

SURAT FROM.

Westpac

ALAN SIDNEY LUBY.
CORPORAL / SERGEANT, NX55531
A.A.M.C ATTACHED
SPECIALIST MEDICAL ORDERLY.
MOSTLY ATTACHED TO 'B' PLATOON, APART FROM
SHORT PERIOD WITH FORCE H.Q. AUGUST.

After 54 years how does one commence a report of events of so long ago and do them justice? However, at the request of my venerable friend Col Daig I shall try, even though my 'write' hand isn't what it used to be.

I guess our way would be to start at the beginning and describe our team of Medics. The team leader was Capt. C.R. Dunkley, a WWI veteran who had his medical practice at Fremantle. He was remarkably fit, extremely capable and performed wonderfully well under most adverse conditions.

The Senior N.C.O. was Sergeant C.Y. (Bliff) Paff, a Dairy Farmer and Timberworker from BELBORA, N.S.W. who had some first aid course experience.

I had been a Permanent Officer with N.S.W. Ambulance Service for about 2 1/2 years prior to enlisting in July 1940.

Bliff and I were both original members of 212th Field Ambulance when it was formed in November 1940 at Sydney Showground and shortly afterwards moved to the Army Camp at Cowra where we took over the running

of the Camp Hospital from 2/3 L.C.S. as well as Field Training.

After responding to an invitation to Volunteer for a Special Unit we travelled by train to Bathurst on 1st March 1941 where we were met, transported to camp and interviewed by Captains Mike Calvert and Freddie Spencer-Chapman until about midnight. It could well be that we were the first people to be so interviewed and accepted in N.S.W.

*1 How we missed out on the 1st Independent Company is a different story but mainly hinges on the fact that by the time our Movement Orders came through we were in Transit North, and held up by flood waters at Alice Springs. It then took us 5 weeks from the Alice to T.I.T.B. foster.

Then came Alex (Scotty) Wares, a down Sait who had worked in the Administration section of W.A.G. Railways, a good solid forthright bloke.

Last but not least was one Fred Sparkman generally known as 'Sparkie' a tall, well-built young bloke who had also worked in W.A.G. R. as a fireman on the old steam locomotives.

So that was us and our original unit displacement was, the 'Doc' and Buff Papp at H.Q., Scotty Wares with 'A' Platoon, lucky with 'B' Platoon and Sparkman with 'C' Platoon.

2/ as time went on, we were supplemented

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We were wakened at 0600, given an early
breakfast and then driven back to Lorna
in an Army Utility, with an admonishment
that we don't tell any body any thing
about where we had been, or who we had
seen, or what had been discussed.

by Corporals Harry Fredericks and Joe Morrissey who were part of a 2/12th Field Ambulance detachment at Koroimo and came through to us.

Also in the early stages one of the youngest members of the Unit Arthur "Boy" Coates was given some training and performed well as an orderly.

I think it is fair to say here that in the formative period of the Unit we took part in the same basic combat training as everyone else, and in the real war situation we took part in patrols, took our turn on sentry duties and even cooked when necessary.

I can't speak for the others as to claims of shooting Japs. Personally I did not, but several times was part of an ambush that didn't materialize for one reason or another. As we had been heads down the Nips had no respect for the Geneva Convention we all carried 303 rifles and knew how to use them.

Whilst at Hemexo and we were manning an OP overlooking Dili, I was present at the planning of the famous Dili Raid by the scrappiest, bearded, half clothed bunch of Australians and Portuguese - Timorese you ever would see, in the flickering light of a pig-fat lamp or two.

I only wish I had the artistic skill to paint or sketch the scene which is still quite vivid in my mind.

1/11/1945

I requested permission to go on the raiding party but was told firmly by the "Bull" "No way Luke, if anyone gets hurt, we want you to be here to look after them!" As it turned out the only casualty was a small bone fracture in someone's foot as they were exiting the scene.

One other incident, as an aftermath of the raid was the ambush of the "Singapore Tiger". When word was received that a large column of Japs was moving towards us, we knew that Cpl. Ray Aitken and his Sub-Section were closing in at the Ranalan O'pips. In any case it was decided to set up an ambush on the track in case the Japs came through. As it turned out the Aitken ambush was so successful, ours was not required as the Japs retreated.

From a medical point of view Timor was almost a disaster from the start. After our landing near the aerodrome and exposure to the elements and the mosquitoes without any real cover or precaution other than prophylactic doses of quinine, these anopheline crosses really gave us a battering, and proved that our clothing, issue of short sleeved shirts and shorts was totally unsuitable for the kind of conditions in which we found ourselves.

Even when we moved out, West along the coast to Tibar, the area in which we

made camp was not much better. What with Malaria and Dysentery from poor water supplies, men went down like flies and a troop of Boy Scouts could have beaten us.

It was not until we moved up into the hills that conditions improved, and at that time we even had our issue Tents.

About this time too H.Q. moved to Three Spurs where the Doc. set up his hospital, and to which I only paid one visit, when I took Pte. Keith Hayes across to him after he had been shot and bayoneted in the 7 Section ambush.

Keith was brought in to our 6 Section camp at Nasuta by friendly Timorese after he survived the massacre of most of his section near the aerodrome; he was in a state of shock and exhaustion as one can imagine. My recollection is that he had a couple of slash wounds through his neck and 3 or 4 bullet wounds which I patched up. After an overnight rest we proceeded next day to H.Q.

At day break one morning whilst sitting on the Toilet perch with one of the most magnificent outlooks one could envisage overlooking the Dumbai Strait, out of the mist came 27 ships of the Japanese Imperial Navy - aircraft carriers, battleships, escorts of all sizes and submarines. Some aircraft were in the air but did not attack us. They

were probably part of the group that went on to Rakaul and the Solomon Islands. In any case they were a magnificent sight.

The events of the next few days have been well documented by Callinan, Campbell, Daigand & Gray so far as Unit activities were concerned so I shall dwell on, except to say we stepped up our preparedness for whatever ensued.

About mid March we had our first real taste of battle when the Japs attacked 4 Section at Bexatote and we suffered 2 killed and three wounded, in spite of the grand fight put up by the Section against overwhelming odds.

Sergeant Dick Morgan sustained a bullet wound through the calf of (from memory) his left leg which fortunately did not do any bone damage. I can still see him sitting astride a small Timor pony with his long legs thrown the ground either side.

Private Eddie Bragwell took a burst from an automatic weapon up and through a shoulder which apparently shattered the joint and cut the tendon. For him, when he arrived at Nasuta it was a matter of tying off blood vessels to stem the bleeding, dressing his wounds, and applying support for his severely swinging arm. He was also in a state of shock and fatigue.

Then came the daddy of them all, one Allan Hollow, an 18 year old soldier from Kelgordie, staggering along the track into our camp H.Q. supported by two Timorese, his clothes soaked with blood and the lower half of his face shot away.

These days he would have been rushed into an Intensive Care Unit and received massive transfusions of blood and serum, but there were no such luxuries at Nasuta, just my very humble R.A.P.

After ascertaining he had no other wounds, it was a matter of cleaning him up as well as possible and then tying off those facial and lingual arteries that were still faintly pumping out blood, and keeping his upper, exposed throat clear.

From my experience with seriously injured accident victims it was obvious that Hollow was "in extremis" and required greater skill and care than I could give, but that was a long way off.

Realising that Nasuta would be the next likely target for attack and the need for more skilful care for these two badly wounded men a discussion was held between Capt. Laidlaw, Lieut. A/C Butch, the N.C.O's and myself, as to movement, it being obvious that they would need to be carried on the two army stretchers I had at that time.

Also at the sounds of the gunfire most of the natives had gone bush, and only a few had attached themselves to us as "brindos".

I submitted my estimation that Hollow could not survive more than a couple of hours, and suggested that the main party move off, leaving a couple of troops with me, so that when he expired, we could bury him, and then catch up.

The reply from "The Bull" was quite explicit, "Either we all stay, or we all go, and, if necessary we carry them out!" With that, we completed preparations, coaxed a few natives to join us and moved out.

Thank God my judgement was wrong, for by dint of courage and sheer determination, the skill of Dr. Dunkley and Professor "Bennie" Rank (Plastic Surgeon Supreme) who performed about 30 operations, good nursing and a loving wife, 54 years on Hollow is still alive and we communicate regularly. However, I digress, which is easy to do - in a narrative such as this.

There was not much day left as we made our way slowly towards the Gland River and as night fell we proceeded along the river bed seeking some where to camp.

With the night, came the rain and shelter was pretty scarce.

Suddenly a shot rang out and with it a call for help - Stan Ludlow had put a .45 Tommy Gun slug through the thigh of Lieut Tom Nicket, once again luckily without any bone damage, and so, relatively easy to control but uncomfortable for the victim.

As movement was more or less restricted to

right time because of Tap patrols in strength we were indeed fortunate we were not under attack. On one day we were sheltering on a lightly timbered ridge or spur and three or four Tap parties passed within close of us. How they missed seeing us we will never know, but divine providence was certainly with us on that occasion. Food was scarce as was water, apart from the rain.

Movement was cautious so as not to attract the Taps.

I recall scavenging some bantam eggs and goats milk from some Timorese to make egg flips to feed Hallow with by squirting the liquid down his gullet with an eyedropper. Eventually we reached the Aifoo Coffee Plantation and had our first meal in 3 days by the generosity of the Portuguese Timorese family who owned the property, Villa Maria. Whilst in Darwin in September 95, we met Sarah da Silva who was in her early teens at that time and remembered seeing us, particularly the wounded.

From there, to Hatohia was relatively easy going and there we met up with the 'Doc' who had been brought in by Arch Campbell and Ron Dook from Cailaco.

I am pleased to hand over the patients: some what improved in body and spirit but still in fairly serious condition.

Hallow is concerned that he has become

fly blown but we reassure him that the maggots will do more good than harm. There is a storm at night and millions of large Hymenoptera are a crawling mass over us as we try to sleep in a rush mat over the hut floor.

after a couple of days to regroup we move on through Atsake and cross the central mountain range, down to Ainaro, one of the better towns on the South side and for a couple of weeks we had reasonable food and a cottage provided by the Chiefs.

My next move was on to Same' via Hataudo; only a short distance on the map but a long day march on the ground, with at least three swiftly flowing rivers to cross.

From Same' I moved up to Hitea via Manbisse and Ailen, and then on to Remexio where I was mainly with 4 and 5 Sections.

There was the constant incidence of Malaria to be treated with our meagre supply of powdered quinine.

Food was scarce in that area and very monotonous, mainly being pumpkin, corn and an occasional chicken - they don't go far amongst about 20 hungry men! Symptoms of dietary deficiencies were beginning to show, as well as tropical ulcers.

Boils and carbuncles were very common and in most cases were quite painful. Many

of us bear the scars from them to this day. Dysentery was rife throughout the whole of our operational area, probably because of the rough basic diet, and crude hygiene that prevailed in most villages.

In some of the Posto towns there was a rough form of water based sewage system built and after an evacuation the "Cautima Criado" would pour water from a Bamboo container around one's backside to clean it. The system drained into a fast flowing stream set aside for the purpose but these were rare.

In spite of the Dehydrating and Debilitating effect of the 'Trots' or 'Squirts', and the fact that our meagre supply of Dist. Dis. Sed. was soon used up, it was seldom that any of the troops would not be able to take part in a patrol or ambush, or any other movement.

Some even went to the extent of cutting the crotch out of their shorts, and in aware of at least one instance of a Plug being cut from a Corn Cob and inserted in the anus.

In many of the villages where the huts were raised on stilts, it was a common practice, for a Toilet Hole to be cut in a corner, sometimes screened. The village pigs, goats, and fowls would await the droppings, and quickly scoop them down. We in turn would sometimes get to eat one animal or another, and so, the "Recycling" went on.

It was no wonder that sometime later when a survey for 'Hookworm' incidence was carried out, there was a 100% positive return.

In the meantime The Great Doc. Smukley... and his pettime were doing remarkably well under very adverse conditions, and because of Jap movements he and his hospital staff had to re-locate several times, with all of their patients.

I only saw him on one other occasion whilst on Timor, until we were re-assembled at Larrimah on return to Australia.

Others who had used of the 'Doc's' ministrations may be able to add to the list but the ones I can recall are Three Spurs, Hattin-lia, Bailaco or Kailaco, Amaro, Alas, and Same'.

To add to his problems Terry Halsey was an L. M. G. hurt through one of his knees and thigh and was rescued from a native hut by Lieut. John Rose and the 'Doc' himself, after being concealed from the Japs by the friendly Timorese.

Eventually the seriously wounded men and some of the sickest were evacuated by a Catalina Flying Boat of the R. A. A. F. along with Brig. Yeale and some of the top brass of Spawen Force.

In spite of this relief, and as time wore on many of the troops were showing signs of strain as well as the other factors previously mentioned.

One striking feature of the whole campaign was that in spite of the enormous number of patrols and other movements carried out in that high, steep, mountainous country, both by day, and more particularly by night, there were few injuries sustained from falling or sliding on treacherous tracks.

Also, I don't recall hearing of anyone requiring a surgical operation for such things as appendicitis, which one would expect in a community of our size, over a 12 month period of time. We had many close shaves too but never lost anyone drowned in deep, fast flowing streams.

Whilst I was mainly up in the forward areas with one or the other Sections of B Platoon, or moving from one to the other depending on needs, for a period during August I was instructed to report, along with Sig. Harry Estorick, and I think Mr. Chas. Pickering, to Force Headquarters then based on Bohinsro.

From memory it took us four days march to make the journey from Liltai via Mindelo, Same 'q' Mape'.

As the 'August Push' was commencing we were bombed and strafed by aircraft several times along the track and in the towns.

I also recall some pretty hairy river crossings in shoulder deep water courses.

Reporting at H.Q. we were given a meal and bunked down - I was told I had been promoted to Sergeant.

Shortly after dawn next morning the Nip aircraft were back in strength and we had reports that a large contingent of troops led by hostile natives was on the way towards us. Evacuation was rapidly organised and we set off towards Atsaki.

After proceeding some distance we were informed there was another party of Japs cutting us off from the North, so, nothing else for it but take to the hills and up on to the Ramelau Range, up to 10,000' high.

For a time we were followed by a party of hostile natives until we opened fire on them and they retreated.

From our vantage point we could see both lots of Jap troops before right fell.

Strangely they did not follow us but we spent at least two more days with little or no food working our way along razor-back ridges towards Amaro.

13.
15. Turton and Dexter with their sections made a successful ambush on the Japs and their natives. There were many anxious times over the next week or ten days as it appeared that the Japs were making an all-out

attempt to bottle us up, and with every chance of success. I think we were at Same when we saw the Yerey Pistol Flores which we assumed were a signal for a massive attack.

Instead, and to our amazement it was a signal to withdraw - why, well never know, for the meantime some of the Timorese factions were taking advantage of the upset administration making a war of their own and the various parties wanting us to take sides.

FRACTIONS

By this time we had moved up to the area of Mindelo and Turiscari, a very 'Hot Spot' indeed. Many of the villages were burnt down, gardens savaged, and the Kunai grass set afire to deny hiding places.

Heads were lopped and placed on stakes along the tracks, hands were cut off and I remember the odd native being hamstringing.

Bodies were left lying where they fell and the smell of death pervaded the air.

We treated the wounds of those who came to us for help, but wisely Col. Ballinson managed to keep us neutral.

However we were under a state of Stand-to Tension for several days. This was not helped by our diminishing food and water supplies, partly brought about by the lack of native carriers and Timor Donkeys.

My role at Force H.Q. was also changed and I moved up to rejoin B Platoon in the village of Fatur-Makengue. I also reverted to my previous rank of Corporal.

After the arrival of 4th Independent Company, for a short time we enjoyed some Australian food from the "Yager" supplies and rationed they brought ashore.

In due course our B Platoon generally moved further East into Manatuto Province to places like Soibada, Lacluba, Lacluta, and Viqueque, where for the most part conditions were marginally better.

I came into contact with the Timorese right from the time we moved out of Dili into the Titar area. They used to pass our camp on their way into the Dili market with their produce, and although there were some language problems we generally were able to make an amicable trade.

Basically they were a happy, smiling group of people who sang as they walked and worked. Mostly they seemed pleased to be relieved to sell their fruit or corn cobs to us and not have to carry it for miles further.

Most of us picked up their common Tetum language fairly quickly, as a matter of necessity, as they who were close to us learned a smattering of ours, particularly the swear words.

Over the 12 months I had three different 'cousins', Manhair, Mandace and Man Duan, in the various areas. Due to restrictions some of the natives would not travel far from their own villages. Others, like Capt. Ravidant BARISU, and Lt. Nisbet's RUPINO would go anywhere. There were many others too, who were with us, and faithful to us for nine or ten months, and when we were evacuated, they linked up with Australians from the 4th. Inf. Corp.

We came to rely upon them in many cases to be our ears and our eyes in respect to Jap movements, to be our go-betweens to obtain food and shelter in villages, to help carry our sick and wounded, and to aid in carrying whatever stores we may have had.

They were also our guides over Timor island and entering into unfamiliar territory.

Many of the indigenous natives and the Portuguese, risked their lives to obtain vital information, and even entered Jap occupied areas and successfully stole items we badly needed, including the Gantas Base radio from Dili and some medical supplies. Subsequent to the evacuation of both Companies, many of the Timorese and

The story of attempts to evacuate us, and our subsequent rescue on the Dutch Destroyer "Jenke Hiddes" was never well documented, but I would express my personal joyous relief and I guess exultation as we were ferried safely ahead, the anchors came up and away we sped towards Australia.

For sure I was not alone as I shed a silent tear of gratitude for those we left behind as the island receded in our wake.

My only recollection of the trip to Darwin are those of meeting up with fellows we had not seen since the original landing, of troops sitting or lying wherever they could, find a space and sleeping from exhaustion, and the kindness of the crew in playing us with Tea or Cocoa with real milk and fresh bread and Jam!

On arrival in Darwin we were transported to an Army Camp at Winnellie where a 1st Class meal had been prepared, but, horror of horrors, our stomachs rebelled at such strange foods and we either brought it up, or squinted it down. The train we wanted afterwards for the journey to a specially set up Rest and Medical Centre at Larimah was like an enormous

Sanitary Cart - you wouldn't have enjoyed walking along those tracks for some time.

Ditto, hours troops shivered also to go down with bouts of Malaria so the Hospital staff were kept busy, and to their credit did everything possible by way of tests and treatment to rehabilitate us.

As I recall, Lucas 42 came and went as did New Year, without any fanfare.

Beards came off, hair was cut and we were issued with fresh clothing - most of us came off the island with only what we wore, and that was promptly incinerated.

Follow

The journey home for leave was painfully slow - three days by American Army trucks from Larrimah to Mount Isa another four or five days from there to Brisbane where we camped at Ascot Racecourse and were given the rest of our clothing kit, over a few more days as we awaited trains to take us further South and West, eventually I arrived home at Wollongong in early February to be welcomed by my loved ones, who like the rest of our families had not expected to see us again.

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Tinian provided a harsh military campaign but for those of us who survived, and we were many, I believe we have been better people for having "been there and done that".

Paragraph

In particular it taught us the value of mateship and forged chains of friendships that has endured for more than half a century.

To conclude, I would simply say
Thank God and the Tinianese for the fact that we were part of it and survived.

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their families paid the supreme sacrifice for having aided us, in other cases they were severely beaten and forced into Jap labour gangs. large numbers of their females were pressured into service in the Japanese "Comfort Houses", so, overall as a national group of people, they paid very dearly because so many of them assisted us when we were in desperate need of that help to survive. It was quite distressing that we were unable to bring at least some of them back to Australia but the order was for only a few Portuguese and their families, along with a small number of religious personnel to come back.

Some of the Portuguese were eventually trained by the Australian Army and joined "L" Special missions back to their Island, and some of these were captured, either to be executed or imprisoned. Some of them are still alive, and good Aussie citizens in this year of 1996, and we have the pleasure of meeting them occasionally.

P.S.
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During the Post-War years entry to East Timor was very restricted as the Portuguese struggled to regain control, especially after the Indonesians obtained their freedom from the Dutch.

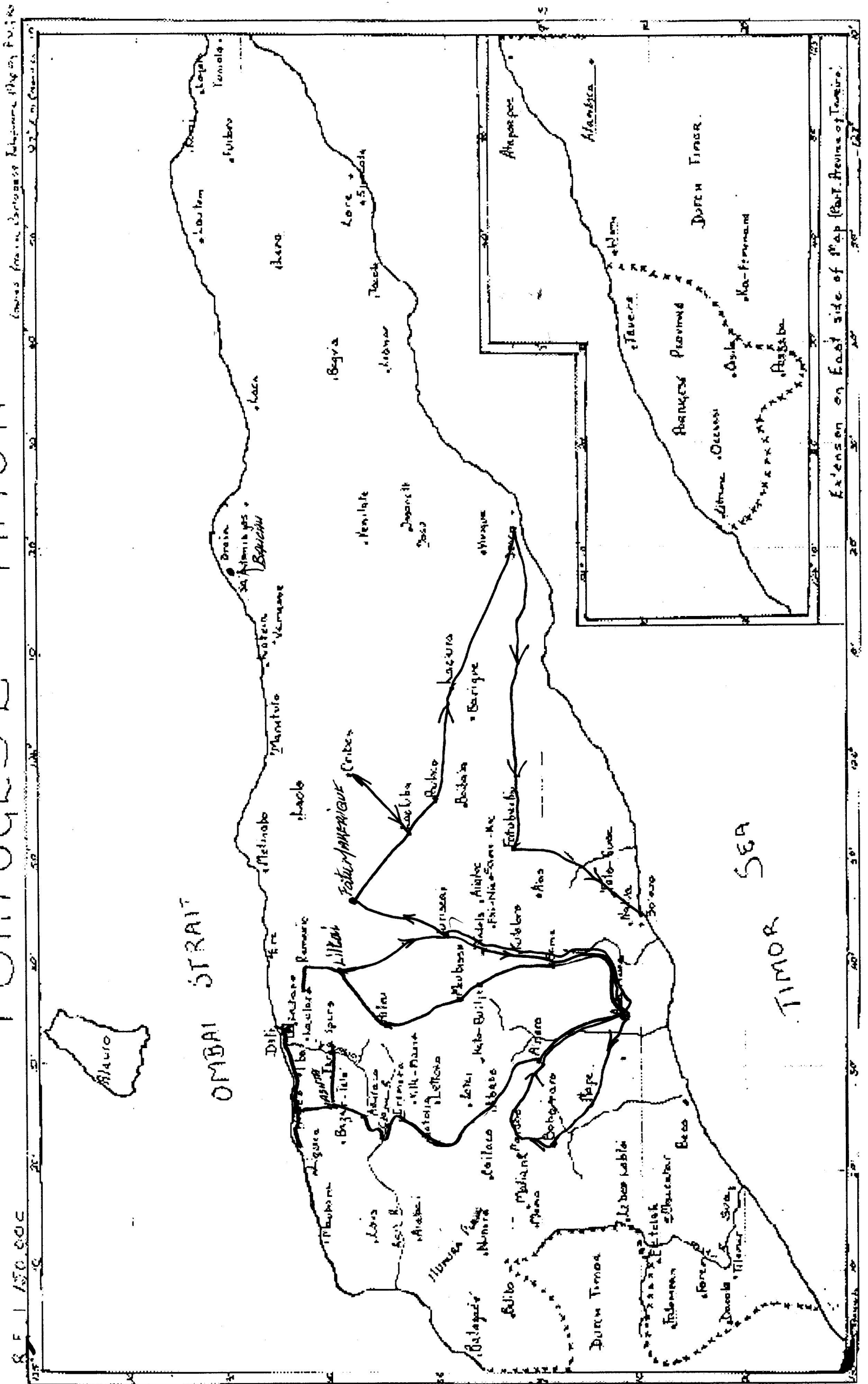
We have been somewhat ashamed by the attitudes and reactions of Australian Governments, of all political persuasions, because of their lack of assistance to the people of a small nation, and the lack of recognition of their needs, when the aggressive occupation of their country appeared imminent, and they appealed for help in 1974/75.

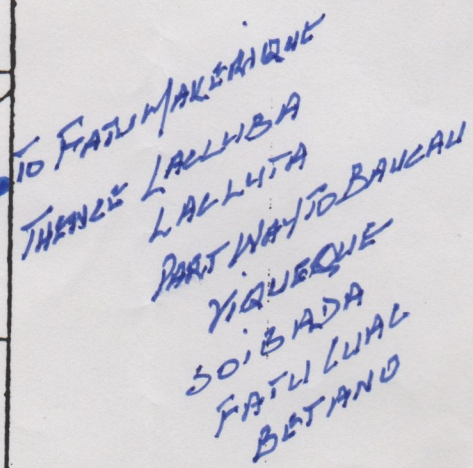
Thankfully at least some of them were able to escape to Australia or Portugal and are able to enjoy a better life

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JOURNALS OF SGT. ALAN LUBY. NX55531
 PORTUGUESE TIMOR 1942.
 Nov - Feb AUGUST.
 BUT - AUGUST TO DECEMBER.

PORTUGUESE TIMOR





JOURNEYS OF ALAN LUBY IN
 PORTUGUESE TIMOR W.W.II 1942
 RED - PRE-AUGUST.
 BLUE - AUGUST TO SEPTEMBER

Dear Bob,

At last I can say "herewith enclosed is my written and taped version of my memories of Junior, to the best of my recollections. I trust it is of some use to you with your newest project.

It's only a matter of days now before we gather at Maroochy Cove for another of our wonderful Re-unions, and we look forward to see you there.

Sad news about the death of Helma Sproston, she was a lovely person.

Erith is back to her normal state of health after a worrying couple of weeks.

Hope my package arrives safely.

Best Wishes

Alan.