

Naval Intelligence history

By LCDR Tim Coyle

The Australian Naval Intelligence Organisation (NIO) began during World War I as a part of the British Admiralty intelligence system responsible for reporting on maritime infrastructure and movements on the Australia Station.

For this vast area, which extended from south of Tasmania to the islands of the South-West Pacific, NIO consisted of one seconded Royal Marines officer. By 1922 the NIO expanded to two officers, the Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI), a Royal Marines officer, and a Navy office civilian (Walter Brooksbank).

From 1919 to 1939, the NIO rarely exceeded four staff, however, with the outbreak of World War II, the NIO expanded exponentially through the recruitment of Navy Reserves.

Until recently, this was the only time when reserve personnel undertook active operational intelligence roles.

All personnel joining the wartime RAN joined the RAN Volunteer Reserve (RANVR), and those officers who were recruited for miscellaneous duties, including intelligence, were allocated to the Paymaster Branch.

In 1943, a newly promulgated Special Branch of the RANVR absorbed paymaster officers who specialised in intelligence, coding and ciphering, mercantile movements, railway and sea transport, and those engaged in controlled mining, radio direction finding and degaussing operations.

Wartime NIO

In 1940 the DNI, CMDR RB Long, believing Japan would eventually enter the war, saw a need for a maritime surveillance capability in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

CMDR Long appointed LCDR EA Feldt, RANEM, who was an official in the New Guinea administration, as Staff Officer (Intelligence) Port Moresby, and directed him to organise a coast watching operation.

The coastwatchers were the best-known members of the wartime NIO and were recruited from among those who possessed an extensive local knowledge of the Pacific Islands. As the war unfolded these officers supplied critical intelligence on Japanese air and maritime movements to the Allied Command.

The coastwatchers were commissioned into the RANVR Special Branch to provide them with international legal protection as combatants.



COAST GUARD: The coastwatchers were the best-known members of the wartime NIO. Photo courtesy Australian War Memorial.

Allied organisations in which NIO members participated included the Combined Operational Intelligence Centre (COIC), the Allied Geographical Bureau (AGB), the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB), and the Allied Translation and Interpreting Section (ATIS).

All of these formed part of the General Headquarters, South-West Pacific Area (GHQ SWPA) under the Supreme Commander, GEN Douglas MacArthur.

The AGB, set up in June 1942 as a tri-service organisation, compiled geographical handbooks containing information for commanders in the field.

The AIB, established July 1942, directed and coordinated intelligence collection in enemy territory and planned sabotage and other special operations.

The COIC was set up in November 1940 to pool the three services' operational intelligence received through their respective intelligence organisations.

From early 1941 until July 1942 the COIC was situated adjacent to the central war room at Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, and analysed operational intelligence received from collection

units and reported its assessments to the War Staff via daily and weekly reports.

In May 1942 the Supreme Commander established GHQ SWPA, which absorbed the COIC. At this point, with the influx of US personnel, the COIC ceased to be an entirely Australian organisation, and it transferred to Brisbane in July 1943 as part of the GHQ.

The ATIS was formed in September 1942 and consisted of a Japanese documents translation section, an examinations section which managed enemy interrogation reports and prisoners of war, a Philippine Islands research section and administrative support sections.

The ATIS employed hundreds of personnel, however the Australian component largely comprised support elements because of the lack of Japanese linguists in the Australian forces.

List of the day

Navy Lists of the day indicated the growth of RAN intelligence functions during World War II.

The list of October 1940 reported 20 officers were posted for intelligence duties at RAN shore establishments and by January 1942 there were 33 RANVR

Paymaster Officers appointed for coding and ciphering duties at Navy Office. The April list reported a naval intelligence staff under CMDR Long.

The NIO reached its full wartime complement, of about 110 Special Branch intelligence officers in the January 1945 List, many of whom were posted to forward bases in the New Guinea region.

Awards to NIO members for wartime service included three Orders of the British Empire, two Members of the British Empire and 11 Distinguished Service Crosses, the last to coastwatchers.

The US recognised the value of coastwatcher reporting to the Allied Command by the award of six Legions of Merit, three Silver Stars and four Distinguished Service Crosses.

1947 – 1991

In accordance with the temporary nature of RANVR engagements, all Special Branch officers were demobilised at the end of the war.

In May 1947 a submission to the Second Naval Member outlined the framework of a post-war reserve force. This included a scheme of comple-

Eminent Australians

SBLT (later Sir) Asher Joel had the task of staying close to GEN Douglas MacArthur to keep DNI informed of what he was up to.

Also as a SBLT, Sir Zelman Cowen was based in Darwin during the Japanese attack of 1942. He was later a SBLT on GEN MacArthur's staff in Brisbane.

ment for 217 Special Branch officers. Despite these reforms, the reserve component of NIO began 40 years of relative inactivity.

As the years passed, opportunities arose to undertake annual continuous training in Joint Intelligence Organisation and the Defence Signals Directorate. Due to the relatively short periods reservists were able to spend in these organisations, and their general lack of specialist expertise, there was a limited value to these attachments.

1991 – present

Because there was little interaction between the Permanent Naval Force (PNF) and the Naval Intelligence Reserve (NIR), the latter tended to remain isolated within the RANR port division establishments and by the 1980s the branch had atrophied through lack of an operational role.

With the 1991 decision to reorganise the RANR as an integrated workforce, and with the creation of an Australian Theatre Joint Intelligence Centre (ASTJIC) around the same time, the NIR had the opportunity to return to an operational intelligence role.

NIR personnel were then able to undertake postings to ASTJIC and the Defence Intelligence Organisation, and to serve as deployed intelligence officers (N2) at sea.

The future

The NIR expects to provide a significant contribution towards Navy's full-time intelligence capability, and continues to recruit sufficient numbers to fulfil anticipated requirements.

With new opportunities to serve, the NIR, in association with its full-time Navy and other services colleagues, is adapting to the challenging operational environment in which the ADF will operate in the future.

■ Anyone interested in joining Navy Reserve Intelligence who has ideally two relevant degrees and 'officer-like qualities', should phone CMDR Peter Saxton on 0416 176 421.

Reserves help out Sea King Board of Inquiry

By LCDR Mick Gallagher

Four Reservists have been helping to keep Navy safe with the Sea King Board of Inquiry Management Team (BOIMT) based at Maritime Headquarters (MHQ).

LCDR Guy Knox, LEUT Katherine Mathews, CPOWTR Morrie Jeppesen and CPOATV Michael Jenner tracked and managed issues, particularly safety issues, coming out of the inquiry.

They reported the inquiry's progress to senior officers with the aim of improving the safety culture within the Service.

The four reservists brought together their various skills acquired during their previous civilian and military roles.

It was also an opportunity to reunite with former colleagues.

LCDR Knox, former Permanent Navy (PN) helicopter pilot joined in 1976 as a sea-

man officer before transferring to the Fleet Air Arm in 1985 and flying Squirrels, Seahawks and Sea King helicopters. His sea postings included HMA Ships *Vendetta*, *Jervis Bay*, *Derwent*, *Kimbla*, *Sydney 4* and *Supply*.

On completion of 22 years service, LCDR Knox joined Qantas, flying 747s and 737s.

As a Reservist he served with RAN Test, Evaluation and Analysis Authority (RANTEAA) in 1999 and joined MHQ this year.

LEUT Katherine Mathews is Staff Officer for Reputation Management at MHQ and is a public relations specialist by trade since graduating from Canberra University in 1998.

Katherine joined the RANR in May 2005 and completed Phases one to five of the Reserve Entry Officers Course at HMAS *Creswell*.

Since October 2005 LEUT Mathews has been the Public Relations Officer for the Deputy

Marine Commander, CDRE Ray Griggs, and is now also PR Officer for the Sea King BOIMT.

"Navy is by far the most rewarding PR job I've held because there is a great sense of honour in serving your country," LEUT Mathews said.

CPOWTR Morrie Jeppesen joined the PN in 1966 as a junior recruit at HMAS *Leeuwin* in Fremantle. He served in HMA Ships *Sydney 3* (troop carrier), *Supply* (tanker), *Brisbane* (DDG), *Canberra 2*, *Sydney 4* (FFGs) and the Destroyer Escort (DE) *Torrens*.

"When I paid off after 30 years I became the rates clerk for the local shire council," CPO Jeppesen said.

"It was a job, but it wasn't me. When I received an offer for reserve service I jumped at the opportunity and haven't looked back."

Since 1996 the CPOWTR has held positions with the RAN

Relief Trust Fund Council, Command Legal in HMAS *Cerberus*, PERSO and the MCD FEG at HMAS *Waterhen*, and is now serving at MHQ.

CPOATV Michael Jenner comes from a Naval 'birdie' family.

His father is former CPOATA Brian Jenner who served in the RAN 1948-69 and was at Maralinga in SA during the British 1950s atomic tests.

Son Michael joined the PN in 1982 and served in HMA Ships *Jervis Bay*, *Tobruk*, *Creswell*, *Nirimba* and many years at HMAS *Albatross*.

He also had a posting to RAAF Wagga.

On discharge in 2004 he joined the Reserves and now works with the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) at the Naval Aviation System Program Office (NASPO).

"The interesting thing here at MHQ is that we have had ranks from CMDRs to MIDN



Reservists on the BOIMT, from left, CPOATV Mick Jenner, CPOWTR Morrie Jeppesen, LEUT Kate Mathews, and LCDR Guy Knox. Photo by ABPH David McMahon

on the team which produces a wide variety of ideas and dynamics," CPO Jenner said.

The Board of Inquiry has completed the hearing phase and is expected to deliver a report with findings and recommendations to the appointing authority by November 30.