

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

1939 - WAR DECLARED

By the beginning of 1939 the threat of war hung heavily over the country, and in March of that year Intelligence in Queensland was augmented by the appointment of Mr R.F.B. Wake, Inspector in charge of the Commonwealth Investigation Branch, Brisbane, to a commission on the Unattached List, and his posting for duty with 1 Military District. In the same month, Mr. N.W. Lockyer a Brisbane manufacturer with extensive connections throughout Queensland was seconded from 9/49 Battalion as Intelligence Officer, 11 Mixed Brigade. In June 1939, Mr. M.F. Bigge, a competent linguist, who had travelled extensively in Europe, was seconded from 9/49 Battalion as Orderly Officer, 11 Mixed Brigade, and was attached to 1 Military District for Intelligence duties.

During the twelve months immediately prior to the declaration of war, Intelligence Section, General Staff, 1 Military District, was forced to concentrate its energies on the security angle of Intelligence, and there was little time for work on the Military Directory (see Pt 3) other than the collation of MROs reports (see Pt 8).

A comprehensive Intelligence plan to become operative on the declaration of war was prepared and with the declaration of hostilities on 3rd September 1939, it became operative.

Outbreak of War

All Intelligence Officers on the strength of 1 Military District were called up for full-time duty on 3rd September 1939, with the exception of Lieut R.F.B. Wake, who continued in his civil capacity with (the) Commonwealth Investigation Branch, and performed military duty on a part-time duty basis.

Prior to the outbreak of the war there was no Intelligence Officers stationed outside the metropolitan area. With the declaration of war, five Intelligence Officers were appointed for part-time duty in the main coastal towns of Queensland.

Mr. H.F. Archdall, an insurance agent, was appointed Intelligence Officer, Cairns, Mr. A. Dale, another insurance agent, was appointed Intelligence Officer, Townsville, Lieut W.A. Amiet, a solicitor who in the war of 1914-1918 served with the Australian Flying Corps, was appointed Intelligence Officer, Mackay, Capt C.P. Stumm, M.C., who had served during the previous war with 1 Light Horse, was appointed Intelligence Officer, Rockhampton, and Capt J.K. Murphy, M.C. a bank manager who had been disabled in the right arm while serving with the AIF, was appointed Intelligence Officer, Bundaberg.

On 6th September, 1939, Mr. G.P. Wills, a member of the firm of Wills, Gilchrist & Sanderson, Shipping Agents, who had travelled in Europe extensively, had lived in Germany for some time, and who spoke German, French, Italian and Spanish, was commissioned and appointed for duty as an Intelligence Officer. The following day Capt. A.J.P. Crawford, a retired cotton broker who had lived for many years in Egypt and the Middle East and who spoke French, German, Italian, Greek and Arabic with great fluency was also appointed as Intelligence Officer.

Thus, within three days of war being declared there were in Queensland six Intelligence Officers on full-time duty and six on part-time duty.

The distribution of duties of the officers at Headquarters early in September 1939 was:-

GSO III (Int)	Lieut R.F.B. Wake
I(x)	Major C.H. Wilson
I(a)	Lieut N.W. Lockyer
I(a) 1	Lieut G.P. Wills
I(b)	Capt G. Morton
I(b) 1	Lieut M.F. Bigge
I(b) 11	Capt A.J.P. Crawford

Up to September 1939, the only clerical assistance available for Intelligence Section, General Staff, was the part-time service of one civilian clerk on the strength of the General Staff. On 4th September, 1939, the full-time services on one civilian clerk were obtained, and two other ranks were enlisted for clerical duties. One of these two other ranks was Cpl. R. Thompson, who some months later was transferred for duty with Staff Officer, Royal Engineers, and obtained a commission. Subsequently he saw active service in the Middle East and New Guinea with the AIF and attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in Australian Army Ordnance Corps.

Round-up of Suspects

The immediate and most pressing problem at the outbreak of war was that of security. Within two hours of the declaration of hostilities the rounding up of German suspects had commenced. Within twenty-four hours more than 100 suspects had been arrested and interned in the metropolitan area. Although work on the Internment Camp had commenced a few days prior to the out-break of war, the camp had not been completed by 4th September, 1939 and for two days internees were housed in the buildings which had formerly been the Lady Bowen Hospital.

It had been feared that trouble might occur in some districts where there was a large German population, but the fact that all members of the NSDAP and the leaders of the Friends of the Third Reich had been arrested within a few hours of the declaration of hostilities prevented any trouble arising. Thereafter work was continued on the sifting of evidence and the preparation of cases for internment of suspects. This entailed many searches of premises throughout the State and, in some outlying districts where Intelligence personnel were not available, the assistance of the civil police obtained.

On the completion of the Internment Camp at Gaythorne (see Pt 6), the internees were transferred there. Although at first they showed a good deal of sullenness and resentment, no major problems presented themselves until the end of the year, when Siegfried Karl Kast succeeded in escaping. This he did by hiding, in the late afternoon, in a piece of hessian which had been left in the internees' recreation compound, and getting through the barbed wire under cover of darkness. His absence was not noted by the camp staff until roll call immediately prior to lights out. Despite an immediate search by Intelligence and the Civil Police, Kast remained at large for two days. Lieut Bigge, who had handled the case for the internment of Kast, was of the opinion that Kast was being hidden by some of his friends in the metropolitan area. Through an agent, Lieut Bigge succeeded in circulating a message through the German element in the vicinity of Brisbane, that a German farmer living in the country was prepared to give Kast asylum and would have a covered truck outside the entrance to Woolworths in Adelaide Street at a certain time in the afternoon. The message reached the right quarter, for at the appropriate time Kast appeared and as he made for a truck which had been parked outside Woolworths by Intelligence, he was arrested by Lieut Bigge.