

## **Annex 6. Ronald Bond, Notes on Sissons (3 August 1990), Smith (8 August 1990) and Treweek (11 October 1990), undated but probably late 1990**

### **(i) Notes on [letter from] Sissons to Smith on 3 August 1990**

Page 2: When Trendall and I left the Navy block at Vic Barracks early in March 1942 to go to Monterey, Graves *and* Archer were in the next room to us at Monterey, together with a few female clerical staff. So it is not correct to say that Archer joined Graves at the end of 1942. (Archer incidentally was much more senior than Graves in rank and influence). When Trendall and I moved to 'A' block in Vic Barracks in early 1943, Archer, Graves and their staff came with us and worked in the adjoining room. They stayed there 1943, 1944 and, I think, were still there when I started to break loose about September 1945, though Graves might have disappeared just before then. (I cannot be sure about Graves, as I was by then tired, bored, and exploring possibilities for early discharge).

Trendall must have come to Melbourne in January 1942. He was certainly here in February 1942, because he met me at Spencer Street and took me to Nave's office at Vic Barracks. I wrote several times to Trendall from Georges' Heights, (NSW) begging him to extricate me from my pit of misery, and I am 90% certain that I wrote to him in Melbourne.

I think it was 28th February 1942 that I arrived on 'The Spirit' — much to everyone's surprise! — and Trendall took me firstly to Nave, then arranged for me to be a Corporal, so that I could afford to live with him in a boarding house in St. Kilda Rd, so that we could work for 30 hours each day! Working conditions in the Navy block were overcrowded. I think we were there for about a fortnight, if that, before moving to Monterey. I have sketched for David Jenkins our location in Monterey (which I believe is about to be demolished for a huge block); RAN people moved in simultaneously, and so did the United States Navy (USN). USN provided armed guards at all (or most) entrances. Commander Newman was the RAN chief. An American cypher section (machine sent messages) was on the second floor. This I know, for sure, having taken information to it.

We moved to 'A' Block at the beginning of 1943 and came under the aegis of Lt. Col. R.A. Little D.S.O. Mr. A.R.V. Cooper worked with us at Monterey. He arrived from *Singapore* (with two very beautiful young ladies!!) where he had been working. I vaguely recall that previously to that he had worked in Hong Kong. We had already moved to Monterey before Cooper arrived. [The fall of Singapore fits that time table.] Cooper was still at Monterey in December 1942 when I got a few days leave to go to Sydney for Christmas. Cooper was summoned to the UK (A.D.T. [Arthur Dale Trendall] jokingly says by his mother — 'Arthur, come home to be married!'), and *did not come with Trendall to 'A' Block at the start of 1943.* (He did return to Australia 1949 (?) and worked with J.I.B. [Joint Intelligence Bureau] at Albert Park)

Trendall went back to Sydney University on 13th March 1943 (the day my commission came through). He returned in July/August (?) 1943, when the great change arrived and we had come to a grinding halt. Trendall sent me home to Sydney for a short break. I was more than a little tired, as Eric Barnes (who had arrived in late February (?), early March) and I were the only people in the diplomatic cyto section during the period March/July '43.

Page 3: 'TRENCODE' was born at Monterey in 1942. It had been ascertained that the Japanese were reading the traffic sent by our troops on Timor, and this wasn't very surprising considering the quality of our cyphers. Trendall, with a little help from Cooper, devised this simple cypher which, if not unbreakable, would have, even with heavy traffic, taken a long time to unravel. Treweek, who had alarmed Aust. Cypher Production, by breaking the codes/cyphers in use on Timor very quickly, claimed to have broken into TRENCODE. Whether he did or not, I don't know. Perhaps Sissons' observation is pertinent. Whether our (Aust.) cypher section put TRENCODE into operation, I know not. At the time I suspected some rivalry between Ath [Athanasius P. Treweek] and Dale: perhaps Ath was a trifle piqued that A.D.T., a civilian, and not he, had been asked to produce a product??

By the time D. C. S Sissons arrived in April 1945, we were all very tired, a trifle bored, and, as Sissons considered, quite ga. ga. — which we probably were! I sensed that we were not militarily-minded enough — we ignored rank, did not stand on ceremony and engaged in friendly abuse of one another's incompetence.

*Who is this 'Cowley'?* As the years went by (There was never in my time any question about who was the Army senior in our section) our section had imposed upon it 'odd-bods'. The Central Bureau occasionally used us as a holding station for people in trouble e.g. Sgt Hickling — he had wife problems — a big, strong, fellow of some charm. As an inexperienced youth of 21 it distressed me to see such a fine man in tears. I can remember he disappeared for weeks: I finally found him to tell him to come back (to keep my attendances correct!!)

When Trendall was present, he dealt with Archer and Little. When Trendall was not there, I regarded Lt. Col. Little as my chief (while according to Archer due deference), though I had little personal contact with R.A.L. [Robert Arthur Little] and generally dealt with his Adjutants(?), initially Capt. Scholes, then Major George Mullenger (now deceased — but who returned to Scotch to teach junior classes after the war) and Capt. Stuart (Stewart?)

It was Archer who wrote the [weekly] Précis [of the Section's decrypts].

D.C.S.S. [Sissons] is not correct in assuming that Treweek recruited Barnes. It was I who mentioned Barnes to Trendall: When I was on leave at Xmas in 1942, I approached Eric in a roundabout way. It is more than likely that Professor Room had mentioned Barnes to Trendall. Eric had been dux of Canterbury Boys' High in 1939 and had graduated in Dec. 1942 with firsts in French and Maths. In 1942 Ron Downer had been recruited by Treweek: Downer had a first in history (1941) but apparently Stephen Roberts did not know him!! ('Modern Times'?). Alas, Downer is out at Springvale, having died of meningitis in 1943 — my first military funeral!

Ken McKay was not unknown to Trendall. He was in his second year Arts in 1941. He came to us late — 1944, perhaps 1945 — he was a Sgt. in artillery — I think his father had died.

A. C. Eastway (Tony) was a contemporary of Ian Smith's at North Sydney Boys' High (both were fans of their Classics Master Mr Gibbs — whom I met in 1944, after he had been transferred to Canterbury Boys' High). How he came to us, or was acquired by Trendall, I know not. He had been with 2nd/3rd Machine Gun Bn at Merauke (Dutch New Guinea), arriving at the end of 1943, or early 1944, and left early in 1945 (?) for Central Bureau. After the war he rejoined J.I.B. and in 1947/8? — could have been 49/50/51 — went to Cheltenham UK, returning to reside temporarily with A. R. V. Cooper in a remote (then) house on Oakleigh/Ferntree Gully Road. Later he rejoined CSR, and Ian Smith told me in 1990 he had departed, as a result of a heart attack while surfing/yachting. A competent athlete, Tony was not of the same intellectual capacity as Ian Smith or Ken McKay. His duties with us were 'general purpose': he lodged with Jackie (Cyril James) in Tivoli Rd South Yarra.

Ian Smith. I do not know if Gibbs had mentioned him to Trendall, but Ian was Prof. Chisholm's (Melbourne) bright boy and doubtless mention had been made.

While we were at Monterey, there was contact with the Americans, who resided a floor below. On several occasions we gave them info about ships leaving Saigon, Hanoi, info which the USN subs used to telling effect (I can verbally supply instances): and we gave them info about agents in Peru and Chile. Japanese 'machine encyphered' intercepts we could not handle and at Monterey

we passed them on downstairs to the USN and to London: what happened to these when we moved to 'A' block in 1943 I'm not sure: I think Col. Little was given them. While we were in Monterey we received some (not much) help from Washington, but more from London and vice-versa. After January 1943, I think D.C.S.S. [Sissons] could be closer to the truth.

Page 4: When I arrived 'in medias res' LA was well known and generally disregarded, because being a straight code it had little matter of importance. 'FUJI' was the encyphered code to which I was introduced. Who had broken the encyphering system and the code, I do not know: possibly London or one of its subsidiaries/Singapore/Hong Kong.) One item of the encyphering system changed daily — and therefore this had to be cracked daily — the other item changed three times a month. Occasionally the 'CA' code, 'Kancho fugo', was used which was for the eyes of 'Head of Mission only', but the material in these messages did not appear to be of greater importance than the ordinary 'FUJI'. 'Hot' information was entrusted to FUJI double encyphering, indicated by a repetition of the encyphering keyword at the end of the message. This system was unbreakable at that time, if you did not know the encyphering system for that particular day. FUJI messages began with a priority word e.g. SIKYU ('requiring early attention'), followed by a five letter group giving the date of origin, and if this msg was part 1 of 3 etc. This second group code was well known by the time I had arrived in Feb. '42.

Trendall devised an ingenious system whereby the daily FUJI cypher could be broken — and then to be sent by our ULTRA system to London for their breakfast: it became a daily challenge and a matter of kudos! It was at Monterey that this system was evolved. I can supply details, but, as I told David Jenkins, I feel that it is Trendall's copyright, and I shall reveal it, only if he is disinclined to give details. 'FUJI' code, consisting of two letter and four letter groups was 50–66% known by February 1942, and in the next two years, Archer, Graves, London and Washington were able to fill in many of the remaining gaps. In my wakeful hours in senility I can still recall the AG = *wa* KY = *no* HL ... VB was '... ...' EHZB was Chile etc. etc. So much for the sins of youth!

Greater East Asia Ministry (GEAM) commenced their own cypher system after July 1943. It was much simpler than FUJI, but with certain similarities. London broke into this quite early and from then on we had little difficulty in breaking the daily cypher. The material was, as DCSS says, dull, mainly economic, boring. I seldom read any of the translations. Basically these GEAM messages would have delighted economists and statisticians.

(Page 4): I have no recollection of intercepts from the Japanese ambassador to Sweden. Our intercepts came from French Indochina, Tokyo, Afghanistan, Peru, Chile, some German occupied capitals e.g. it was from Budapest that the Japanese

ambassador told his Foreign Affairs Office that the Germans had suggested that the Allies were reading his messages, but he assured Tokyo that this was unlikely, nay impossible, because Japanese was such a difficult language! Why I remember this piece of trivia, I do not know, but I do, quite well.

The military value of the contents of 'FUJI' traffic declined after July 1943. Up till then we had been able to supply information to the USN (and RAN) About shipping movements out of Saigon etc. — it was rewarding to read the subsequent messages to the effect that Mr. ... would not be returning by (such and such date) as there had been 'an accident' — and we tracked down a few spies (agents) of the likes of 'Mr. Gonzales Smith'. Perhaps the Japs sensed that their diplomatic cyphers were not as secure as they had thought. Perhaps, it was just a routine change, which would have been normal every six months or so, but in 1942/3 was delayed by distance and opportunity.

## **(ii) Notes on [letter from] Smith to Sissons, 8 August 1990**

Page 2: John Charles Davies who worked with us for only a brief time (3 to 4 months) had been in my class at Canterbury Boys' High School. Early in 1942 I had suggested to Trendall that he could be a helpful minion; he was bright and had a first in Latin and in French. He arrived at Monterey about May 1942, worked with Trendall, Cooper and me for a few weeks and then worked with Treweek downstairs in Monterey. For some reason he fell into Trendall's bad books and Trendall had him shipped out to the Central Bureau which had just moved up to Brisbane. As far as I know he spent the rest of the war with CB, and I did not see him, or hear of him, again until he passed through Melbourne about 1955/6 on his way back from Queens Belfast to New England at Armidale.

John Thomas Laird also arrived in Melbourne about June 1942. He was also a classmate at Canterbury, but I don't think Trendall was interested in him and he went to CB at Brisbane. John, after the war, lectured in English at Duntroon.

Page 3: Paul Grange came to us in 'A' Block when he had moved into our larger room. He seemed to me 'elderly': he was a Czech-Jew who had served in 1914–18 war with the Austro-Hungarian army. (I remember him telling us that when they captured some Roumanian officers they were all wearing corsets!) Quiet, docile, he did clerical duties honestly without fuss. I thought that he had been a Sandford cast-off and I was surprised to learn that he had been formerly a translator with 52 ASWG. Paul and his wife lived in East St. Kilda (or Balaclava?)

Page 4: Ian mentions 'Cowley' — who is this man? I have no recollection of Biggs. Perhaps they arrived after September/October 1945. I had been summoned to Sydney in Sept/October (I think the latter) to the University of Sydney where, under Trendall's eagle-eye, I was to write the war diary (history) of our section, presumably because I was the only one with continuous knowledge of its work from Feb '42 to Sept. '45. I clearly remember writing down every detail of our experiences, etc. etc. (dates, codes, cyphers, personnel) — not once, but twice, and in parts, thrice — until Trendall was satisfied. What happened to this document forged over for nearly a fortnight? Did Trendall keep it, pass it on to someone's obliviontray? It was sufficiently detailed to answer any question posed by D.C.S.S, David Jenkins etc. etc.

I have no knowledge of Pitman — arrived after I left?

### **(iii) Notes on [letter from] Smith [to Sissons 8 August 1990] on 52 ASWG**

(a) I have no idea how, from where, intercepts reached Trendall during our short stay with Nave and Co at the Navy Office.

(b) When we were in Monterey, intercepts came from Park Orchards by dispatch motorcyclist. Sometimes they arrived late, which made Trendall a trifle testy. I cannot recall hearing anything of Ferny Creek. I had no contact with any ASWG personnel.

(c) 52 ASWG moved to Bonegilla. When, I'm not sure. Why, I know not. However, by the time we had settled into 'A' Block in early 1943 somebody, (Col. Little?) had arranged with the PMG [Postmaster General] to run a direct 'sound' line from Bonegilla to our office. Two ex-PMG telegraphists manned our end, Sgt. Harry (?) Watson, who lived at West Footscray, and Cpl. Brown(e), the latter being a (6th or) 7th Division man who had served in Crete, and perhaps Greece. (I don't know if he was there with Ryan and Ballard). This direct line meant that we had last night's intercepts pronto in the morning, with confirmation copies coming next day, or on the next but one, from Bonegilla! Presumably by 'safe hand' D/R [dispatch rider]. It also allowed us to request checks or replays of garbled texts. This direct line was retained when 52 ASWG moved to Mornington, a move occasioned I did hear because it was a better reception area. 52 ASWG was quartered at Mornington racecourse.

(d) I did not ever hear KALINGA mentioned.

(e) I had virtually no direct contact with 52 ASWG personnel. I *vaguely* remember Lt. Col. Ryan coming to see Trendall and Cooper at Monterey in 1942.

In the winter of 1944, (or was it 1943?) I went to Bonegilla for two nights to see the unit at work, and to deliver an explanatory pep talk to the AWAS who were becoming 'browned-off' by the meaningless maze they were required to intercept. Being inexperienced in public speaking, I made quite a mess of this public address, mainly because I was unsure (and not briefed) what I could, or could not, reveal. At some time (cannot remember) Archer went to Bonegilla for a 'pep' talk, and I'm sure this experienced gentleman was more effective.

(f) I paid a flying visit to Mornington — once only — with several more senior officers. The reason for the visit I either did not know or have forgotten. As a humble lieutenant amid senior officers, I remember I kept a discrete [sic] silence.

(g) From the little I saw, I think the AWAS did a good job, especially as they could never be told the final fruits of their labours.

#### **(iv) Notes on Interview by D. C. S. Sissons with A. P. Treweek 11 October 1990**

I was not conscious of Treweek (who had been my Classics master at school and lecturer at University) during the short time we were in the Navy Block in Feb/March '42, but I am surprised by his comment on p. 3 about Trendall being in a different block. Treweek was with Nave and Co. on the first or 'second' floor of Monterey, and Trendall, Cooper and I on the 'third' (or do you say 'second') for nearly a whole year. Ath and Hazel occasionally had both us and sometimes AW Sandford for dinner in their Jolimont flat!

A.P.T. is correct about Arthur Cooper coming by ship from Singapore, but astray on the length of Cooper's stay. Still in those days movement was very restricted: you moved and lived only with those with whom you worked directly, and were told 'only what you needed to know' for your work.