

PTE KENNETH JAMES MONK - 3 SECTION A PLATOON - VX63724

I was with Bob Palmer and several others mapping tracks up behind Water Pipe Camp and looking down towards the coast near Dili when we saw warships moving along the coast. When we got back to camp we found out that they were Japanese. The first aggressive patrol we were sent on was towards Tacolulic to see that no enemy came from Ailie. We heard a vehicle coming so over the bank we went. As it came round the corner we could see it was an old car containing Capt Callinan and Pte Doyle. We told them where the A Platoon camp was and continued on patrol. The next move was the evacuation of the camp up to the Lone Cross Spur. Carrying those boxes of ammo up that mountain was hell.

It was about now that Bob Palmer took half the Section on a patrol and we did not see them for many days. It was here that Keith Hayes went through on a Kuada. Then B Troop went through. 3 Sub Section was on the right of A Headquarters and 2 Section when the Japs attacked over the rise so could not see what was going on. Pete Campbell and Eric Weller were sent to find out but were soon back as the place was full of Japs. We were on our own staying in a Re-entrant until nearly dark then went over the Glano River to Ermera then on to Hatulia where C troop were - then to Calaco. We went through a number of Postos till we came to Ainaro. B Troop just beat us there. As B Troop were in the area we were sent to HataBulico. Had no blanket - Rowan Robinson and I slept under 1 ground sheet. We used to shiver ourselves warm. At Maroba got word Jap coming Maliana so had to go the pass from Maliana to Bobonaro. I remember that well as it was my 21st birthday - 4 August. Nothing happened there and went to Bobonaro. Rumours Jap come so Alf Hillman and Charlie Waller went on patrol. Jap attacked Bobonaro. Charlie Waller killed and Alf Hillman shot in the arm. Went to Atsabe Saddle. The Jap shelled a hut in Saddle but we were a bit lower down.

Withdrew up through Hata Balico, then down to Ainaro. Was in Atsabe when news came through Wireless had contacted Australia. Was here we got word 2 Aussies running amok in a village. We had to go and arrest them and bring them back - then had to put a guard on them which hurt a bit as we had not done guard at night for quite a while. Was here when Jap attacked Lete Foho where Callinan was. Then they shelled Rotai which was across the valley. Doing guard down the road when they started shelling Rotai with another chap. Marvellous how it always brought on a bout of malaria and he would have to go back. Was at Ainaro when the Jap came through but I had to go to the hospital at Alas where a Jap plane did us over. Rather amusing now but I remember three or four of us ducking behind a tree and as he came back the otherway having to race around the other side. Trouble was tree was on a bank and we had to scramble up and down. At Same had pleasure of being bombed by Japs and strafed by our own plane. The bombing - Jim Waller and I were going up to the OP when 3 planes bombed near enough to get a bit of dirt over us and hear shrapnel fly through the air. The strafing was up in the same OP when we heard a burst of machine gun fire and a plane flying about 50 feet overhead. There were many flaying arms and legs as he flew over the huts in the plantation. The plane gave the church a burst then disappeared over the hill still flying very low. A few minutes later message came up wondering what sort of plane it was. Reply was - did not know but did not think it was a Jap plane. The plane turned out to be a beaufighter - recommended for Japs. When the big push was on we were at Same and I think it was the night the very light went off we were sent in the middle of then night to reinforce C Troop. We did not contact the enemy. In the last days on the Island we were down on the river between Same and Fata Cauc.

I remember we got hauled over the coals as we had seen Fred Sparkman cross the river then lost him. When he got back to Fata Cauc they must have asked if he had seen us and said no. How he missed coming along the track we were on I do not know. Later we had to send a runner back to Fata Cauc and Stan King was the one. He walked, rode a pony into Fata Cauc straight into a nest of Japs. Nobody let us know they were there. We then got the order to head for the beach where our Sub Section had reconnoitered quite a while earlier for an embarkation. Being a Bren Gunner at that time I had the job of outpost for the embarkation and was in the last boat load to be taken off.

RE THE CRIADOS - Our Sub Section got a lad early in the period. If my memory is right his name was Labooty. He was Clarrie Turners lad. He did a great job and was a bit of a standover of the natives but looked after us well. I did not get a criado for quite a while and I think I picked him up between Atsabe and Hatu Bulico. His name was Mohoda - I did not need one as I had no gear until August when I got a blanket - I had got a sarong.