Censorship Liaison Officer of General Staff (Intelligence) who could order their release, but if he required them to be held or handed to the General Staff (Intelligence) they were not to be handed over, but referred to the Information sub-Section for decision.

Although repeated efforts were made to alter this ruling, they were not successful, and eventually the recommendation of this Headquarters that the parcels be scrutinised by 1 Aust Field Censorship Company at the points of despatch before they came under the Post and Telegraph Censorship Order, was adopted, thus giving the Army authorities full control over their treatment.

### **Special Censorship**

One of the greatest difficulties in reconciling troops to censorship was the delay caused by diversion of mail for scrutiny. Every effort was made to do this with the minimum of delay, and in no case was mail delayed for more than 24 hours unless it contained serious breaches of censorship.

Arrangements were made for the regular collection of mail written in Service Hostels, and in the case of Units such as "M" Special Unit, "Z" Special Unit, Central Bureau, etc, where special precautions had to be taken for the preservation of security, Field Security personnel were utilised to ensure the speedy collection of mail, sometimes doing a 150 miles motor cycle trip in inclement weather for each collection.

The arrival of a Canadian Radar Unit comprising mostly French Canadian troops, the presence of recovered Prisoners of War, and British troops in the area, all required special precaution and liaison in the interests of security. 1 Aust Field Trials Company was stationed at Proserpine, and here too, it was necessary to carry out strict censorship (NB: 1 Aust Field Trials Company was established to test the effects of chemical agents in the tropics, and was located to the south of Proserpine.)

### **Publicity Censorship**

Liaison was maintained with the State Publicity Censor, and matters involving security frequently were referred to General Staff (Intelligence). The Public Relations Officer attached to this Headquarters also referred questionable matters for advice, and articles for unit magazines were submitted to I(c) before publication.

### **Photography**

Official photographs for processing were forwarded to this Headquarters, and I(c) arranged for their processing and return. Even after the decision that official photographs were to be sent to Military History Section, LHQ, for processing, special authority was given to this Headquarters to arrange processing in cases of urgency, and this was done through I(c) until the cessation of hostilities. Routine Order G18/44 provided that service personnel must have films processed through approved photographers, and the work of handling applications of photographers for placing on the approved list, and publishing lists of those approved in Routine Orders was done by I(c). The subject of control of photography is further covered in Part IV.

## **Unit Censor Stamps**

Issue, recall, and transfer of Unit Censor Stamps in the area was one of the functions of I(c) Sub-Section, and this, with the maintenance of a register of Unit Censor Stamps, entailed considerable work. On several occasions a census was taken of stamps held by units, and particulars were forwarded to LHQ so that the master register could be kept current. Approximately 5,000 Unit Censor Stamps were handled by I(c) during the period under review.

## **Lectures to School of Military Intelligence**

Lectures on Censorship were given by I(c) at each course at the School of Military Intelligence from the time of its location in this area in 1942 until its disbandment in 1945.

## **Lectures to Units**

Lectures were also arranged by I(c) from time to time to units in the area, and many of these were carried out by Field Security or Field Censorship personnel. It was evident that such talks on censorship were of great value, giving the troops a better idea of the necessity for censorship in their own interests, and was more effective than the adoption of disciplinary methods which often served only to antagonise them.

## **Recommendations for Unit Censorship Training**

An appalling ignorance of the duties of Franking Officers was noted amongst commissioned ranks, indicating the necessity for more comprehensive training in this section of the OCTU courses.

The resentment of the average soldier towards censorship was based largely on one or more of the following real or imaginary grievances:-

- (a) Private matters being known to their immediate superior,
- (b) Franking Officer, discussing matter read in private correspondence,
- (c) Delay in despatch of unit censored mail,
- (d) Unnecessary mutilation of letters in franking,
- (e) Misuse of knowledge gained in censorship,
- (f) Unnecessary restrictions as to what may be included in correspondence,
- (g) Ban of penfriends correspondence,
- (h) Ban on location or projected movements, etc.

Censorship regulations provided for the soldier's protection against items (d) and (e), and, if there were grounds for those complaints, this was due to the ignorance or inefficiency of the Franking Officers.

Items (f) to (h) were due to the lack of security education on the part of troops themselves, and this could best be remedied by explanatory talks on the reasons for the restrictions.

Censorship checks made after such talks, proved the efficiency of the "prevention rather cure" method. Many letters were noted after such checks, in which troops preached the doctrine of security to their civilian correspondents. Security films such as "Next of Kin" also created a profound impression on the troops, indicating that visual training in security matters should be more widely adopted.