

19 JACARANDA CHOSE

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Dear Jack,

Some time back it was announced in the Courier that somebody was re-writing the unit history. I am penning these few lines to give my version of certain happenings from first hand knowledge - not hearsay. If it's not too late, perhaps the following may, after due consideration, be included:

Page 198: Para 1: The real story is: the raft was meant to cross the Rann at dawn but, due to unforeseen circumstances, was launched in full daylight. The covering party of 3 or 4 blokes observed their landing on the other side & soon after heard dogs barking in what was presumed to be the Japanese encampment. Soon after, a tall Jap officer was seen to scan his binoculars on the area where the raft was launched & where the reeds had been broken down. Understandably the covering party were very concerned at all this but stayed hidden & watchful until about 3 days later when one of them felt a tap on his shoulder. Kivi & party had made it!

Page 201: Para 5: Daigie was with the fairies when wrote this one. The story should read that for a few days we had slogged across the Rann mudflats heading towards the Finister Range when we came upon a well defined track showing the recent imprints of those two toed shoes the Japs used to wear. This led to an open flat area perhaps 50 yards wide, 100 long, completely cleared of any vegetation at the far end of which was an elevated fortified position. The only thing that gave it away was a freshly cut banana leaf on the forward slope. Daigie ordered Kivi, Harrison, Jack & Eddie Arch Clancy & Jim Smith to bash scrub to see if the position could be out flanked. Having done this their further progress was tympied by 3 strands of barbed wire across. Kivi looked at

Jim Smith + Jim Smith looked at Kiwi knowing
bloody well what would be on the other side
We could see the rest of the section spread out on the
open ground + noted Bren gunner Hughie Brown in
a forward, instead of a covering position. What
enabled the fourth roll away over a fairly steep
drop, was a shouted Jap fire order, when all
Hell hit the barbed wire - a spit second of time
was all ~~was~~ the party needed. As for Doig's assertion
that Kiwi "called Doig" that is absolute bull for he
was NOT with us but with the main body when
the section O.C. should be.

Page 201. Para 2:

Here, I feel, Doig had
flights of imagination, for the whole of 5 section
knew that to cross the Rami the good swimmers would
load their gear into dugout canoes, enter the water a
couple of hundred yards upstream from the
proposed landing point + gradually "crab" across the
fast current. Men + not so good swimmers plus all
gear was taken over by native man^ued canoes. We never
saw "cordage" used.

Page 208: Para 1. As for Doig's assertion
"the forward scouts plus Doig", this is pure imagination.
We certainly did slide ^{over} a fairly steep slope + were listed
"missing in action" for a couple of days but finally
found our way back. Doig was NOT with us.

Page 208: Para 2 makes mention that "Doig +
the scout group were not with them". Can anyone
imagine any section commander being up with forward scouts?

Page 221 - Para 4. Kiwi, Parry + Ross Smith
were certainly in the river + came under fire from Jap
machine guns with water kicking up all round them. I
saw Ross Smith have a go with his Owen. I do not think
any of them had a Bren.

As a Bren gunner, when the action started mid stream I & the rest of the section were on a very steep slope leading down. It was impossible to get a rest for the Bren I wrapped the sling around the left arm & let fly with a couple of mag mag. Sufficient to shut 'em up. I saw the three reach the other side of the river unscathed and as by now darkness was falling the remainder of the patrol waded down the stream to what turned out to be a safer crossing. In pitch blackness, holding the laynet scabbard of the bloke in front, the track we had come down by was found & followed up the mountain. At about 2 AM a halt was called & the exhausted bodies had a few hours sleep alongside the track. Kinn, Ross Smith & Ray Parry rejoined the party a little after daybreak.

Page 238 - Para 6. I was on this patrol proceeding up a shallow river when the forward scout sighted a croc, of about 6 feet, at the same time as the croc sighted our bloke. The croc dived into a pool & when the water cleared it was obvious he was in a bit of a cave. Somebody dropped a grenade in the cave entrance & the patrol pulled back & camped the night. Some morning the ~~cro~~ croc was lying belly up on the bottom & one of the police boys dragged him out. Tried to eat some tail steaks but not having any salt or other condiments it was pretty bland. Tasted somewhere between hooker poultry.

Page 245 - Para 1. Wrong!! The 5 year service including at least 2 years overseas rule came into force in September - not December. I certainly opted for discharge & left the 2/2nd in September - discharged 11th October. This while we were at Wide Bay - not Rabaul as Daig chronicles.

I do not think it appropriate for this to be published in the Courier. Rather for the review Comm. Heels to sift through & use as they see fit.
Regards Jim Smith