Throughout the last three volumes of this series glimpses have been given of the Intelligence and guerilla operations of the various organisations that were directed by the Allied Intelligence Bureau. The story of these groups is complex and their activities were diverse and so widespread that some of them are on only the margins of Australian military history. They involved British, Australian, American, Dutch and Asian personnel, and officers and men of at least ten individual services. At one time or another A.I.B. controlled or coordinated eight separate organisations.

The initial effort to establish a field Intelligence organisation in what eventually became the South-West Pacific Area was made by the Australian Navy which, when Japan attacked, had a network of coastwatcher stations throughout the New Guinea territories. These were manned by people living in the Australian islands and the British Solomons. The development and the work of the coastwatchers is described in some detail in the naval series of this history and in *The Coast Watchers* (1946) by Commander Feldt, who directed their operations.

The expulsion of Allied forces from Malaya, the Indies and the Philippines, and also the necessity of establishing Intelligence agencies within the area that the enemy had conquered brought to Australia a number of Allied Intelligence staffs and also many individuals with intimate knowledge of parts of the territories the Japanese now occupied.

At the summit were, initially, the Directors of Intelligence of the three Australian Services. In March 1942 Major G. Egerton Mott of the British Army arrived in Australia from Malaya by way of Java with authority from the War Office to help Australia establish a branch of “Special Operations” to counteract sabotage and subversive activities by the enemy. He was accompanied by Major A. E. B. Trappes-Lomax. General Blamey authorised the formation of “Special Operations Australia” (S.O.A.) under Mott. In April, when General MacArthur was appointed to command the Allied forces in the S.W.P.A., his senior “G2” officer, Major-General Willoughby, became the senior Intelligence officer in the area.

Among other arrivals from Malaya were Commander Proud1 who had worked on propaganda in Singapore, and Dr Victor Purcell, formerly Director-General of Information in Malaya. On 19th June 1942 Blamey authorised them to establish a propaganda section under the camouflaged title “Far Eastern Liaison Office” (FELO).

Also in June it was decided to form the Allied Intelligence Bureau (A.I.B.) to coordinate the existing propaganda and guerilla organisations. Colonel C. G. Roberts, who was Director of Military Intelligence at L.H.Q., was made Controller of the A.I.B., and Brigadier Rogers, who

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had been senior Intelligence officer with the A.I.F. in the Middle East, became D.M.I. The role of the A.I.B. was to obtain information about the enemy, “to weaken the enemy by sabotage and destruction of morale and to lend aid and assistance to local effort to the same end in enemy-occupied territories”. It was divided into four sections: “A” (S.O.A. or I.S.D.—Inter-Allied Services Department), information and sabotage; “B”, “secret Intelligence”; “C”, field Intelligence through coastwatchers, natives, civilians, et al.; “D”, propaganda. Mott headed “A”, Captain Kendall, R.N.R., “B”, Commander Feldt “C”, and Commander Proud “D”.

The formation of the A.I.B. was necessary with so many national forces and so many separate Services operating, but for the next six months or so the lion’s share of the effective work in the field was carried out by the long-established coastwatching organisation and by Angau—the New Guinea administration, now absorbed by the Australian Army. There was no lack, however, of imaginative plans for future operations: hundreds of Malayan Hadjis (pilgrims who had been to Mecca) would be recruited in Arabia and introduced into Borneo and Celebes as agents; rubber would be smuggled out of the N.E.I.; a Chinese espionage network would be established in the occupied territories; and so on.

The first long-range penetration of enemy territory was undertaken in September 1942 when Captain Van-Arcken and two others were landed by night on Java from a Dutch submarine. This enterprise demonstrated the need for careful planning and training: the landing boats turned over, most of the gear was lost, and Van-Arcken was injured; the submarine surfaced next morning with the object of bringing the men off, and was probably reported to the Japanese; that night the landing party re-embarked, having collected some information. Two other parties were landed on Java in 1942 and one in Ceram. These and some other later parties were lost.

Also in 1942, while an Australian Independent company was operating in Timor, Captain Wylie (a British Army officer attached to the Australian Army) led parties into other parts of Portuguese Timor.

Soon maladies from which a group of “cloak-and-dagger” organisations staffed by highly-individualistic and sometimes temperamental people seems certain to suffer began to manifest themselves. The Dutch officials informed G.H.Q. that they wanted political and economic as well as military information about the Indies and were given permission to establish a separate organisation with direct access to G.H.Q. Thereupon Roberts asked to be relieved, but his request was not granted. The separate Dutch section was not set up, but Colonel S. H. Spoor of the Dutch group was granted direct access to G.H.Q. To solve the problems created by

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3 Capt G. G. M. Van-Arcken, VX87080. “Z” and “M” Special Units. Export sales promoter; of Melbourne; b. Batavia, Java, 4 Apr 1902. (Name changed to Vance.)

4 Capt I. S. Wylie; “Z” Special Unit. B. Calcutta, India, 2 Mar 1910.
the existence of separate groups operating with extreme secrecy in the same areas, the bureau was re-organised on a regional instead of a functional basis into North-Eastern, N.E.I. and Philippines areas controlled by Feldt, Commander G. B. Salm, R.N.N. and Lieut-Colonel A. W. Ind (American Army) respectively; the remaining areas were directly under the A.I.B. Thus unified control was restored in the North-Eastern Area, where the most important work was then being done. It was also directed that no activities should be undertaken without the approval of Willoughby, and that, in the case of S.O.A., Blamey's approval had to be obtained for operations in the North-Eastern Area and the Dutch commander's for operations in the Indies.

Lieut-Colonel P. J. F. Chapman-Walker arrived from London to look into S.O.A., which Mott ceased to command in February 1943, and in March 1943 obtained approval for a new unit, employing S.O.A. men and equipment, to be known as the Services Reconnaissance Department (S.R.D.). It was to be available also for operations required by the South-East Asia Command.

In 1943 many bold and successful projects were carried out in the New Guinea area, as mentioned in earlier volumes of this series. There was a constant demand for reconnaissance parties, guides, air spotting and coast-watching. Parties were inserted into the Philippines to assist the guerillas there and collect information. By mid-1943 the guerilla movement in the Philippines had so developed that the Philippines section was given semi-independent status under MacArthur's Chief of Staff, and control of the section was given to Colonel Courtney Whitney, a lawyer who had spent 22 years in the Philippines.

The N.E.I. Section was renamed Netherlands Forces Intelligence Section, Division III (N.E.F.I.S. III).

The most daring S.R.D. operations of 1943 were the raid on Singapore harbour by a party led by Major I. Lyon, which is described in the naval series of this history, and those of "Mosstroops", described in this series.

The A.I.B. ventures in Borneo have been outlined in the section of this volume dealing with the operations there.

The A.I.B. continued to send parties into Timor. One group of 34, mostly Portuguese and Timorese, was landed in July but was rounded up by the Japanese in September. The Japanese captured enough information to enable them to send to Australia wireless signals that appeared to come from the A.I.B. party. In this way during the rest of the war they tricked the S.R.D. into dropping supplies at places they indicated and obtained information about the insertion of later parties. As a result two later parties were captured soon after landing, and the Japanese continued to send misleading signals and to receive valuable information. Finally on 8th August 1945 a signal in the S.R.D. code arrived from "Nippon Army" expressing thanks for "information received over a long period".

In 1943 Dutch plans were handicapped by lack of suitable men and dependable submarines. Two Dutch submarines were sent out from
England for use principally on missions to the Indies, but they proved to be old and hard to refit. The most successful Dutch venture in this year was led by Lieutenant J. D. de Bruyn, who established an observation post in the Wissel Lakes area (400 miles north-west of Merauke) and held it for more than fourteen months. G.H.Q. now instructed N.E.F.I.S. to give priority to Hollandia, Wakde, Sorong, Menado, Ternate, Manokwari and Fakfak, in that order.

There were further changes in the A.I.B. organisation in 1944. The various components "were growing beyond the dimensions originally anticipated" and Willoughby sought reports on the strengths of the sections. These reports showed that, not counting the P.R.S. (Philippine Regional Section) the bureau was employing 280 officers, 1,121 other ranks and civilians, and 556 natives; of these 144 officers and 622 other ranks were in the S.R.D. The sections were showing a tendency to grow, in the manner of such private armies in wartime. Also all were tending "to set up their own mechanism regardless of economy or efficiency".5

At least one S.R.D. leader would have agreed with this. Later Major Harrisson wrote:

There were several units responsible for what are nowadays known as cloak-and-dagger works in this theatre. True to the mood of the business, the secrecy they valued above all other was among themselves. Each unit appeared more concerned with preventing its "operatives" from knowing about or being in contact with any other unit, than anything else. It was heinous sin to be found in possession of knowledge of or contact with a closely related body operating in parallel with you—or, often, in conflict. One of the ultimate effects of this was that units with the best salesmanship, warmanship and political savvy tended to get the plum jobs, on a system of competitive tendering which sometimes staked claims, took risks and even made statements of fact for which there was little (or no) substance behind the cloak. A further and perhaps more important effect—for the lives of volunteers sacrificed to a group loyalty or colonel's ambition can hardly be counted in these war years—was that a lot of things which should have been done never got done properly; through lack of liaison, because no one unit was fully equipped to do it, and because (with very few exceptions) no two units were ever allowed to work together.6

It was decided by the War Department that the A.I.B. and the P.R.S. should be separate, and each should procure equipment from its own service: in effect this meant that the American Army would provide for the P.R.S. and the Australian provide for the several sections—Australian, British-cum-Australian, and Dutch—remaining in the A.I.B.

The lack of success of the Dutch parties and their shortage of personnel caused G.H.Q. to call upon the Australian group to undertake reconnaissance of the Hollandia area. This led to the insertion of Captain G. C. Harris' ill-fated party whose experiences are described in Volume VI of this series.

In the second half of 1944 further steps were taken towards coordinat-
accounts each subject to different rules, they would be pooled. On 17th October Colonel Roberts was released to a civil appointment and Brigadier K. A. Wills, then D.D.M.I. at Advanced L.H.Q., was appointed Controller. Wills soon proposed several measures for better coordination both within the A.I.B. and between the A.I.B. and the organisations it served, and for the better equipment of the bureau. These proposals, which represented the fruits of long and hard experience, included: the placing of the headquarters of the A.I.B. and each of its sections close to G.H.Q.; that projects submitted by the A.I.B. should be judged by the Chief of Staff at G.H.Q. and not have to be channelled through the navy, the air force or the operations branch at G.H.Q.; that operational control of a project should be vested in the field commander in the area concerned; and that the A.I.B. should have a flight of aircraft for its own use. These proposals were adopted, with unimportant modifications. Six, later eight, Liberators were allotted to No. 200 Flight R.A.A.F. with nine air crews of 11 each, and a ground staff of about 450.

Major Jinkins' group, working in Borneo with the help of American submarines, achieved notable successes in 1945. A party under Captain Anderson landed and damaged enemy installations on Pratas Island, and raided a railway line in Indo-China. Another group, under Lieutenant W. A. Chaffey, was also landed in Indo-China where it blew up a train.

The A.I.B. organisations contained in 1945 1,659 Australian and British personnel, 1,100 natives, 268 Dutch and 19 Americans. It possessed its own flight of aircraft, mentioned above, and its own surface craft. General Sturdee said that about half his operational Intelligence was collected by the A.I.B. parties.

In August 1945 Brigadier Wills, as Controller of the A.I.B., reported that the several special Intelligence and guerilla organisations coordinated by the bureau had, in the course of the war, killed 7,061 Japanese, taken 141 prisoners, and rescued 1,054 servicemen and civilians from enemy-occupied territory. In addition 951 enemy were reported to have surrendered as a direct result of propaganda leaflets.

The report of the A.I.B. contains a list of the field operations undertaken by the components of the bureau with a terse note on the fate of each operation. The following table shows the number of operations, the number in which the party, or a member of it, was killed or captured, and the number which were not successful although no one was killed or captured:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Total Operations</th>
<th>Party Killed or Captured</th>
<th>Unsuccessful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S.R.D.</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.I.A.</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.E.F.I.S. III</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.E.A.</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Five of these were begun in June 1945 or later.
Comparisons between the operations of any two of these organisations should take into account the relative difficulties faced in each area; but these figures do appear to indicate that unless the local people can be relied on to help, and unless communications are reasonably secure, excursions behind the enemy's lines are unduly hazardous.

Some of the difficulties encountered by the A.I.B. stemmed from the fact that it had to coordinate four separate national groups with differing aims and allegiances; some, undoubtedly, from the fact that the kind of organisation it controlled tends to attract men who are not only adventurous but imaginative, individualistic and temperamentally to an unusual degree. Such men tend also to be enthusiasts who see their own chosen activity, whether it be propaganda, sabotage, or irregular warfare, as exerting a far greater effect on the progress of the war than it actually did.\(^9\)

After enduring a series of crises, the A.I.B. belatedly acquired a form of control that could probably not have been bettered, at least in principle: the grouping of headquarters, the channelling of proposals through the senior operational Intelligence officer to the senior operations officer, and tactical control by the field commander of any operations in his area.

The operations of the A.I.B. as a whole undoubtedly justified the expenditure of blood and effort, but that is not to say that each of its components justified itself or that every type of project it undertook was wise. Practically all the effective work done by the A.I.B. seems to have been achieved by two sorts of parties: Intelligence groups stationed in areas where they could gather information of direct interest to the commanders, and guerilla groups operating under the only conditions which justify the initiation of guerilla warfare, namely, that it be among a friendly population and in rugged or otherwise difficult country. A glowing example of the first type of activity was provided by the coastwatchers; the second was seen at its best in Bougainville, New Britain and the mainland of Australian New Guinea, in the Philippines, and in the mountains of Borneo.

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\(^9\) One view of the effectiveness of such groups, undoubtedly too sweeping, is expressed in the following passage from a work of fiction:

"A general in the War Office, one of the rugged sort, whose cooperation I was seeking to include two pretty A.T.S. sergeants on an Establishment, once told me that in his opinion all irregular formations and private armies like Bomfrey's Boys contributed precisely nothing to Allied victory. All they did was to offer a too-easy, because romanticised, form of gallantry to a few anti-social irresponsible individualists, who sought a more personal satisfaction from the war than that of standing their chance, like proper soldiers, of being bayoneted in a slit-trench or burnt alive in a tank. He went so far as to hint that Bomfrey's Boys in particular had caused more dislocation to its own side than it ever had to the enemy.

"I never argue with Generals. This one was much bescarred with wounds and beflagged with medals for bravery, gained fighting like a proper soldier, so I felt he was entitled to his point of view. Besides, I thought he was perfectly right"—J. Verney, *Going to the Wars* (1955), p. 147.