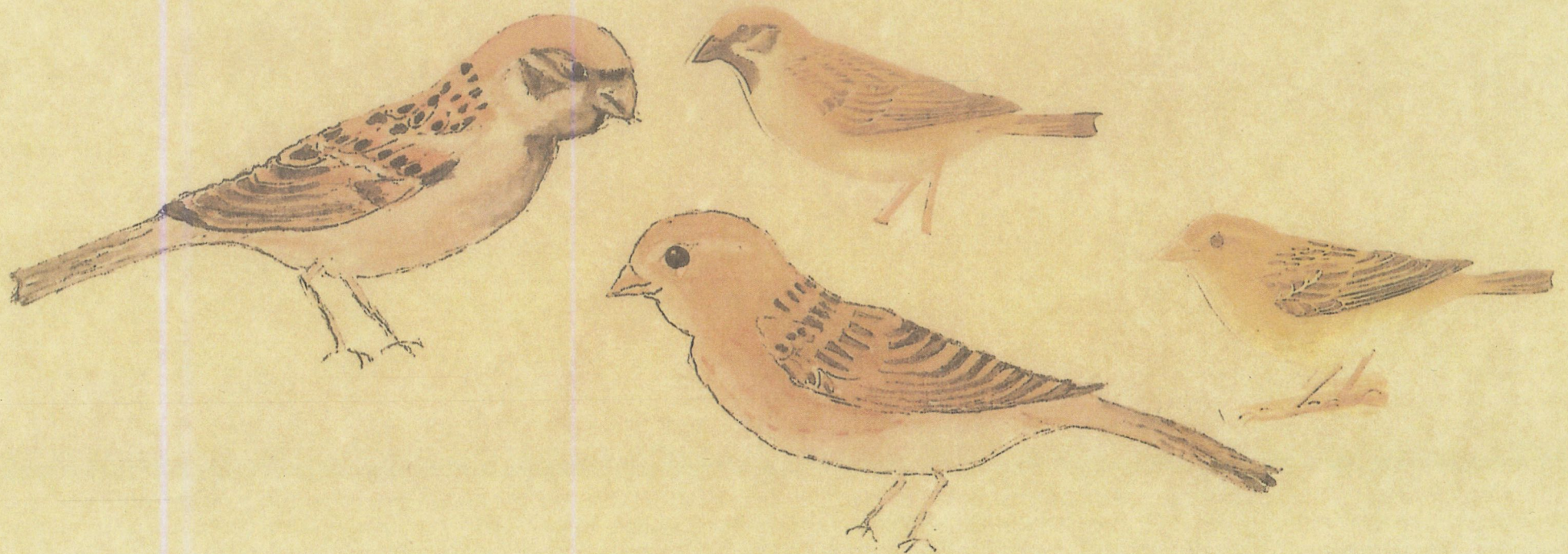


SPARROW FORCE



LIEUTENANT JOHN ALBERT ROSE
NX65630

2ND REGIMENT SIGNALS

LATER NAMED "Z" SPECIAL FORCE

DAYS IN SERVICE = 1,863

Acknowledgements

"Timor" Author Chris Wray. Publisher: Elm Grove Press

"Deeds that made the A.I.F. author James Holledge. Publisher: Horwitz Melbourne

Disclaimer.

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Taken on Final Leave

May 1942.

JOHN ALBERT ROSE.

My Dad and Mum were married immediately after the First World War in 1919 and moved from Sydney to Gunbar in western New South Wales.

My Father managed a store and post office there. Two rooms at the back of the store were their home for a few years.

I was born in July 1920 at Wagga Wagga. Mother had to travel by horse and coach down to Carrathool where she caught a steam train to Wagga Wagga, the nearest maternity hospital.

In 1923 Dad moved to Hillston, a small, thriving town, north-east of Gunbar, where he went into partnership with Mr MacFarlane, the owner of Nall Jackson, a general store.

I grew up in Hillston and attended primary school there up to sixth class. I had a happy time childhood here, learning to swim in the local swimming hole in the Lachlan River, and mud fights. I belonged to Cubs and Boy Scouts, which was held in a shed the Graham boys owned in Molesworth Street.

My friends and I belonged to the Bird's Guild, and I had lots of bird's eggs! There was no secondary school in Hillston so I attended Hay War Memorial High School and boarded at one of the students' hostels in Hay.

After a time at Hay I was sent to boarding school, SCEGGS (Shore) in Sydney.

My first job in Sydney was with a firm called Hoffnungs. I enjoyed being in retail very much, and shared a common interest with Dad. Some of the wholesale goods went to Hillston to Nall Jackson's Store.

Late 1938 I joined the Militia and was trained at Centennial Park. When war was declared in 1939 with Germany, I enlisted with the army.

In 1940 a British Mission was sent to Australia, (Mission 104) to train Australian and New Zealand Commando Companies, similar to their own, and consisted of three officers and two warrant officers.

The training area selected was Tidal River on Wilson's Promontory, the southern most part of mainland Australia, which runs into Bass Strait. About 32 k long and 18 wide, the Promontory was an ideal commando training area, isolated and virtually uninhabited with a wide range of country including high mountains, dense bushland, open grasslands, swamps, beaches and sand dunes.

These companies were to be trained a bit different to the British ones, mainly to 'stay behind'



John and Cleo

1924



BACK TO HILLSTON WEEK 1931



BA. Cleve Sis Pat.

John

Nancy

Circular

Quay.

1941

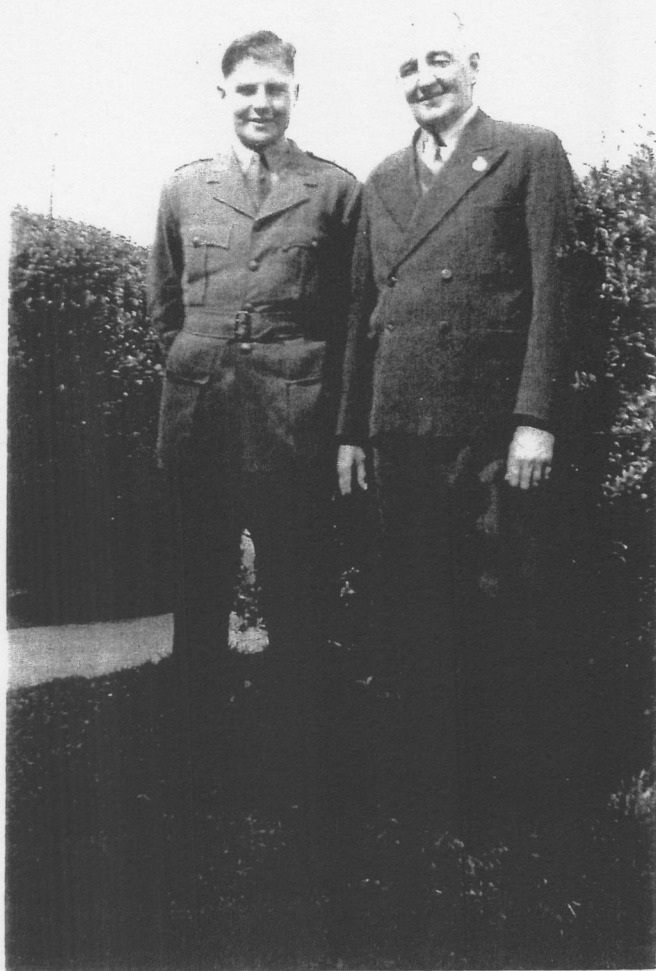


After School John Friedels Pat





John at Home



John and Dad



Mum

John

Dad

Cleve

Neville

Kevin



Mum & I in Pitt St. in militia uniform

Parties and to carry out guerilla warfare against an attacking force.

In the words of Captain Spencer Chapman, in charge of fieldcraft, "The role of the independent companies would then be to stay behind, live off the country, or be provisioned by air, and be a 'thorn in the flesh' to the occupying enemy, emerging in true guerilla style to attack vital points and then disappear again into the jungle."

And so they planned to have about 273 officers and men, with specialist sappers, engineers, signals officers, and NCO and men under their command, and a medical officer.

The majority of the men who were to form the 2/2 Independent Company were W Australian and many were used to harsh and arid conditions from the inland areas of that state. These blokes were used to inhospitable country and could 'make do' with their own resources and were soon to find their initiative tested to the limit. AHK "Harry" Wray, had worked on cattle stations for 10 years as a book keeper, and played a great part in recording the history of the troops in Timor. He later published a book, Timor, by Chris Wray.

And so, the assembled 'diggers' trained and went through Foster, on the way to Wilson's Promontory. They passed the 2/1 Independent Co which had already completed their training. There were many New Zealand soldiers also training with Australians and everyone thought they would be heading off to Tobruk where we were pinned down by the Panzers of Rommel.

There was all sorts of training to live off the environment; map reading, memorizing routes, knowledge of the night sky; a new conception of fitness; the essentials to take and how to carry all this; what to wear: what to eat and how to cook it.

We finished our training about 29/8/1941.

The Australian Government became worried Timor and Ambon, gateways to Australia, so they attempted to get an Australian Embassy into Portugese Timor. The Dutch had the southern part of Timor and Koepang, which had a large airport. Dilli, in Eastern Timor had a Flying Bay by sea and an airport but would not allow an Australian Embassy. Portugese was neutral and had good relations with Japan.

After two weeks leave the 2/2 left for Adelaide, and spent weeks camped at the Wayville Showgrounds. We were entrained on the 19/10/1941 and headed north.

We hopped off at Tervwie, camped pretty roughly. We were lucky to catch and kill a sheep and this turned out to be an expensive bit of mutton as it was the pet of a local pensioner. The police came and all those who ate it had to pay five pounds.



Just got my "Pips" 1941



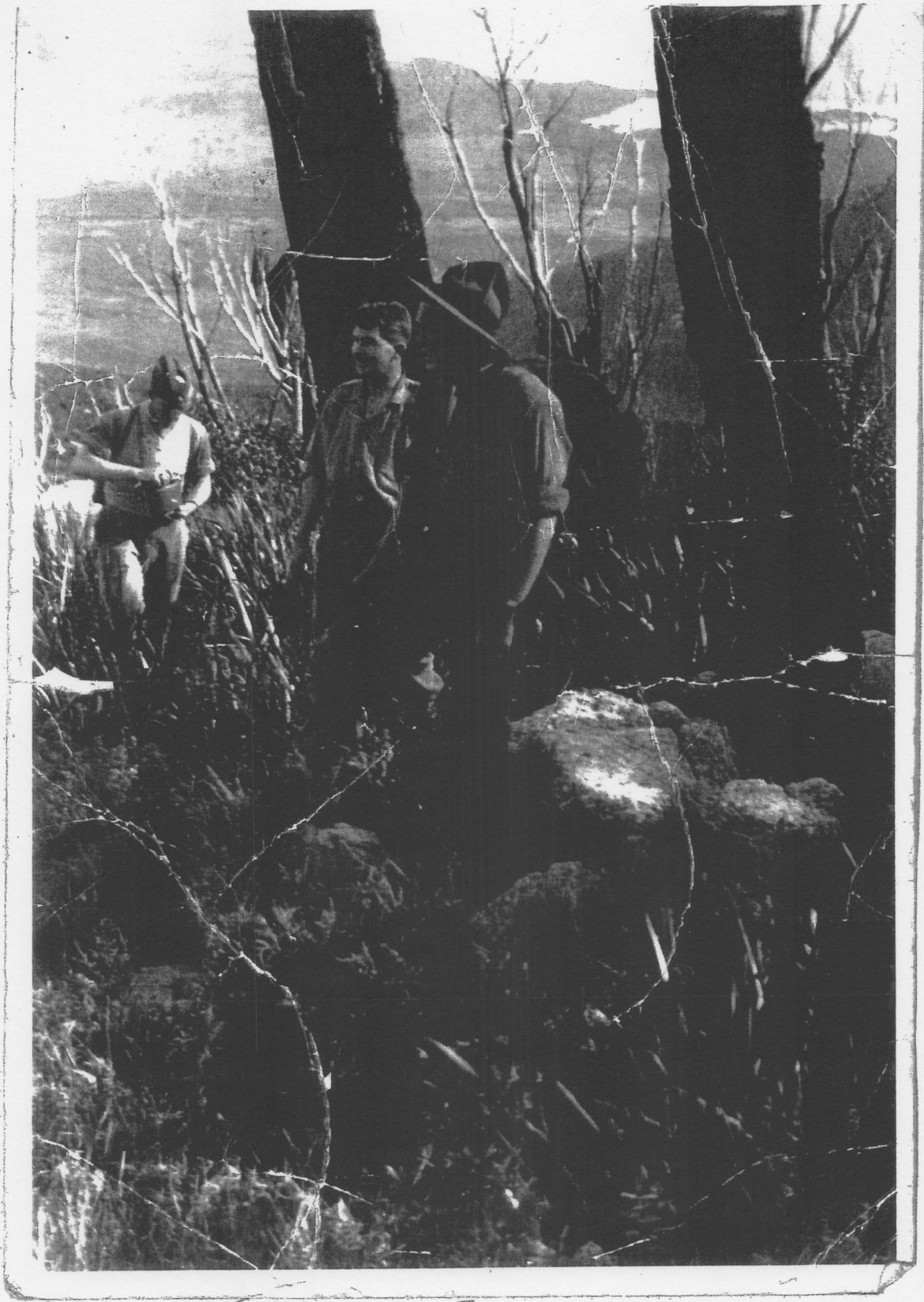
John at Circular Quay.



AFTER TRAINING AT FOSTER



Early day in Easter



TRAINING AT FOSTER

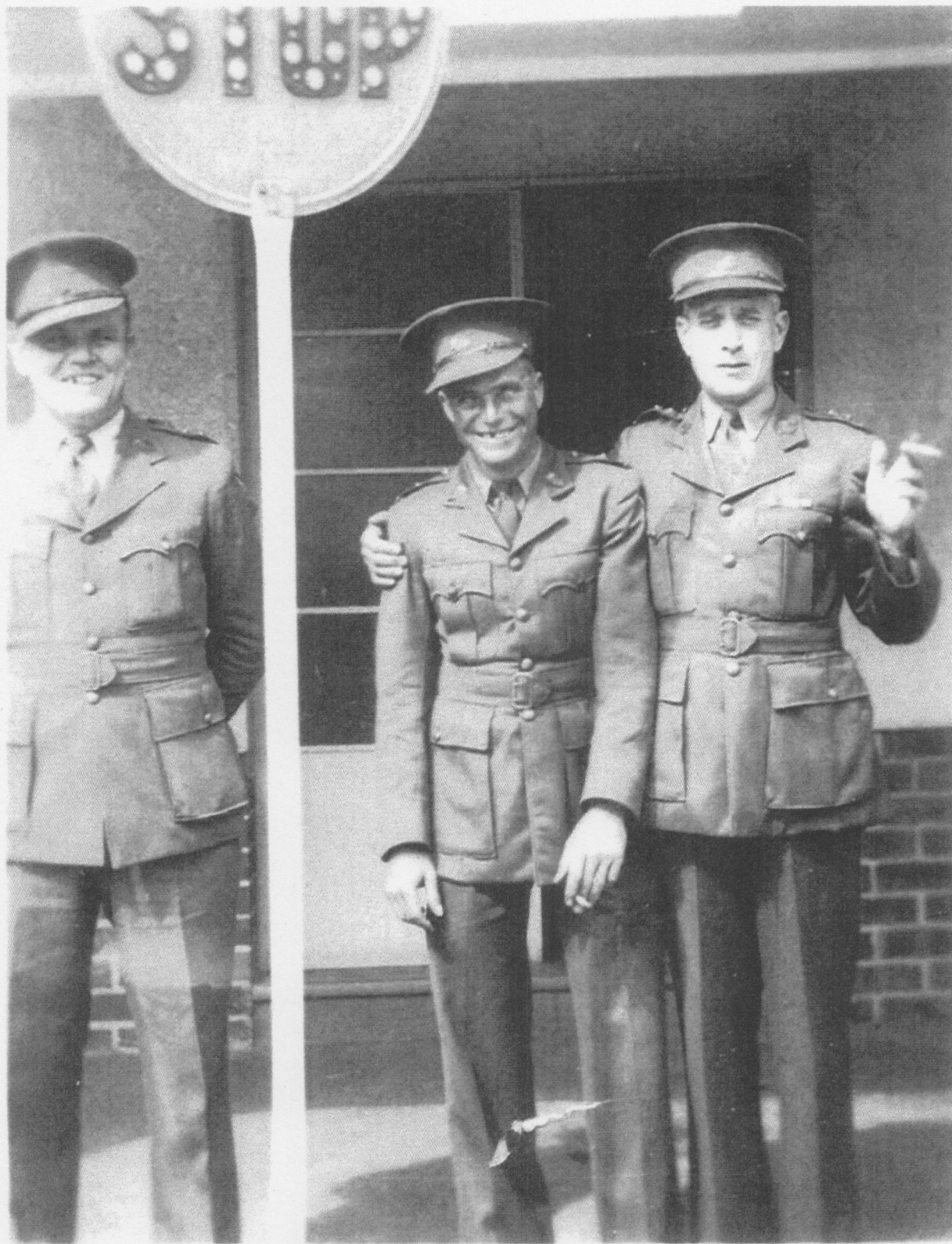


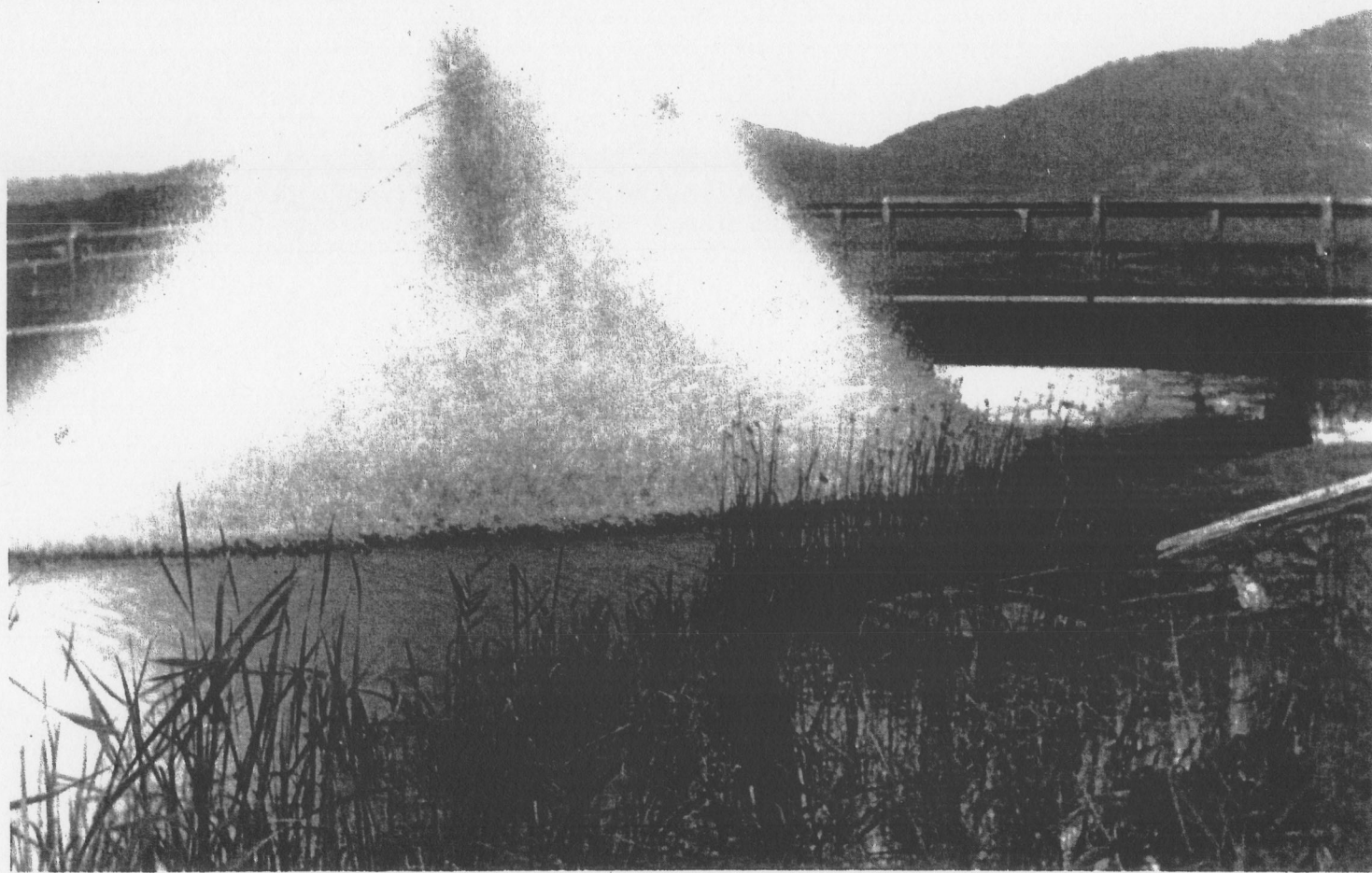






Foster 1941 Sept.





The Charge Blowing up a Bridge. Foster.



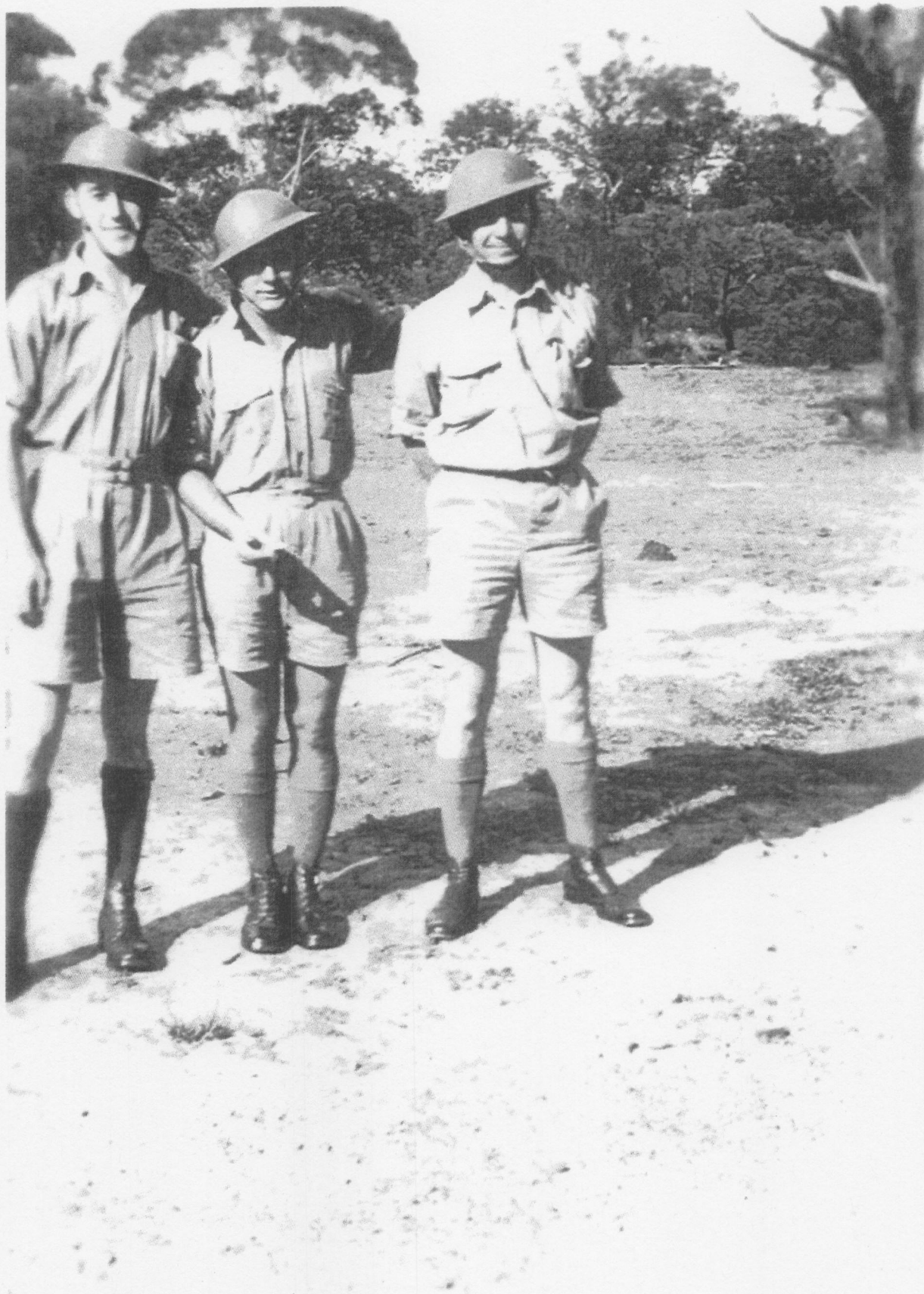
Learning Map reading at Training Foster.



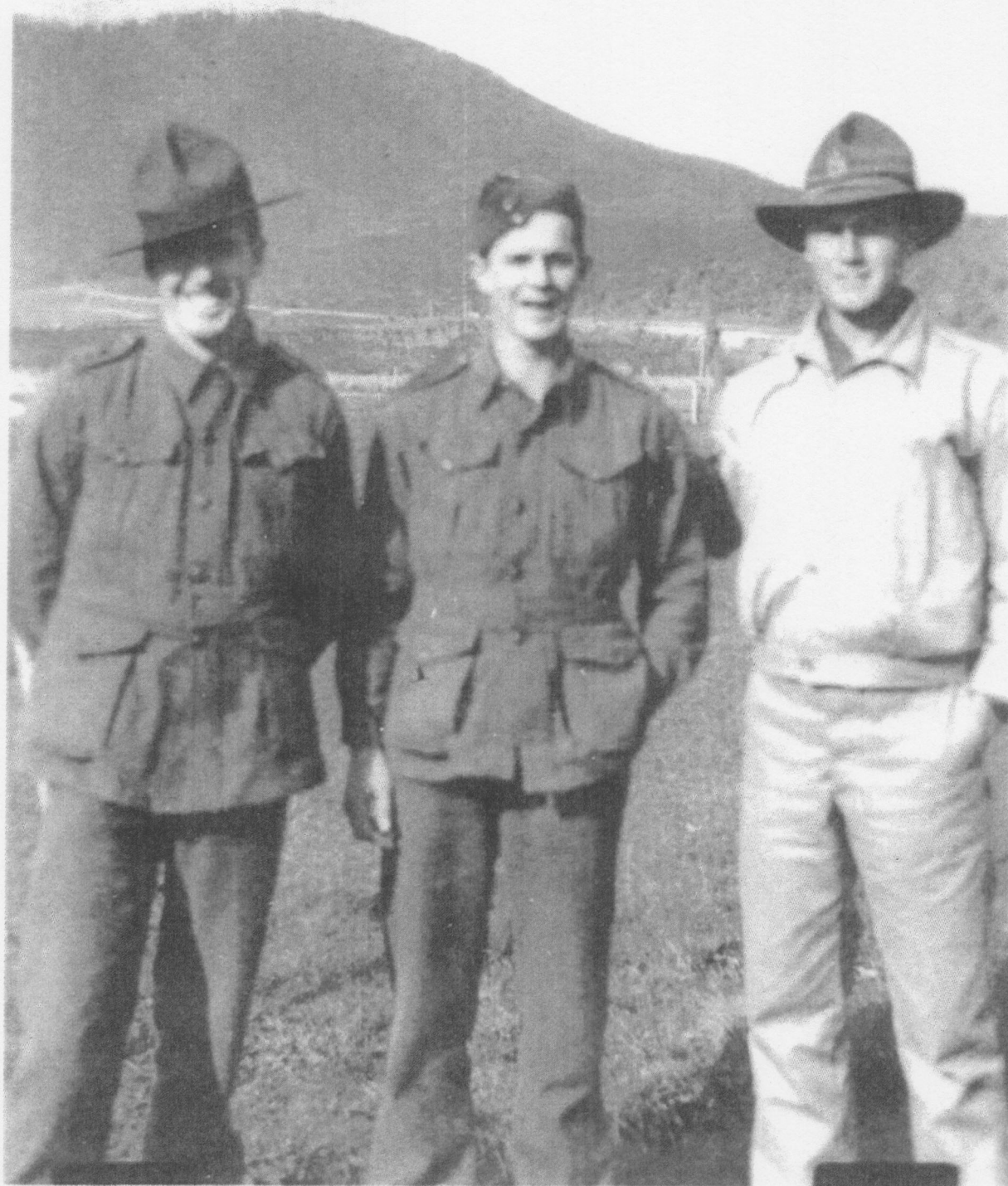
Cups of tea at Foster



Pets come to Attention.



Cobbers at Foster



Kiwis at Training, Foster.



Street at Foster



Beach Patrol Foster.



Rugged up for snow. Foster



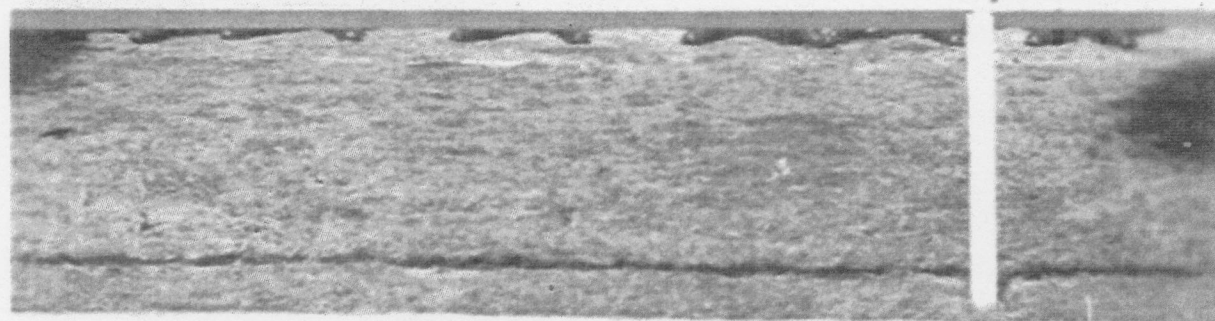
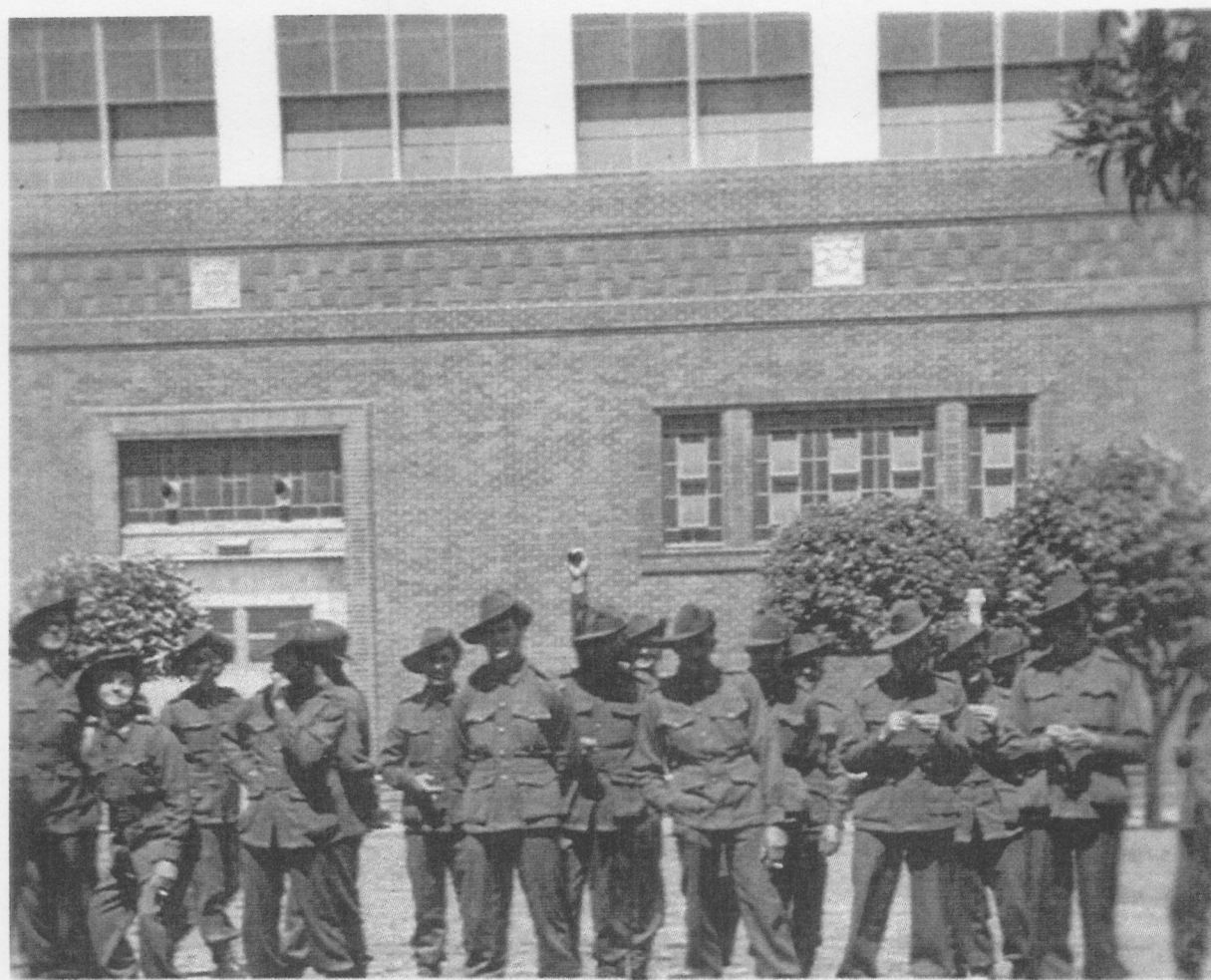
preparing for 1st flight. Foster



Comparing Notes at Foster



Training at Foster



Reading for Final Inspection at Foster.

31-1-41.

My Dear Mother,
Well Mum I hope you are well and had a happy birthday I hope by now you have received the brooch I sent you.

I hope Auntie Nellie enjoyed her stay at Hillston I guess it would have been a change for her & the kids.

I received your letter no 8 & guess it must be rather warm at home now.

Everything is going OK here the only trouble is we haven't yet received any parcels since we left Aussie. Still I guess we can't growl as the mess just hasn't been available.

I believe Sydney is full of air-raid warnings & water shortages.

Please give my love to Maggie & everyone at Hillston I believe Arthur is at Cairo at the moment well I guess that should be interesting.

Everything is getting shorter daily such as razor blades & writing paper. Well I guess we will just have to put up with it.

As usual we just get settled down then off again we are expected loading & unloading.

So don't have much time

(v)

It as it occurs every few weeks
well Dad will have to close now.

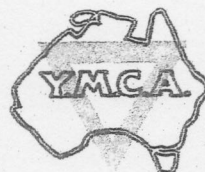
Lots love

John.

John

From _____

No. _____



28.5.1941

No 7 Inf. Training Centre.
Foster.
Vic.

Dear Dad,

Glad to hear from you and that all is well at home. I received a letter from Mum yesterday she has the bottom flat and doesn't like it as much as the upper. I believe Pat is down and Auntie has gone home.

I haven't been to any Lodge meetings so I would appreciate a manual if you have a spare one.

As usual we are working hard at it. I have down a couple of mountain climbs one about 2500' It was some hill. But the view was well worth it.

The weather has been rainy and blowing which is a pity as it is such a great spot. A few new arrivals and a couple of them are coppers of mine from Manly.

Mr. Storey kindly sent me a pull over and extra socks which I appreciate. Things overseas aren't as 100% but I guess we will have our day.

(2)

I heard Pres. Roosevelt's speech
to-day and I think he is right they
are sinking our shipping at a terrific rate.
Our little friend Huppin is very
quite so we had better keep our
eyes on him.

Well Dad everything is under
control.

Your loving son
John.

P. S. Strangely enough new cobbler in tent
is called Harvey as was Ross.

This one is called John to he comes
from Shanghai Police I 6' 4" &
16 stone in sacks is a very nice
chap

From

No.



(2)

19

The boys were magnificent but we must get equipment over to them plus planes or the cows will come further on.

I am with a bunch of West Australians who are great fellows and who will certainly put up a good show in a scrap. I hope to be getting into it soon but I think we will get about a weeks leave before we go.

I think I mentioned I received comforts from m. store which was greatly appreciated.

I have been doing a lot of hill climbing with sleeping the night included. It certainly puts one in a great condition. Last Friday 4 of us 3 New Zealanders & myself went out for 3 days walked about 50 miles & climbed hills went fishing etc we had a great time.

I wish you were here Dad some of the sayings & incidents would amuse you I'm sure.

Well I will close now
Love from
John

17-4-14/1.

Dear Dad & Mum,

I hope you are both well.
I wrote to you last week thanking you
for the cake which was longer. I also mentioned
the 'other' & was glad to see the
news. I see when I am out for 18
out for 18 doesn't seem like your from
now. The last time I was up a bit
here & play matches every Sunday. I
have written my last letter early
so I cannot play. It is nothing and
just write it.

The weather here is like
Australia in December. We have
tropical storms righty nearly
all of them consist of lightning
only followed by a cool
breeze.

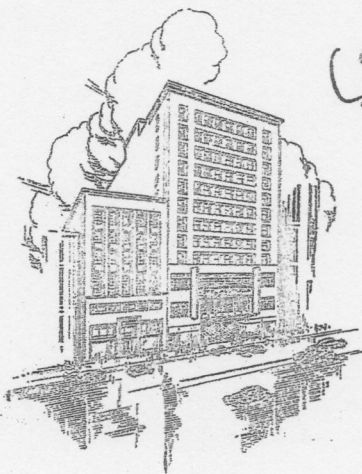
Our camp is getting
better & better now. We
are getting the same kind of
it now. The weather is
just what we need.

Well I miss very
the war certainly looks critical
at the moment. I think every day
efforts are being made to Russia's
keep going. We are all trying
to have a bit of the other or
the job & at times we all feel
by ~~the~~ ~~moment~~ ~~about~~ being at
here. But for now we can't
do this other. The
leads to Egypt waited for 16 months
before they were needed so we
can give it for a few months.

Received a letter from you
but at the young man seems to be
enjoying his life & because the time
was when.

Love to him & his family & to you
your own

the
the



(2)

65630

no 2 company.
no 14 Military District.
Mayville Camp.
Adelaide.
Western Australia.

HOTEL AUSTRALIA

"THE BEST THAT HOTEL LIFE OFFERS"

COLLINS STREET . MELBOURNE

TELEGRAPHIC & CABLE ADDRESS
"AUSTMEL" MELBOURNE

TELEPHONE CENTRAL TEN-SIXTY-SIX
1066 « 16 LINES »

Dear Dad & Mum,

I hope you are well and
everything at good old Hillston is 100%.

We are stationed here
until further orders & we don't know how
soon we will leave. The Camp is the
Adelaide Showground not as big
as the Sydney one of course but
still a very nice place.

The City itself is like
a doll city house after house all
brick & all looking like mansions.
at the moment Spring is just breaking
& the place looks a picture. Wild
flowers are everywhere & with the trees
we still in bloom.

(2)

Everyone here has been very
decent indeed to us. We have
been very well received & looked
after. One of the lads in the mess
here very kindly took us out to
dinner & then with him.
• we are now in a large camp.

We march down to
to look about a mile or so
to do on day, trying what
we don't like much but so necessary
plenty of water & just eat.
we don't know exactly
when we are moving on so that will
get me at moment.

With love to
you & family.
John



Commercial Travellers' Association Club

Affiliated Club of United Commercial Travellers' Association of Australia

Telegrams: "Travellers" Adelaide

Telephone: Central 4970 (Seven Lines)

140 NORTH TERRACE, ADELAIDE

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

3

No 2 Company

4th Military Camp.

Wayville Camp.

Adelaide.

3rd October 1941.

Dear Dad & Mum,

I hope you are both well, glad to hear from you all. By the sound of everything Hillston is to all accounts giving its quite a nice little party. I wish I could be there with you.

Received a letter from Nance today saying the great Patricia passed her test O.K. & will now just await her job. In the Bank. It's something to be proud about the way Hillston is putting staff on the war work.

The weather has been very wet indeed for the fortnight. In fact I believe the wettest September Adelaide has seen.

The people here have been absolutely marvellous to us, just can't do enough. In the fact the night life is a little too hectic, we are going from party to party. The training has improved

(2)
Especially In the drill &

Marching but the sooner I get away
from here the better. I will like it.

I don't think they
know what they intend to do with
us yet. Only hope we don't go to
Darwin or somewhere like that.

Man tells me the
snaps of us have been sent on
to you so hope you like them

well I will close now
lots love to all.

P.S. Regards to John
Joe

John letter
(5)

The camp has got to be
wild problem so we will have quite
a lot to do to keep us from
thinking.

The little camp has become
an almost deserted house because
because of the conditions.

At your meeting I said
that you were not to be left
coming north.

The lads are as usual
making fun of each other
incident that I don't see.

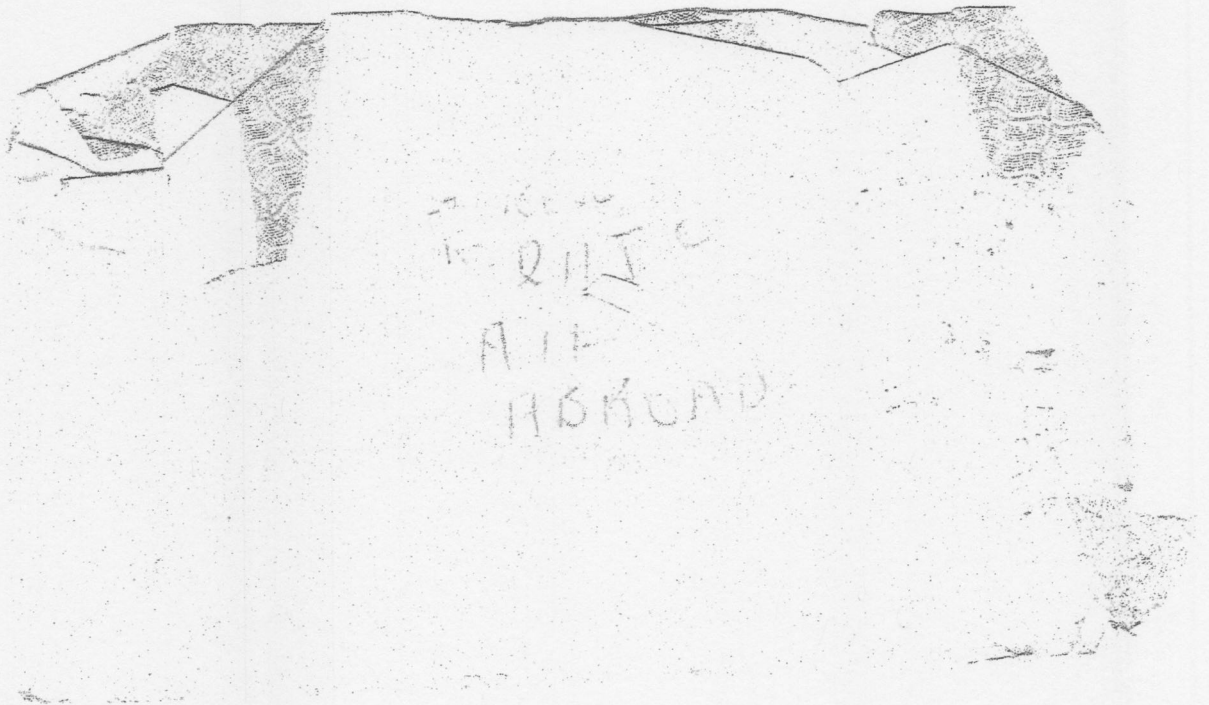
Our news is not much
to us we saw nothing but
numbers. We have incidentally a
gamephone and about 300 of them
and a lot of other things.

Well I will say good-bye
regards to you
your loving John

John

P.S. I will be on the way.

P.P.S. If you could send some frog skin and a few
various 120 film would be thank.



Nx65630
By Rose J
no 2 and 3rd Coy

A.I.F.
ABROAD

The Empire
is marching

A.I.F.

ABROAD

31-1-42

Dear Dad,

Well old boss how are things going with you from the tone of your last letter you have been experiencing some heat around good old Hillston.

So Arthur is in Cairo well I guess he will be feeling a little warmer by now.

I am well & in the pink but the Jap business is getting B ——— serious. It looks as though Singapore will soon be falling. We are all waiting patiently for the news but I guess things will turn soon. I wonder when Uncle Sam will wake up.

The mail services have been mucked up to blazes so don't know when we'll ever see another letter & can only hope this gets home OK.

I got your Xmas bable
Pop thanks a million.

Am enclosing a few snaps taken around our nearest city hope you like them.

We are on the move again am writing this in new camp by candle light. There is the main factor with better working we don't seem to get much here. From here I can hear some nags yabbering like monkeys.



Training To Live Off The Land

(3)

activity shows & letters are out
of the question as we expect action
any moment.

There are signs of things coming
here very strongly & the army is moving
into the hills. (All the troops are there).

We did not expect for hours
more (to get us) the boys are
8 fowls & we are looking for cables
between the hills but find it very hard
what we have been told we have written.

None of the papers have
yet been received here. We
are not sure if it is true
they will be sent to J. & K.

Will be sent soon

Yours & X X X

Sam

John

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GUNBAR
(From Our Own Correspondent.)
RAMBLINGS
The recent rain was a Godsend and it has revitalised the already good growth of feed to such an extent as to make us feel reasonably assured as to sustaining for good feed means good stock and good stock means good wool and good meat, therefore Australia's chief primary industry will be in a buoyant condition.
However, the saying, "You can't have your cake and eat it too," is being exemplified because feed and flies are synonymous and the flies are plaguing the landholders. Many have time for but little else than rounding up their sheep to deal with this monstrous pest. Usually the fly comes in waves and then vanishes for a time, but it now seems at most one perpetual wave.
Measles are still in our midst, and seem reluctant to leave our district. Last week saw five out of six members of a household all prostrated simultaneously.
Gungah is particularly quiet these days and has not even staged a day's sport for well high eighteen months. Maybe it is because much of the young bloods are away on active service, and the remaining population is a big factor contributing to this conspicuous decline in social activities.
The regular meeting day seems to be confined to Church Sunday which has been reduced to a monthly service. Signs of the times are obvious in the restoration to popularity of the dear old "gee gee."
Rain for October aggregated 170 points, while the ten months' reading now stands at 1234.5 points.
DEATH OF MR. J. ANDERSON
The friends of Mrs. Anderson, formerly Miss A. Flanagan, of "Sunrise," will be sorry to learn that her husband passed away in Griffith on Saturday, 14th instant. Mr. Anderson had been ill for many months. Heartfelt sympathy goes to Mrs. Anderson and her family in their bereavement.
J.R.C. AT CARRATHOOL
Boys and girls of the J.R.C. Circle at Carrathool Public School are good workers for the Junior Red Cross and these of them have just sent £2/10/- to headquarters to help sick children whose fathers are at the war, and whose homes are not well provided. Mary Henderson earned £1/10/- of this money and Alan Heffernan and Frederick Henderson raised the other £2 by selling vegetables from their school gardens. This thrifty effort will help to provide some all-ingle little folk from service families with needed comfort and convalescent holidays at the Junior Red Cross homes in the country. More than 400 sick children received treatment and periods of rest and change at these homes during the last twelve months, virtually as guests of the school children who form the J.R.C. Circles, and who have made this assistance to other children their special form of war service.
SPORTING
It was announced on Saturday that W. Cook, who rode Great Britain to victory in the V.R.C. Derby was donating his riding percentage (£175) to a patriotic fund.
All Sydney proprietary racing clubs will probably be amalgamated to operate as one club on a strict non-proprietary basis similar to the Australian Jockey Club in the "Piedmont" Cup, a club official said in Sydney on Thursday.
The ex-Hayite, Prairiedale, who the "daddy" of the Melbourne Cup field met Saturday. The old horse is 19 years of age.
Jockey A. Breahey was suspended for two months on Saturday, but was granted a reprieve to ride in the Melbourne Cup. Breahey was suspended for causing interference in the Derby. Breahey will now be able to ride Pandect in the Melbourne Cup.
SATURDAY'S RACES
V.R.C. (FLEMINGTON)
Wakelin Stakes (Three-year-old Fillies): EAST END (6 to 4 favourite), 1; Refractive (11 to 1), 2; The Bohemian (8 to 1), 3.
Maribyrnong Plate (Two-year-olds): MAEMANTO (7 to 4 favourite), 1; Pharos (11 to 1), 2; The Bohemian (8 to 1), 3.
L. K. S. Mackinnon Stakes: TRANQUIL STAR (10 to 2 favourite), 1; Pandect (10 to 1), 2; True Flight (8 to 1), 3. Won easily.
V.R.C. Derby, 11 miles: GREAT BRITAIN (5 to 2 favourite), 1; Amazed (3 to 1), 2; Hylarian (50 to 1), dead heat for second. Won by length. Time, 2:21.
Cantata Stakes: QUEEN SACCHA (16 to 1), 1; Phocion (8 to 1), 2; Lilette (20 to 1), 3. Crookley was favourite at 7 to 2.
Hotham Handicap: DARK FELT (9 to 2), 1; Skipton (13 to 1) favourite; and Mercury Bay (8 to 1), dead heat for second.
CANTERBURY PARK
Trial Stakes: ADDITION (3 to 1 favourite), 1; Tyrannus (14 to 1), 2; Karesot (6 to 1), 3.
Two-Year-Old Stakes: CRAGLIA (3 to 1 favourite), 1; Kurrundula (20 to 1), 2; Alestis (8 to 1), 3.
Flying Handicap: TRIMMER (3 to 1 favourite), 1; Guild Hall (14 to 1), 2; Petrichio (7 to 1), 3.
Canterbury Handicap: AMBERSPEAR (7 to 1), 1; Gaudet (8 to 1), 2; Panurge (3 to 1), 3. It's Funny was favourite at 5 to 2.
Highweight Handicap (First Division): IRISH SEA (3 to 1 favourite), 1; Skerries (5 to 1), 2; Young Yalain (10 to 1), 3. Second Division: KY FRIEND (9 to 4), 1; Arenosa (20 to 1), 2; Lord Pen-thous (15 to 1), 3.
Complete Handicap: WINDBROOK (25 to 1), 1; Haridelle (14 to 1), 2; Silverdale (14 to 1), 3.
The quota that this is not intended to be the goal of the campaign, but merely the minimum cash contributions expected from the community.

Progress of the War
The Operations in North Africa
Allied Paratroops Capture Aerodrome
LONDON, Sunday.—Hundreds of British and American troops, dropped without a hitch, have captured the Bona aerodrome, 50 miles from the Tunisian frontier. The troops, which were mainly British, landed at Maison Blanche aerodrome, and later took off in American transport planes for Bona.
Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, Naval C-in-C of Anglo-U.S. forces in the Mediterranean, has congratulated the British and U.S. Navies on what he has described as a "splendid job of work." He says: "I believe I am correct in saying that the British and American Navies have brought this vast force of troops to the assault points without a single soldier having been lost at sea."
It is stated that the French in Tunisia are not resisting the entry of the Allied forces.
The Germans are trying to delay the advance with harassing air raids. Violent air battles are reported to have taken place over Tunisia, Sardinia and Sicily. Allied air forces have shot down 20 enemy machines in three days.
At least 13 U-boats have been destroyed since the campaign against North Africa began.
In an attack on Bona by the Axis air force many civilians were killed and wounded.
The French battleship Jean Bart, was struck by heavy shells 15 times, and both ends of the vessel were blown open.
In their rush through Vichy France the Nazis requisitioned everything of use, looting everywhere, regardless of the needs of the populace. They used lorries in the Lyons area to collect all available food. Documents of Germans are commanding billets in towns and villages.
It is stated that General Weygand, a French leader in the last war, has been arrested.
The Germans have deserted Touion, the French naval base, "out of bounds," and forbidden communication with the French Fleet stationed there.
Desperate efforts are being made by the Axis to gain control of the Sicilian "Narrows," which would give them practically control of the Mediterranean. Forty-two of their planes have been destroyed.
Rommel's Retreat
Tobruk was occupied by the British forces on Friday, and they are now pressing on to El Makili to the south of Derna. The enemy is already well to the west of Derna.
A later message stated the Allied Army was 70 miles past Tobruk.
The losses of the Australian Ninth Division in the Battle of Egypt are stated to total 2000, the great majority being wounded.
Allied heavy and medium bombers continued to make heavy attacks on Benghazi, and the retreating enemy is being continually strid.
The losses of the Axis forces in the Battle of Egypt are placed at 75,000. There is no official news of the German resistance to the Allied forces since the unsuccessful delaying opposition at El Adem.
The greatest array of trucks seen in the Middle East is now rushing to the west to keep the armoured motorised forces in the van supplied with ammunition, food and water.
It is not expected that the enemy will make a stand till Agheila is reached.
Reported clashes between Allied forces and the French at Bizerta are not confirmed. It is also stated the French are resisting the German invasion.
A later message states the Anglo-U.S. forces entered Tunis on Sunday.
Marshal Petain has deprived Admiral Darlan of all official rank.
Naval and Aerial Battle in the Solomons
No Official News
Japanese Make Extravagant Claims
WASHINGTON, Sunday.—There is still no official news of the big naval and air battle which has been taking place in the Solomons during the past four days. An American communiqué says there has been losses on both sides. At dawn on Thursday, 30 out of 31 Japanese planes were shot down when attempting to attack U.S. naval forces. One disabled Japanese plane crashed into the heavy cruiser San Francisco, killed 30 of the crew and damaged the vessel slightly. A destroyer was the only other U.S. ship damaged.
It is reported that Admiral Callanan, of the United States Navy, who was commander of the San Francisco, was killed in the action.
On the other hand the Japanese claim the Allies lost four aircraft carriers, six cruisers and one destroyer sunk, and two cruisers and three destroyers heavily damaged, against Japanese losses of two destroyers sunk and one battleship severely damaged. The Japanese also claimed that three Allied transports were set on fire and 13 planes were shot down.
JAPANESE ARMADA SIGHTED
NEW YORK, Monday.—The United Press correspondent (Harold Guard), somewhere in New Guinea, reports that a Japanese convoy extending farther than the eye can see, packed to the gunwales with troops and equipment, has been sighted 150 miles north-west of Guadalcanal.
The Japanese have assembled probably the largest fleet of warships and transport yet seen in the South Sea in a major effort to expel the Americans from the Solomons, says Hansson Baldwin in "The New York Times."

The New Guinea Area
Allies Closing in on Buna
The Australian and American forces have contacted each other, and are moving on Buna, where the Japanese are in strong force. The Japanese have been forced back to the sea.
The battle of Gorari caused heavy losses to the Japanese, and 500 dead bodies were counted in the field. It is estimated that the losses at Oivi and Gorari totaled about a thousand. The Australian losses were much lighter.
Allied planes carried out a heavy raid on Rabaul, where two large ships were hit and one blew up.
A party of three Australian sergeants, who escaped from the Japanese at Rabaul, have arrived at an Australian base, after wandering for 200 days in the wilds of New Guinea.
The latest news is that the U.S.-Australian forces are advancing for a final assault on the Japanese.
German Attack on Stalingrad Eases
Russians Advance in Central Caucasus
LONDON, Sunday.—The attacks on Stalingrad during the past 48 hours have been on a small scale and the Germans have made no advance.
Continuing their aggressive tactics in the Weichik area the Russians are now advancing and causing heavy losses to the enemy.
South of Stalingrad the Russians penetrated the Axis position and killed 100 Rumanians.
It is expected that the Volga will freeze within a few days. This will alter the whole aspect of the Battle of Stalingrad, and while it undoubtedly will allow the Germans to attack the Soviet rear, it will give the Russians much greater freedom of movement. As soon as the river ice becomes thick enough, reinforcements will be able to pour over the two powerful bridgeheads which the Russians hold north and south of the city.
Other War Items
Two more air raids on a big scale have been carried out on Genoa. All the planes returned. Many 400lb. bombs were dropped on the city, in which it is stated 450,000,000 lbs. of damage had already been occasioned.
A Chungking report states that 5000 Japanese were killed and wounded in a battle with the Chinese forces in the Changshui province.
Cap. Eddie Rickenbacker, American air ace of the last war, who has been missing in the Pacific for three weeks, has been rescued from a raft. Two other men were with him, and a third man died.
DARLAN'S NEW ROLE
The Attitude of the Fighting French
LONDON, Monday.—Political repercussions "have developed" as an outcome of the elevation of Admiral Darlan to a position in North Africa equivalent to the head of the civil administration. General de Gaulle's headquarters in London issued a statement, that "General de Gaulle, and the French National Committee announce they are taking no part whatsoever in, or assuming any responsibility, for the negotiations progressing in North Africa with the representatives of Vichy. Should these negotiations result in arrangements which would, in effect, confirm the Vichy regime in North Africa, such decisions could obviously not be accepted by the "Fighting French."
TO-DAY'S LATEST
SMASHING AMERICAN NAVAL VICTORY
Twenty-three Ships Sunk
Fantastic Japanese Claims
WASHINGTON, Monday.—The Japanese have been smashing defeat in the Solomons in the greatest naval battle of the war.
The Japanese lost 23 ships destroyed, while seven others were damaged. The American losses were two light cruisers and six destroyers.
This dramatic news was announced in a Navy communiqué to-day.
Details of the Japanese losses are: One battleship sunk, three heavy cruisers sunk, two light cruisers sunk, five destroyers sunk, eight transports sunk, four cargo transports sunk, one battleship damaged, six destroyers damaged.
The communiqué added: "We drove off the Japanese who were attempting to recapture the American positions by force."
Almost at the same time as the release of the Navy communiqué the official Tokyo radio reiterated, "More than half of the Allied Fleet in the Solomons was destroyed or crippled on Thursday." The fate of the United States land force on Guadalcanal is now in the hands of the Japanese. The defeat of the United States means that the American navy's counter-attacks in the Solomons have been shattered.
A later message states that it is estimated 30,000 Japanese soldiers were drowned.
French and Axis Forces in Conflict
LONDON, Monday.—The first military engagement between the French troops and the Axis forces occurred yesterday. The Algiers radio, quoting a report from the Axis headquarters, states that a French Guards battalion met a German reconnaissance unit, consisting of motor cyclists and armoured units, about five miles to the north-west of Tunis. The French opened fire, and forced the Germans to retreat.

British Forces in Derna
LONDON, Monday.—The British forces in Libya are on the outskirts of Derna, after advancing 100 miles from Tobruk in three days.
Allied Advance in New Guinea
Air Raid in Solomons
SOMEWHERE IN AUSTRALIA, Tuesday.—Further progress in the reconquest of New Guinea is revealed in to-day's G.H.Q. communiqué, which announced that our troops in the Buna area are rapidly advancing from both flanks, and the enemy is steadily retreating. The communiqué reveals that the Allied Air Force yesterday incessantly attacked the enemy. Our heavy bombers have been again successfully active in the Buna-Faisi sector of the Solomons, where the enemy's shipping was attacked, damaged to a destroyer and one transport resulting.
HAY BABY HEALTH CENTRE
The following particulars relating to the work of the Hay Baby Health Centre during October, have been kindly furnished by the Director-General of Public Health:—
Work at Centre: New cases enrolled, 4; babies weighed, 32; test meals given, 2; expectant mothers advised, 1.
Attendance at Centre: Infants, under one year, 26; under 2 years, 11; under 3 years, 11. Total attendance (including mothers without babies), 55.
Daily average attendance at centre, 27.5.
Melbourne Cup Acceptors
Tranquil Star, Skipton, Pandect, Volocoy, Malkal, Spearmin, Wilson, Prairiedale, Gasher, Hestia, Similiar, Dark Post, Great Britain, Phocion, Royal Peter, Throttles, Grain Trader, Son of Aurous, Colonel, Hear's Desire, Mercury Bay, Ronolive, Amazed, Mandini, Manawatu.
THE SUPPRESSION OF WAR NEWS
Prime Minister Explains Position
MELBOURNE, Tuesday.—The Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin), commenting on criticism that the facts relating to the war were needlessly suppressed and last night that he knew of no suppression of vital facts. It was surely not expected that communis should be published which would reveal information prejudicial to the conduct of the war. He added that he would not regard the non-publication of such information as suppression. It was inevitable that precaution must be taken by all commanders in directing their strategic and tactical campaigns.
SOUTH COAST ELECTION
Mr. J. G. Seale (Ind.) has won the South Coast State seat, rendered vacant by the death of his father. He polled over 7500 votes against J. Bates (U.-L.-F.) 5794. Absent and postal votes have still to be counted.
WOMAN KILLED BY PEA-RIFLE
Mrs. Alice L. Johnson (39) was killed by a pea-rifle bullet at her home in Footscray. It was reported that her aged 14, was cleaning a rifle and asked for a piece of rag. As Mrs. Johnson was going to get the rag the pea-rifle discharged, and the bullet went through the woman's back into her heart.
"THEY WILL LIVE FOR EVER"
Field-Marshal Fedor von Bock commanded 1,600,000 or more men, fighting for Stalingrad, the Volga, and the Caucasus. Junior Lieutenant Kochetkov commanded 16 Red Guardsmen holding a hillock between Stalingrad. At dawn twelve of Bock's tanks climbed the hillock toward the swallow's nest of trenches and light fortifications where Kochetkov and his men lay. The Guardsmen had only rifles and hand grenades. Kochetkov was wounded. His Guardsmen spoke briefly to him, and he to them. Four of them fastened grenades to their thick leather belts. Back of the four chose a tank, ran down the hill, and dived headlong. Eight tanks were left. Six of the eight tanks turned and retreated. The two others crawled on toward the Guardsmen's nest. By then only Kochetkov and a Red Guardsman were alive. The three soldiers placed Kochetkov in a trench, laced grenades to their belts, and ran to meet the tanks. Junior Lieutenant Kochetkov was alone when a Red detachment found him. He told the newcomers what his men had done, and said: "They will live for ever." Junior Lieutenant Kochetkov then died.—From the American magazine "Time" (September 21, 1942).
WANTED, General Servant (over 45). Apply South Hay Hotel.
FOR Quick Sale, Sedan Car in running order, five good 5.00 x 20 tyres (two new), 2.50 cash. Hay Motor & Engineering Pty. Ltd.
FOR Good Loom, Sand or Firewood, Ring ASHCROFT, 133.—Prompt delivery.

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Workers' Comp
N.S.W. BRANCH, 17 O'CONNELL
Gavin Johnston, Local Agent.

No 2 A.I.C.

A.I.F.

ABOARD.

AT SEA.

Dear Grandma,

Just some scribble
to let you know I am well.
Things are moving very fast
at present and we will expect
some action soon.

The ship has been
100% OK for 4 I am chilled to
the bone has been as
dead as a mill pond.
All the loads are well
I am going down to where
we can help in.

I don't know how
long this will take to reach
you but don't worry
I will be O.K.

8

Nx65630

AIF

ABROAD

19-12-41

Dear Dad & Mum, I hope you are
all well & everything at Hillston Is
100%

Since the last 10 days
we have untaily moved about
a devil of a lot.

We have a my me
trip on board troop ship like the
moby King the sea was as smooth
as glass. We arrived at a camp
where we just began to settle down when
bush we were off again.

we have ~~arrived~~ I
can't say where or how but it was
for four camp we came in

- we have been flat out day &
night for the last 4 days with boots on
all the time & rifles loaded.

Well will close now as
have to go will write letter Love John

(2)

Will write as soon
as we get settled down
I don't know when that
is. Received a letter
from him the night
before.

There are dozens
of flying fish seen
flying along.

- Will not lose him
so will cross in a
minute.

Love him

P.S. Merry Xmas & Happy New
Year to the best man & son
in the world.

To 2 A.I.C.
A.I.F.
ABROAD.

Dear Dad & Mum,
I hope you are well. I am 100%
at the moment. I hope Mum received her brooch I sent her
for her Birthday it is quite a nice little piece of art work.
I have been worked pretty hard the last
couple of weeks at one stage only 6 of my 30 Sigs were OK
the others had malaria but we managed to make out
O.K.

The town in which we are camped is
is a typical tropical one full of Chinese shops who charge
very high prices for everything a tin of cocoa costs about
10/- a writing pad costs about 7/- with only 30 pages so
you will realise why I am writing small. Because the
pencil unfortunately on a night someone in the jungle
here I lost my fountain pen.

At the moment the news doesn't seem
the best the B — Japs seem to be putting on a show
of the Yanks had better wake up quickly else things will
be drastic.

Our wireless sets are going OK. Larchmont
we have numerous worries each day which keeps us
occupied & out of mischief. There is no bar in the town but
a bottle of port is 2 guilders about 6/8 we have a feed at
the only pub there whenever time permits leave there. The food
is very different to our own but not bad & quick a
change from Bully Beef & Inland Shift —

(1)
Have camp station on 1800 high above
Camp and so it a climb up it almost
like climb. The days are pretty good up there
a flash messages though it is a bit. There
few of them up there & they have engaged
little native booby to cart water & do
a job for about 5 auros about 1st per day.
we after by fowls & fruit here
rather check prices about ~~eggs~~ & postage
if these held to supplement the diet but
geese give us ~~tomatoes~~ ^{tomatoes}. after a hard climb
a coco-muts are the berries.

am enclosing a few snaps
hope they get you OK.

well will close now

lots love -

John

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

PAID BY SENIOR
513



gkoo

Jx65130

111

710K0117

No 2 AUST. INDEP. COY.

A.I.F.

ABROAD.

31-12-41.

Dear Dad & Mum,

I have just got a letter from you
and it was very nice to hear from you.
I am well and hope you are the same.
I am working hard at the moment.
I am sure you will be proud of me.
I am sure you will be proud of me.

I am sure you will be proud of me.
I am sure you will be proud of me.
I am sure you will be proud of me.
I am sure you will be proud of me.
I am sure you will be proud of me.
I am sure you will be proud of me.

I am sure you will be proud of me.
I am sure you will be proud of me.
I am sure you will be proud of me.
I am sure you will be proud of me.
I am sure you will be proud of me.
I am sure you will be proud of me.

Just received a letter from
you & 2 telegrams by plane which is
very good. I am sure you will be
proud of me.

NO 2 AUST. IND. COY.

A.I.F.

PO BOX 10.

25-12-41.

Dear Dad & Mum,

I don't know when this letter will reach you but am writing it so it may go on the next mail. (wherever that is) I am well & 100% I hope everything is O.K. with you.

As you know we have been travelling around quite a bit since last camp. We had a quick move to the back & then away. The trip was very nice we had a couple of days on horseback there was very little to do till we filled in time! We arrived at home at our first destination our year (with only 10 days) & tented down.

The natives were very friendly & happy but we noticed all the women in the work were carrying heavy loads of water etc. We gave the accounts big & long

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

NO 2 A.I.C.

A.I.F.

ABKOH D.

73-12-41

Sunday

Dear Dad & Mom,

How is everything going out good
at Hillston I hope the ships are well. I am good. The
our first mission has been successful.

I haven't had time to say anything
at for the last 14 days a plane has just landed
so we are working this in a hurry.

When we are we speak about
& language some of the things you know about
in Bill, Blot, Plover, Plover, Plover, Plover,
Bokos Plover and they get the and we know is right.

We have an abundance of
coconuts a pineapple has some so we have a
little fruit. The natives are very frightened of
us for devils & have all evacuated. On the
whole things are good Oh.

Well will close now so plane
is ready very love & Hopsy New Year
lots love
John

John

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL

FORCE

PASSED BY CENSOR

187

Mrs G. Rose
Molesworth St.
Hillston
N.S.W.

PER AIR MAIL
PAR AVION



(5)
Mrs. G. G. Rose.
Molesworth St.
Hillston.

New South Wales.

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

NX65630.

No 2 AUST. IND. COY.

AIF.

ABROAD.

7-1-42.

Dear Dad & Mum,

I hope you are well just
a few scribbled notes to let you know
I am still OK.

We expect the plane in the
morning so I am writing this off to-night.
I scribbled a note to you to-day
a whisper it arrived the post
just before it left.

The boys are all looking
a bit awestruck in all letters they
it was the boys just to be
faint from the - riggers.

Am enclosing a few snaps
some taken at Gordon's room in
N.T.

a lot of the boys have had
trusty had others of museum the
museum have been very nice.

(v)

most of the boys traded in their winter
clothes & buttoned scarves for
coconuts etc. We have to all take
a dose of white powder for cholera
every night. I think it wise as the water
is pretty rough here.

We have just got matters
down when being motion movement
and away we went again.

The new place is a lot
warmer than the former one the natives
had never seen before. Before
at first they were somewhat stiff but
gradually have got confidence back.
I think the morning is a better
one. There is no fever it is
all the better & Portuguese as we
have a lot of trouble working out
of the sea getting taken down &
lost.

For some reason, perhaps from
being about 4 to 5 miles & the sea is very
rough about 10 degrees. We are in the
bay (10) and have a lot of

DAD PLEASE DON'T LET ME

TELL YOU THE TRUTH ABOUT ME

THE TRUTH IS I AM A LITTLE BIT

OF A LITTLE BIT OF A LITTLE BIT

IS TO LET YOU TELL THEM I AM A LITTLE BIT

THE TRUTH IS I AM A LITTLE BIT

THE TRUTH IS I AM A LITTLE BIT

MISS BETTY BOCKWOLD 344 W. 1st St. N. Minn.

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Maj Laidlaw and his Shaghi

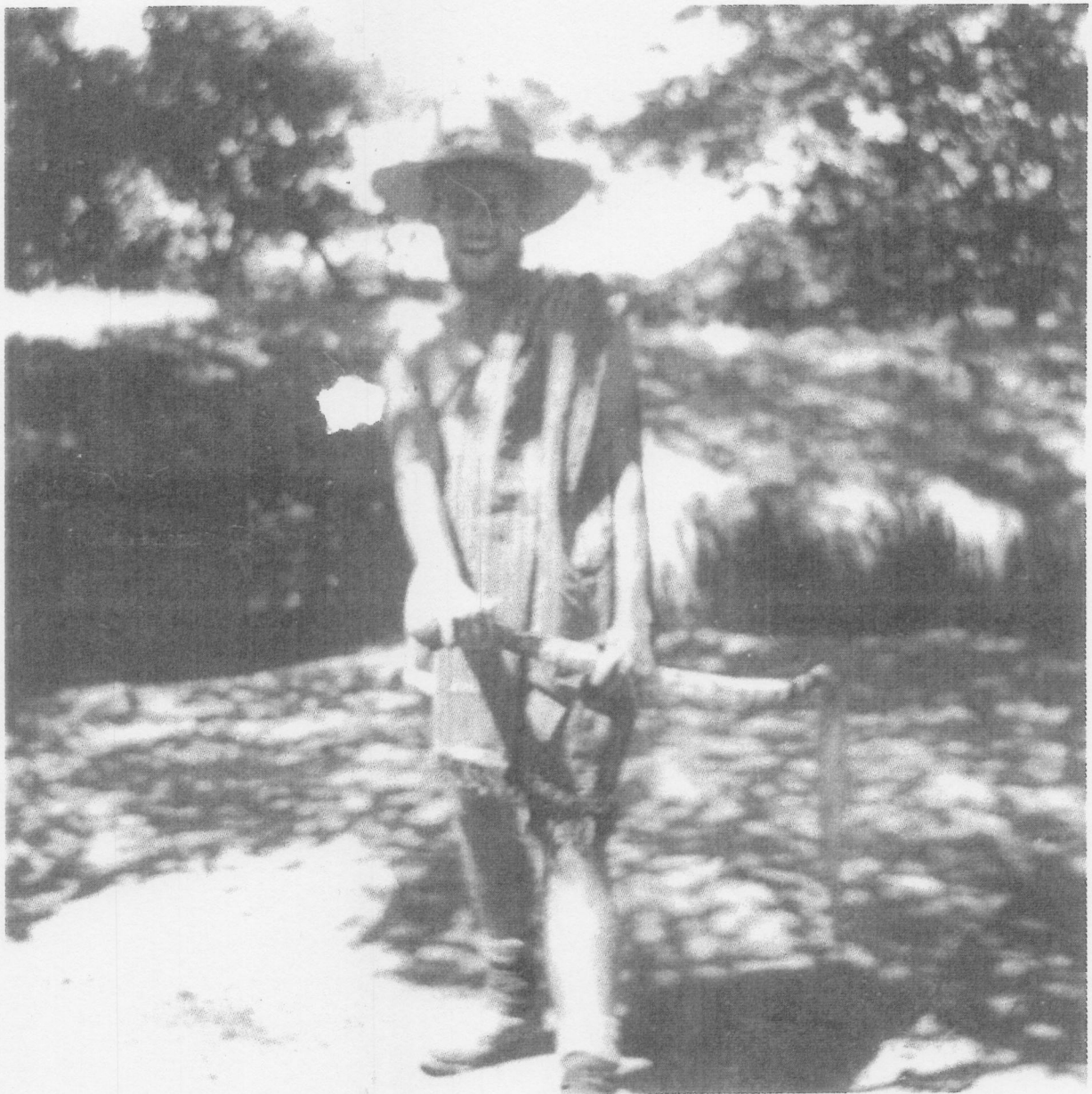


Drinking "Too-ock", Native plank made from juice
of a Tree. We shot a Buffalo & had a party for the Chiefs.



Taken at the Party. Lt. Smythe. Mj. Leidlaw Mj. Callinan

John bottom left.



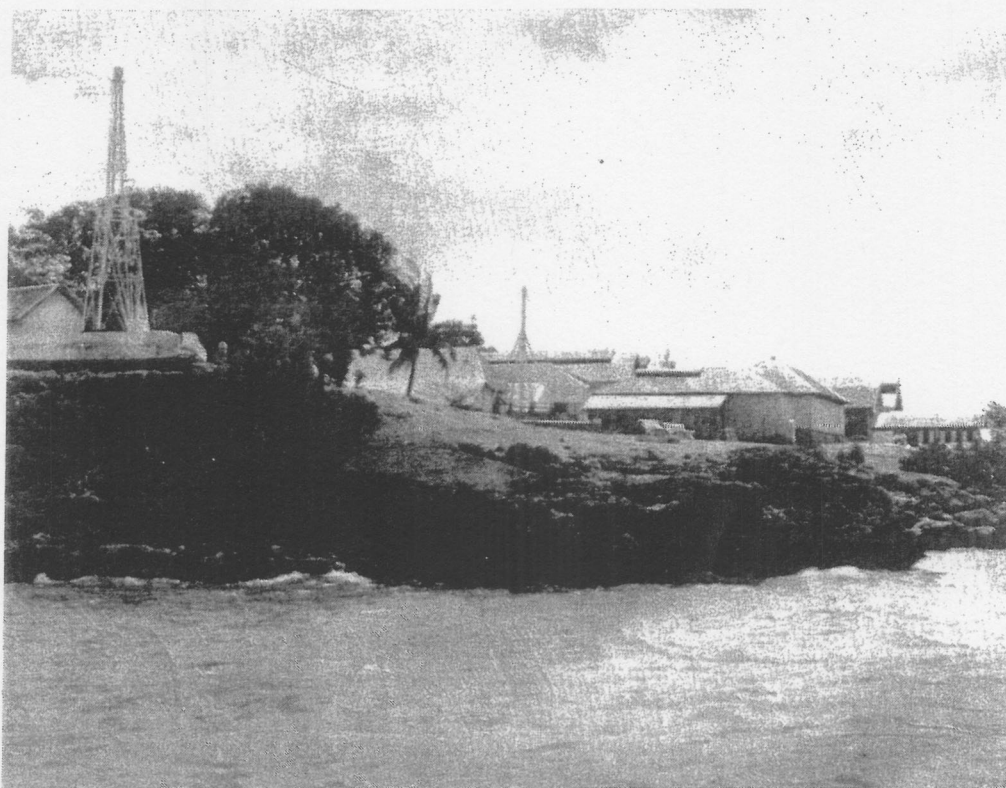
John marking Time



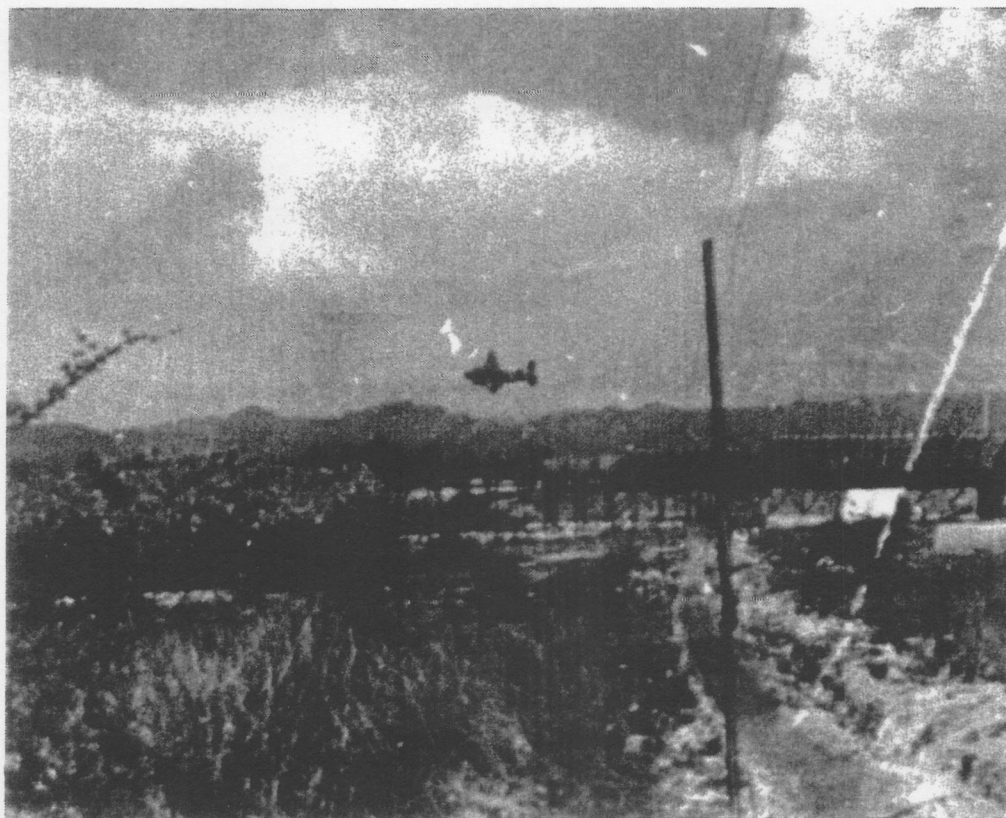
John and his transport.



John with short beard.



Koepang from the harbour. At the outbreak of war with Japan, western Timor formed part of the Netherlands East Indies; Koepang was the principal town.



Japanese aircraft raid Koepang, early 1942.

We did not stop here long, and entrained once more to Alice Springs. Then we were bundled into trucks and had a very uncomfortable ride to Katherine on 19/10/1941, to find the camp there had only just started. We were busy concreting floors, digging drains etc and after six weeks the huts were all completed. We were not 'happy campers' and glad when on 7/12/1941 we were given standing orders. Suddenly we were on the way to Darwin. Work parties had worked all night packing our stores and supplies, and radio equipment. One of the work parties was sent to clean an open cattle train for transporting the troops, that had recently had cattle in it. They had to clean it without water, so shoveled sand on most of carriage floors. Some were not finished and the boys had to travel to Darwin sitting on cross bars of the trucks.

As soon as we arrived in Darwin we embarked on the ship "Zealandia", a first World War boat. There was not much room to move about. The 2/40 was already on board.

Dick Rees, from Hillston was in this lot.

The 2/40 were mostly made up of Tasmanians and Victorians as part of the 8th Division. They had been ordered to defend Darwin.

When Japan entered the war, they were part of a contingent to proceed either to Timor or Ambon. The force allocated to garrison Timor was named "Sparrow Force" and the force for Ambon, "Gull Force." A third force was sent to Rabaul, named "Larkforce".

The Zealandia carried stores and equipment and the Westralia, an armed merchant ship, carried the troops. They sailed off together for Timor.

On the voyage we learnt our Company was to protect the airfield at Atambua, which was roughly in the centre of Timor.

By the second day, we arrived at Koepang, which is in Dutch Timor on the South-West side.

Unloading was a problem. Due to the large tide variation the ship would sometimes be 300 yards from the water's edge. The stores were ferried from the ship but as the town was about 7-8 miles inland, with no transport available, the stores and equipment were moved manually. Most of the food stores arrived putrefied.

Before we had finished unloading we heard the Japanese had swept down the Malay Peninsula with ease. On the 10th December the British battleships "Repulse" and "Prince of Wales" were sunk by enemy planes which meant that Singapore was exposed.

Also, our head officers, who had been instructed by the Australian Cabinet that Portugal would also be invaded by Japanese forces, simply because they



Like all guerilla armies, Sparrow Force needed the support of the local population to operate successfully. Without this, the ability to remain an effective fighting force or even to survive would have been placed in doubt. (Australian War Memorial, 13799)



Each soldier soon acquired a 'criado' or Timorese servant who carried his pack and other non-military equipment and who would quickly lead him away to safety after an attack on the Japanese. This assistance gave the Australians great mobility. (Australian War Memorial, 13797)

had an understanding with that country. So, on 9/12/41 we were informed we would proceed on to Dili, capital of Portuguese Timor.

On 16th December about 200 Dutch soldiers and over 100 Australians embarked on the "Surabaya." The rest of us would follow when it came back from Dili. on the "Canopus". We were glad the Dutch training ship "Surabaya was with us, as the Japanese ships were in the vicinity.

Advance party for us was Major Spence, Capt Baldwin's 'A' Platoon, and Capt Boylands 'C' Platoon. This contingent was also escorted by No2 Squadron of Hudson Bombers.

Once we landed at Dili, I was ordered with a few signalers to take over the radio station. It was quiet as we walked up to the station, and the few people we saw appeared friendly. The rest of 2/2 Company were able to hold the Dili Aerodrome, while the town was to be guarded by the Dutch and Indonesian Force.

On the 22nd the 'Canopus' returned from Koepang with the rest of the boys. "B" Platoon and more of our signalers and engineers. There were also motorcycles, 2 ton trucks which were to prove very handy.

There was a worry that the Portuguese Garrison, which had moved out of Dili, might attack us from the rear with some natives, so we had to stand to the first night.

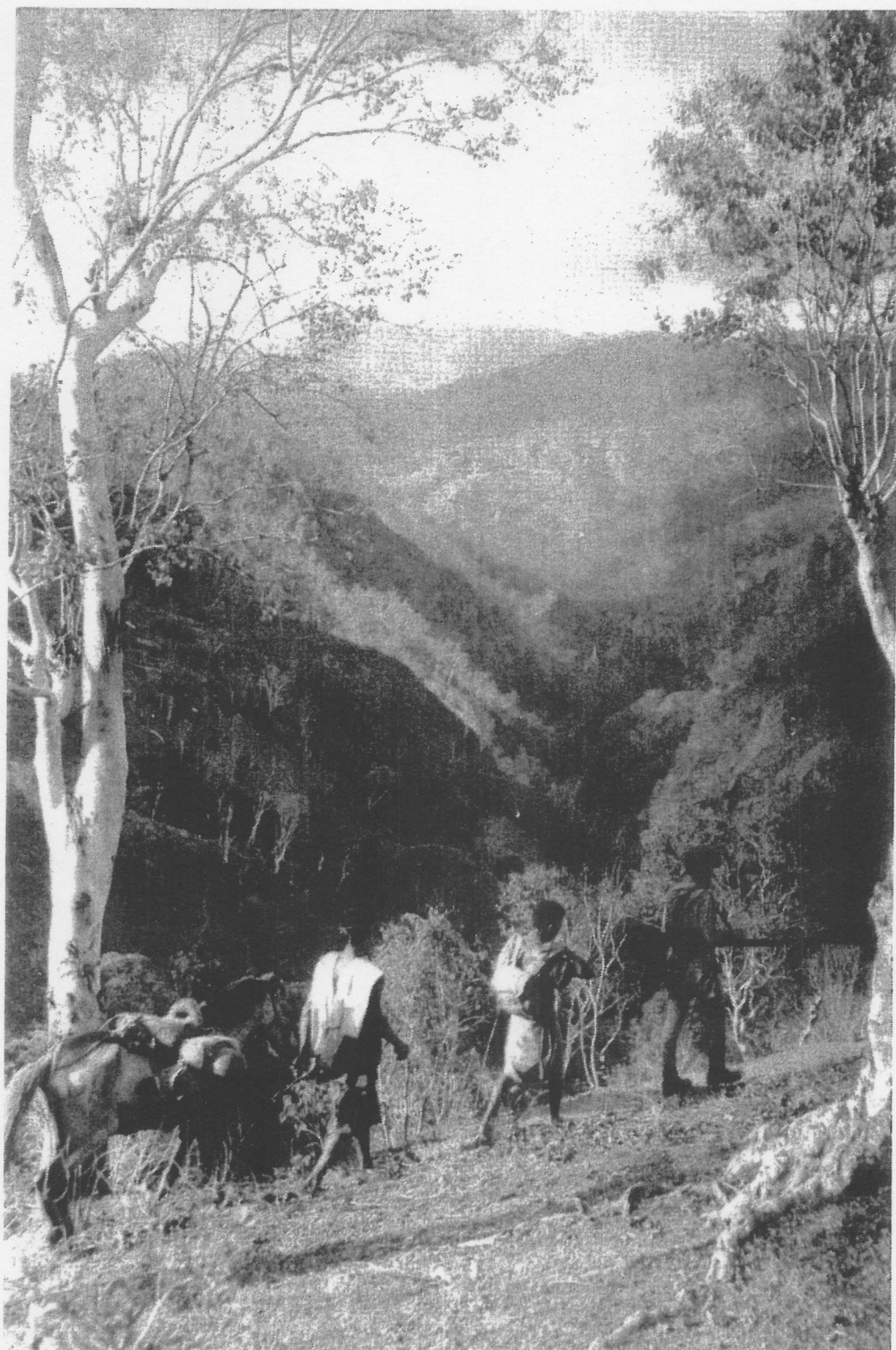
We also found we were poorly equipped for war in the tropics. Thhe Dutch had green tents and mosquito nets. Ours were white and hard to camouflage. Our shorts were useless in the long undergrowth.

As we settled in we prepared for the Japanese who we knew would come, our food became scarce. I took it on myself to acquire six chickens which were nearby for our section. It was a lovely Christmas treat!

Unbeknown to me, the main body of Japanese who attacked Dutch Timor were about 23,000 strong, with cavalry and tanks, and well supported by air. After about four days of continuous rear guard action our exhausted men had to surrender. Later they found out that only 75 Japanese paratroopers had survived out of 500. Our casualties were heavy on 23rd Feb, with 84 Officers and men killed, and 132 wounded.

Our time came in Dili. The hills around Dili were established as headquarters, and hospital. There were lots of tracks up into the hills so for the first few weeks we had to familiarize ourselves with the environment. Thank goodness we had, as we soon found out we needed all that knowledge.

We found out on 1st March, the only surviving radio was smashed so all communications with Australia was lost.



A patrol in the mountainous hinterland. Eucalypts were common in parts of Timor and the precipitous rocky ranges of the interior reminded some of the Australian Alps. (Australian War Memorial, 13771)

Brigadier Veale gave the order, 'every man for himself'. All vehicles were destroyed and stores were given out at Atambua and most were led up to Portuguese Timor. The Dutch had orders to surrender.

On 13th March David Ross, a British Consulate General, arrived in Hatu-Lia with a Japanese surrender demand. If not, they would be executed. Major Spence and Captains Callumin, Boyland, Baldwin and Dunkley were all of the opinion that they were trained to continue the fighting, and be killed in action.

Ross gave each officer a note saying any orders food or supplies from natives would be honoured later by the British, and Australian Governments. The natives were called 'surats' and they worked very well.

My boys and I were ordered out of Dili, and took equipment that we thought may come in handy.

We managed to get to three spurs and set up.

We found this too close to Dili, so loaded a truck with supplies and munitions and set off to Actuto, but the truck broke down. One of our men got the Timorese to bring 150 horses. They were small but sturdy and we transported our goods on their backs. The ponies were ideal over the rough terrain.

About 9th April the Japanese started moving from Ermera to Hatu-Lia, forcing us back towards Lefe-Foho. We kept harassing them. On April 15th Lieutenant Turton, Sergeant Green and a party of sappers, went to demolish a road between Dili and Hatu-Lia in the Glano Valley. They met a party of Japanese and killed six. Corporal Thompson and sapper Marsh ambushed a larger party on the Glano-Ermbra Road. They had hopped off a truck, and when the Aussies opened fire the truck sped off leaving the rest stranded. They thought they had killed about 35 Japanese with their Bren gun.

As a result of this hit and run tactics, the Japanese forces stayed at Lefe-Foto for a while.

On the 18th Lieutenant Dexters section moved to Cailico to cover any possible move west from Hatu-lia by the Japanese. On the 20th, a patrol under Corporal "Scotty" Taylor moved into the Glano Valley area, intending to harass any Japanese traffic between Dili and Hatu-Lia. I took my patrol into the same area, and both of us were near the old Three Spurs Camp and Villa Maine. On the 24th Scotty's lot saw 4 trucks approaching the main road through Three Spurs. The Bren gun opened up on the leading trucks at 150 yards giving the signal to the rest of the party beside the road to pour Tommy gun and rifle fire into the convoy from 30 yards. As soon as the Japanese got their heavy machine gun out, we dispersed, leaving 30 dead.



Australian sniper in action. Many members of the 2/2 Independent Company came from the outback and were expert marksmen who took a heavy toll on the Japanese. (Australian War Memorial, 13827)

John Rose



Friendly Timorese return from a battle with a neighbouring tribe in the pay of the Japanese. Disruption of indigenous economic and social life and the eclipse of Portuguese colonial power resulted in bloody inter-tribal clashes. (Australian War Memorial, 13830)

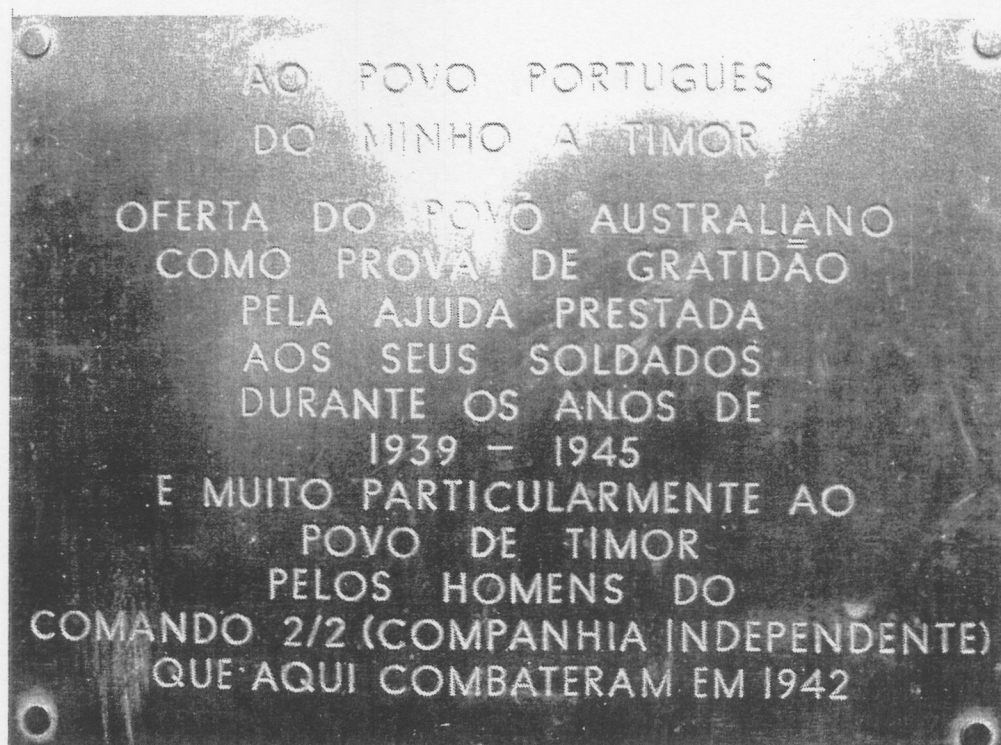


John Rose

Australian troops burn native huts in the village of Mindelo. Japanese anti-white propaganda exacerbated inter-tribal tensions and forced the Australians to take sides in local conflicts. (Australian War Memorial, 13829)



The author's father, Corporal A. H. K. 'Harry' Wray wearing the beret and uniform of the 2/2 Independent Company. "Timor '5" Author.



A plaque erected on a memorial near Dili in 1969 commemorated the help given to Australians by the people of Portugal and Portuguese Timor in the Second World War. The plaque disappeared after the Indonesian annexation of Timor but moves have been made to have it replaced.

The next day brought considerable Japanese movement between Lete Foho and Hatu-Lia to Erma and Dili. Four men and I ambushed a truck filled with Japanese troops, near Villa Maria. We fired into the truck and as they jumped out they were easy targets. We left 12-15 dead. Private "doc" Wheatly, a professional kangaroo shooter accounted for 8. He was very quick with his 'aim and fire'.

From then on it was 'hit-and-run'. Most of us had worn the soles out of our boots. The ground was hard and we had to walk and run everywhere. We had only a little food. Our main objective was to get a signal to Australia to let them know we were still alive and fighting!

I'll include the next few pages to describe how we got a wireless set to operate. It is taken from "Timor" a book written by Chris Wray, son of Corporal Wray who fought with us.

From the book *Timor* by Author Chris Wray

While the aggressive policy was taking the battle up to the Japanese was good for the Australians' morale, an event of more lasting significance occurred on 20 April. On that day the Australians reopened radio communications with Australia for the first time since the Japanese landings. For some time a number of the Independent Company's signalers had been attempting to build a transmitter. On 8th March Signaller Max Loveless of the 2/2 started work assisted by Signaller Keith Richards, also of the Independent Company, together with Corporal John Sergeant and Signaller 'Saus' Liversidge from Dutch Timor. Using parts from an American commercial medium-wave receiver, a damaged army 109 set and another small set. Loveless began constructing a new transmitter and receiver. Although an ill man, Loveless, a trained radio mechanic, took the lead in designing and constructing a radio transmitter. The parts of the three sets were carefully unsoldered and the molten solder was collected for re-use. Using only a tomahawk, pliers and a screwdriver Loveless and the others constructed a transmitter. Keith Richards, whose ability with a soldering iron was uncanny, played a major role in the construction of the set. Powered by two small batteries which were charged by a generator taken from an abandoned car the set was first tested on 26th March. It did not work. Loveless and his companions had to start again. Two days later Corporal Donovan returned from a foraging expedition to Atamba. He was laden down with salvaged equipment including the power pack from a Dutch transmitter, aerial wire and a receiving set.

Work on the radio was disrupted when the whole party had to be transferred to a more secure locality as a result of Japanese moves. However, they were soon to receive a welcome gift. In March a small patrol under Lieutenant H.J. Garnett had left Villa Maria to report on the countryside and towns of Suro Province. The patrol had traveled to Villa Maria, then through Ermera and south to Atsabe. From there it had moved to Ainaro, then onto Same carrying out a thorough reconnaissance of the country, noting the attitude of the local Timorese towards the Australians. Finally the patrol had moved north through Mindelo and Turiscai towards Dili. Lieutenant Garnett made a reconnaissance into the outskirts of Dili, and there met a group of Portuguese 'desporados'. These were men who had been banished from Portugal to the colonies often as a result of revolutionary activities in their homeland. (Later a number of these deportados, dubbed by the Australians as the 'International Brigade', carried out their own war against the Japanese.) At a meeting in a house on the outskirts of Dili Garnett met Pedro guerre, a leader of the deportados. Garnett was given valuable information as to the disposition of the Japanese forces in and around Dili, and was told of a wireless set in Dili belonging to Qantas Airways. Guerre, together with several deportados, smuggled the set out of Dili along with some guns and ammunition salvaged by the Portuguese after the Japanese landing. Garnett collected the Qantas wireless which was then carried by a party of Timorese under the command of two patrol members, privates Johnston and O'Neill, across the mountainous spine of Timor Mape where Loveless and his companions were able to commence work once more.

A further attempt to construct a working set failed and Loveless slipped into the depths of despair. His health was bad and morale was suffering from the setbacks. Everyone working on the project realized that it was essential that Loveless be encouraged to carry on. Captain Callinan, conscious that success with the project was imperative if the small force was to survive, issued orders that everything possible must be done to have the project succeed. Captain G.E. Parker, Sparrow Force Signals officer in overall charge of wireless building operation, was the right man for the job. He knew how to handle Loveless in order to get the maximum effort from him. The encouragement worked. Loveless had a brilliant idea. He would hook up the powerful uncalibrated Qantas transmitter to a weak set with a range of only 50 kilometres. To do this four more batteries were needed. A foraging party set out and returned with the necessary batteries. Then the battery charger ran out of petrol but with the help of the 'International Brigade' tins of petrol and some diesoline were snatched from Dili. Fuelled with this

mixture the battery charger was started. The batteries were soon brought up to the full strength, ready for the trial of the third set. Sir Bernard Callinan later described the transmitter as a masterpiece of improvisation:

"The set occupied a room about ten square feet, and there were bits and pieces spread around benches and joined by wires trailing across the floor. Batteries were charged by a generator taken from an old car and driven by a rope which passed around a small grooved wheel attached to the armature of the generator and around a similar wheel about eighteen inches in diameter. Attached to this latter wheel was another wheel around which a further rope was passed on to a wheel about four feet or more in diameter, and to this large wheel were fixed handless by which four natives turned the machine."

Named 'Winnie the War Winner' the transmitter was ready for operation by 18th April and that last night its weak signal was picked up in Darwin, causing great consternation at Northern France Headquarters. All stations were told to keep off the air and to listen the following evening.

On the night of 19th April the signal got through again and this time an answer was received from Darwin. The small group of signalers were overjoyed, but then the batteries failed again. All the next day they worked at charging the batteries ready for the next effort. That night, the batteries worked and the message got through. The signalers on Timor were using an obsolete code which had been current when Parker was at Penfoi some three months earlier and their listeners in Darwin were suspicious that the signal was part of a Japanese ruse. They demanded proof of identity. Back came the message:

'Do you know George Parker?'

'Yes, he is with us.'

'What is his rank? Answer immediately.'

'Captain', went back the prompt response.

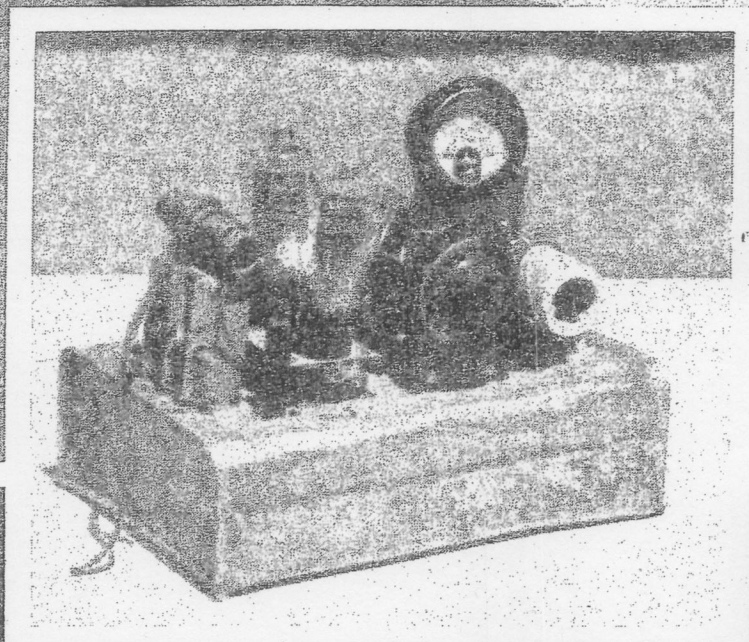
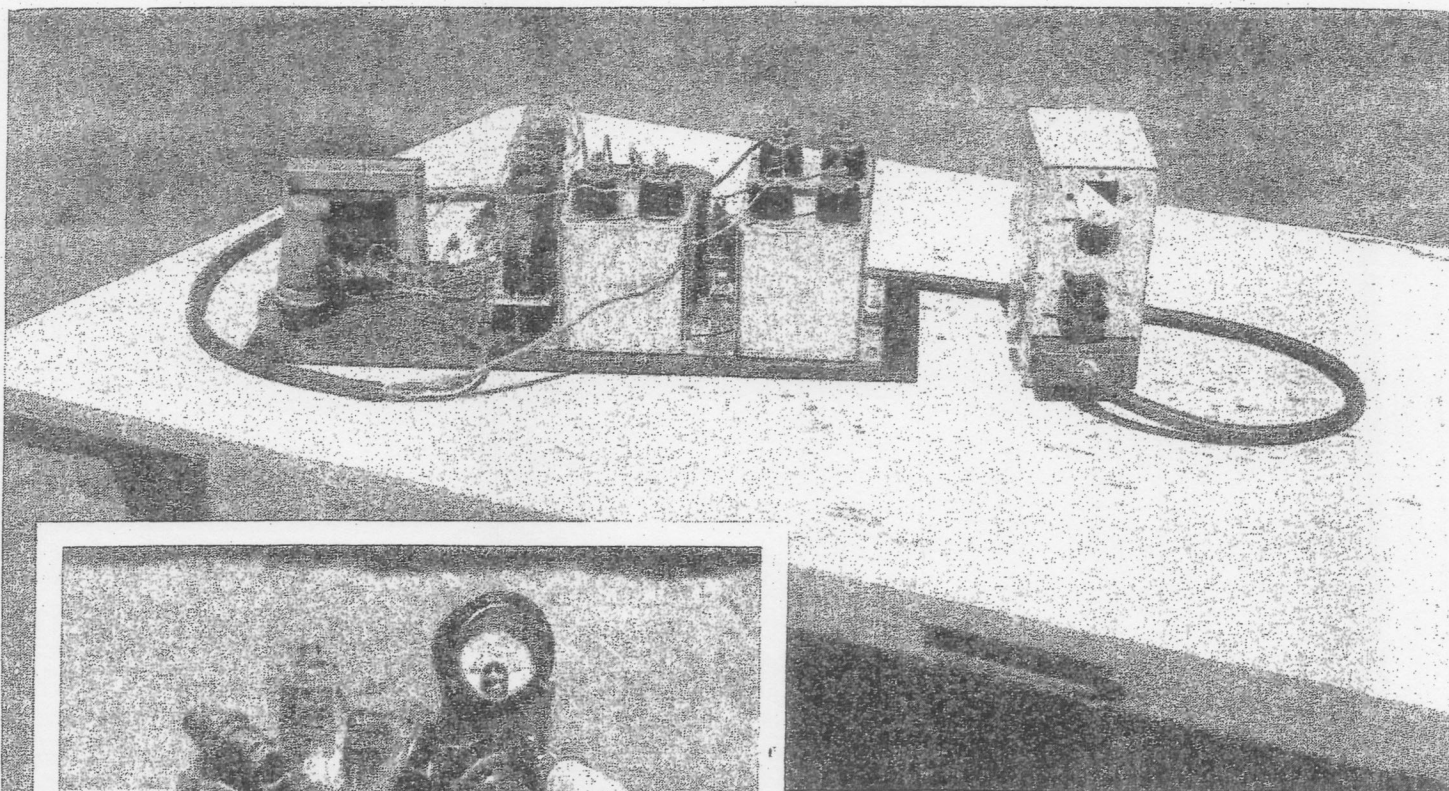
'Is he there? Bring him to the transmitter. What is your wife's name, George?'

'Joan', came the answer via morse code.

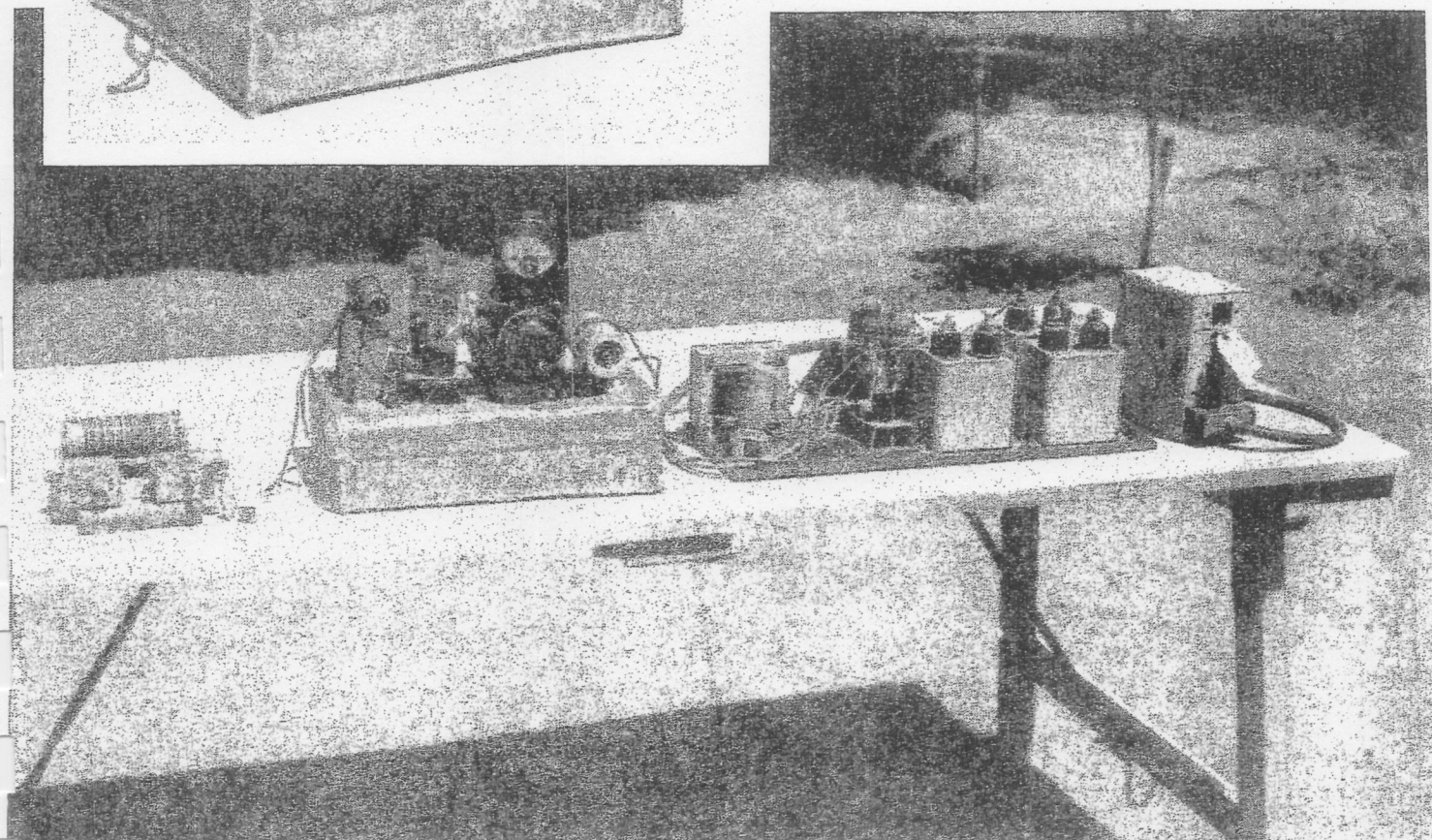
'What is the street number of your house?'

'94', replied Parker. Darwin was satisfied.

Then came the message which electrified the Darwin headquarters:



The building of "Winnie the War Winner" was a triumph in the art of improvisation. *Above:* The power supply and (left) the tuning unit. *Below:* The finished article. Note the half kerosene tin as a base for the tuning unit.



The Timor force is intact and still fighting. Badly needs boots, quinine, money and tommy-gun ammunition.

Sparrow Force was in communication with Australia once more. Arrangements were made quickly for the RAAF to carry our reconnaissance and to drop supplies. The first Hudson arrived over Sparrow Force area on 24 April but being unable to pick up any signals from the ground returned to Darwin. Two days later Darwin asked Sparrow Force to designate a suitable area for a parachute drop and to burn signal fires to mark the drop site. Sparrow Force Headquarters designated Mape and fires were lit. The RAAF aeroplanes, flying too far north, did not sight the signals and once more no supplies were dropped. However, the first successful air drop was made the next day when nineteen packages were parachuted in at Beco. This marked the beginning of regular support for the Australian troops. Sparrow Force was no longer alone.

Much joy to realize that Australia knew we were still alive and fighting. Our spirits lifted when our new supplies arrived. We also learnt that it was impossible to be evacuated and so we were asked to continue to harass the enemy.

Our main officer group were contemplating attacking Dili again, but this idea was squashed with more information from Darwin.

The Japanese had a base at Ermera and we soon found their convoys moving about. After we had set up several ambushes, the Japanese started to guard the sides of the roads. We did something different.

On 9th May, I got another private and we blackened our hands and faces from the black on the cooking pots. We took four Timorese with us and sneaked into an enemy outpost at Aturo, a small village on the road to Lete-Foho. The two huts which housed the Japanese were the ones we attacked, throwing grenades into both. As they rushed out we shot them, about 20. Then we shot through like a 'Bondi tram.'

Sergeant James and two soldiers watched a Japanese outpost for two days. They decided to attack them as they had breakfast. They left 12 dead and wounded behind and disappeared as quickly as they could.

Sir Bernardd Callinan later wrote:

"It was seldom that a week went past without two or three successful raids being carried out. The individual numbers of Japanese casualties was small, 5 or 15, but these numbers quickly provided an amazing total, and the effect on Japanese morale was enormous. Japanese soldiers told natives that the

HIT AND RUN ON TIMOR

ONE OF THE MOST fantastic feats by Diggers of the A.I.F. in World War II was the cheeky defiance of three hundred and twenty-seven commandos who took to the hills and the bush after Timor fell and for more than a year held out against Japanese forces which eventually totalled twenty-one thousand men.

In a sustained guerilla campaign, these Australians of the 2/2nd Independent Company, with reinforcements they later received from the 2/4th Independent Company, drove the Japs to distraction with their deadly hit-and-run tactics. When they were finally successfully evacuated, they had killed fifteen hundred of the enemy for the loss of only forty of their own men.

When twenty thousand Japanese attacked Timor on February 19, 1942, they overwhelmed the two thousand Australian troops stationed there in a few days. Most of them surrendered when hopelessly encircled at Koepang in the Dutch half of the island. The 2/2nd Independent Company, commanded by Major A. Spence, had the task of defending Dili in Portuguese Timor and, unlike the other Australian units at Koepang, was able to make a fighting withdrawal to the hills and continue resistance.

So began one of the great adventure sagas of the war. Those three hundred-odd commandos from the two Independent Companies lived, it has been said, closer to death and for a longer period than any other band of fighters in any other war. It was nearly three

months before, with the aid of a make-shift, home-made radio, they contacted Australia, and Army Headquarters learned of their existence. It had been assumed all the Australian defenders had been either killed or captured when Timor fell.

For month after month the Timor commandos flitted about the mountainous island like will-o'-the-wisps. Their sudden, deadly raids wreaked havoc on enemy morale. Japanese troops told the natives that the Australians were "devils," who jumped out of the ground, killed and disappeared into thin air.

They harried and harassed the Japs at every opportunity, butchering them from ambush, bayonetting stragglers on lonely jungle trails, invading and shooting up their camps under cover of darkness.

At first the Japs left a thousand troops on Timor to clean up the commandos. This force was soon enlarged to six thousand men as the Australians seemed likely to take back the whole of the island. When the raids and ambushes continued, a full division of fifteen thousand veterans arrived from Malaya to make a garrison of twenty-one thousand troops.

The new division arrived in June, 1942, accompanied by a high-ranking officer known as the "Singapore Tiger," from his ruthless tactics in Malaya. He was openly contemptuous of the Australian commandos and boasted he would crush them in one blow.

Instead, the first time the Singapore Tiger went out to hunt his quarry in the Timor jungle, four shots suddenly rang out from waiting Australian snipers. The Singapore Tiger and three other officers fell dead, all neatly drilled through the head. As the rest of the Japs hastily withdrew down the track in confusion, the grim-faced Aussie killers melted away through the

foliage, already planning to strike a similar blow somewhere else.

Generally the individual number of Japs killed in each raid was small, but the total grew quickly. The Australian strategy was always to get the officers first. In small bands they unconcernedly took on enemy patrols often fifty times their size. Bridges were blown up, roads mined, and camps and buildings fired. Enemy trucks were waylaid, the occupants killed and the vehicles rolled over precipices.

The most audacious Australian foray took place on the night of April 26, 1942, when thirty commandos invaded Dili itself and thumbed their noses at the three thousand Japanese stationed there. Under Captain (later Major) Geoff Laidlaw of Newcastle, the raiders sneaked through the barbed wire of the perimeter defences and reached the main street undetected.

The fight was on when Laidlaw shot dead a Japanese sentry at a machine-gun post. Bedlam broke out as Japs came tumbling out and the Australians opened up everything they had from the shelter of building walls and street gutters.

Dozens of Japanese were mowed down. They panicked and believed a major attack was under way as another Australian party added to the confusion by keeping up a steady fire from Dili beach.

The Japs, firing wildly, began killing their own men, and Laidlaw took advantage of the turmoil to withdraw in the darkness. Almost clear of the town they discovered that one of the party, Paddy Connelly, of North Sydney, was missing.

The Captain dashed back and found the absentee lying in a gutter and still blazing away happily with a Bren gun. Both men had to shoot their way out,

but they made it and rejoined the rest of the raiders, who had not lost a single man in the whole operation.

Not all the raids were made by such organised parties. Some of the most successful were carried out by Diggers stalking and killing as individuals. Thus Lieutenant John Rose of Hillston, N.S.W., disguised himself as a native, walked into a village and tossed grenades through the doorway of a hut in which thirty Japanese were sleeping. When the survivors rushed out he bowled them over with a tommy gun and then made a successful getaway.

Acknowledged the Number One Sniper of the commandos was Private Mervyn Wheatley of Kalgoorlie, a professional kangaroo shooter in civilian life. He played a sporting game with the Japs, refusing to use the telescopic sights on his rifle for any range below three hundred yards. When the Australians finally left Timor, he was credited with forty-seven kills, but himself claimed only twenty-five certainties. "In my game," he explained, "you can't count a 'roo unless you see him drop and know exactly where to go to skin him."

Once the Timor commandos established radio contact with Australia, it was possible to drop supplies and equipment to them by air and even in September, 1942, to re-inforce them with part of the 2/4th Independent Company which landed by ship under cover of darkness at an arranged rendezvous.

Despairing of beating the Australians in combat, the Japanese late that year concentrated on turning the natives against the commandos by the use of bribery and force. Gradually, as they were repeatedly betrayed and the enemy knew of their movements in advance, the situation changed and often they became hunted instead of the hunters.

However, they kept up the fight, determined to kill and keep on killing Japs as long as they had weapons and ammunition. They were never beaten, but finally the decision was taken at Australian Army Headquarters to withdraw the force before the Japs won over all the natives, which would have meant inevitable disaster sooner or later.

In December, 1942, the men of the 2/2nd were picked up from different Timor beaches by Australian corvettes. The 2/4th followed a month later. Thirteen volunteers remained behind, led by Captain Harry Flood of Albury, to destroy equipment and try to locate four wounded stragglers who failed to keep the rendezvous with the rescuers.

Night and day the Japs hunted them, but they continued to elude their pursuers and make their presence felt with lightning raids. They located the four missing men and wirelessly the news to Australia. On the night of February 11, 1943, they climbed aboard the surfaced American submarine, *Gudgeon*, which had put in to pick them up.

The epic of the Timor commandos was over. For more than a year they had pinned down thousands of Japanese and prevented them being used in the crucial fight for New Guinea. Had the enemy division on Timor been available, it is possible it could have turned the tide for Japan on the Kokoda Trail.

2/2nd Pioneer
Dick Rees.



Native Timorese build a bamboo house for the Australians. The Timorese were impressed by the skill and bravery shown by the Australians in fighting the Japanese and provided them with great assistance. (Australian War Memorial, 13763)



Initially very short of cash, the Australians paid the Timorese with 'surats', a kind of IOU. Later large quantities of silver coins were supplied from Australia. (Australian War Memorial, 13794)

Australians were devils who jumped out of the ground, killed some Japanese, then disappeared. Whilst their officers said they had been fighting them for months, many had not seen an Australian."

The Japanese tried to bribe the natives to help them, putting a price of 100 pataccas (about 16 pounds) on the head of every Australian soldier killed and 1000 pataccas (About 160 pounds) on the head of each Commander. The natives would not participate, they liked our tactics. The Japanese took property without payment and sexually abused the native women. The natives began to help us, on the lookouts, and would call us if there was any movement on the hills.

We did not know that because of our success, the Japanese increased their troop numbers from 6,000 to 21,000, bringing the veterans of Malaya under a ruthless major, known as the "Tiger" to get rid of us. He had been very successful in Malaya and his troops thought he was the 'ant's pants'. The first time he led his large contingent of troops into battle against us, our snipers, Doc and a few of us shot him and some officers, turning them back. We were surprised they did not chase us as they had plenty of man power.

I started to get more attacks of malaria even though we had quinine.

After this episode we started to get more supplies, and better food, ammo and clothing.

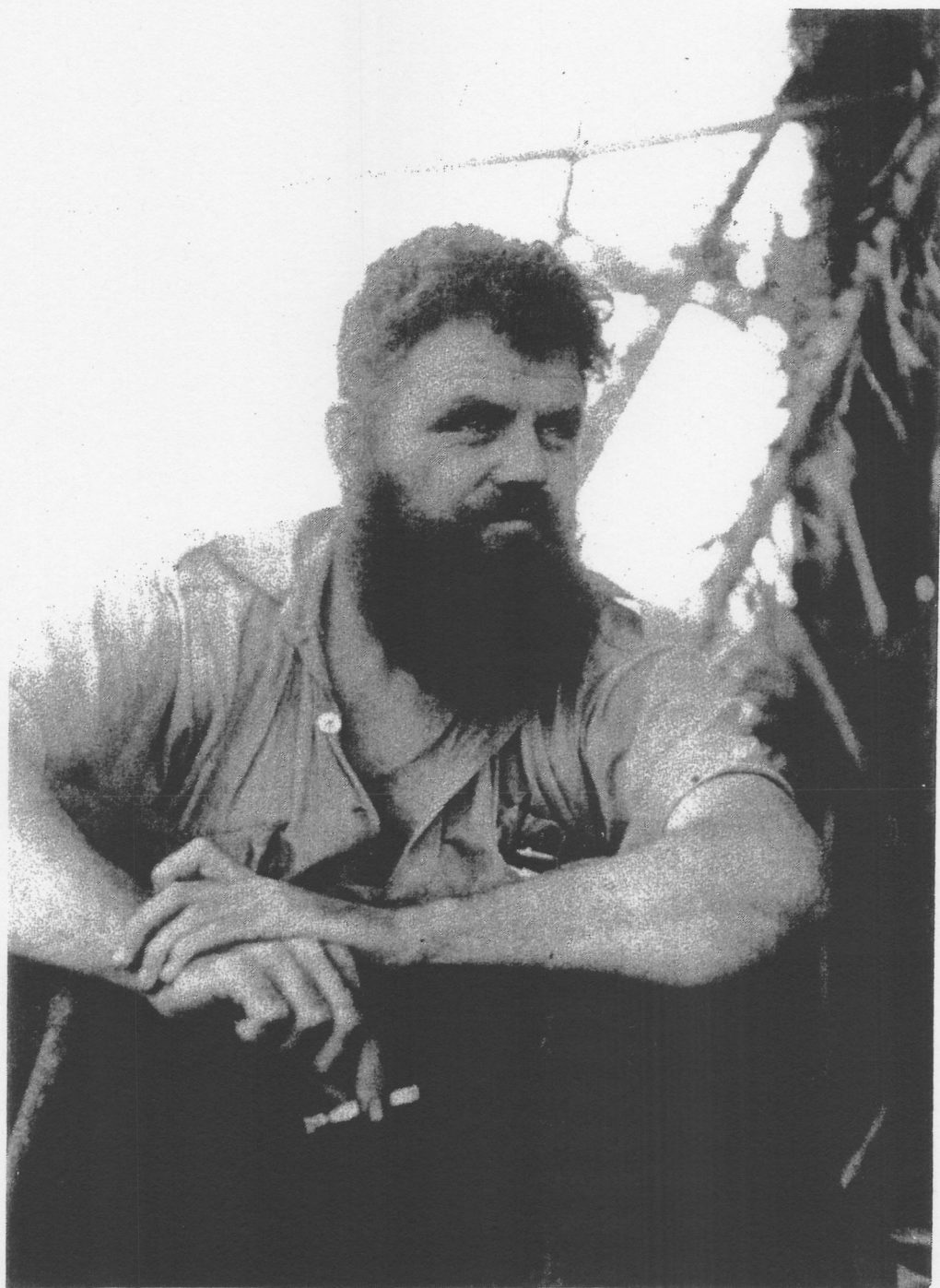
What happened next was that the Japanese started to bribe the natives more than we did, and sometimes we became the hunted! We all pulled together as a team and although we had a lot of stress we did a good job.

On 23rd September the destroyer, Voyager, began unloading reinforcements in the form of 2/4 Company, with supplies. She went aground and we were faced with the dilemma of sinking her. We stripped her of everything we could. The Japanese beat us to it the next day, she was bombed and sunk.

The evacuation of Timor by the 2/2, I refer again to the book "Timor" by Chris Wray, to describe our departure. He also tells of the wonderful exploits by the RAN and the loss of all those brave sailors on the *Armidale* Corvette, which was sunk.

"On the 27th Nov, Callinan received orders to evacuate the 2/2 Independent Co, 150 Portuguese and Dutch Troops, and decided that the latter two groups should go first.

The embarkment would present few problems as the men of the 2/2 were available to protect the rear.



Major G. G. 'Bull' Laidlaw, one-time junior surf champion of New South Wales, led thirty Australians in a daring raid into the heart of Dili, then occupied by some 3000 Japanese. (Australian War Memorial, 13785)

Callinan was more concerned about the evacuation of the 2/2 as he could not withdraw the men of the 2/4 Independent Co from their positions to cover the beachhead. The Northern Territory Force in Darwin advised Callinan that he was free to keep whatever staff he required for Force Headquarters.

He asked Baldwin to stay, which he did. Callinan determined that the two companies would hold an extended line until the last moment. Then, the 2/2 would be evacuated while the 2/4 moved to take over the vital areas. To confuse the Japanese, the 2/4 would then increase activity along the shorter line. Final plans were then made. The "Kuru" and two corvettes, the "Armidale" and the "Castlemaine", were to stand off Betano on the night of 30th November. The "Kuru" was to arrive two hours before the other ships, land stores and embark the Portuguese refugees for transfer to the "Castlemaine". This done the "Castlemaine" would depart for Darwin. The "Kuru" was then to ferry fifty Dutch replacement troops from the "Armidale" to shore, taking the sick and wounded and Dutch troops on the return journey."

See insert from Chris Wray's book Timor pages 156-163



A platoon moves out to collect supplies from Force Headquarters. Small but sure-footed Timor ponies such as the one seen here at the end of the column played a vital role in transporting radios, stores, ammunition, the sick and wounded. (Australian War Memorial, 13766)



Members of Headquarters Staff, Sparrow Force. From left to right: Lieutenant-Colonel A. Spence, Lieutenant Eric Smyth, Major B. Callinan and Captain G. Boyland. (Australian War Memorial, 13762)



A meal of water buffalo meat provides some variety for men accustomed to a monotonous and unbalanced diet of rice, sweet potato and pumpkin. (Australian War Memorial, 13770)



Troops take a well-earned rest. Inadequate diet together with the effects of malaria and other tropical diseases and the stress of having to move and fight continually in terrible physical conditions, gradually reduced the fighting efficiency of the troops although morale remained high. (Australian War Memorial, 13768)



SELF with my PONY



SELF



MAJOR "Bull" Laidlaw.



J. Rose Bull Laidlaw C. Spence

Dec. 11 1911

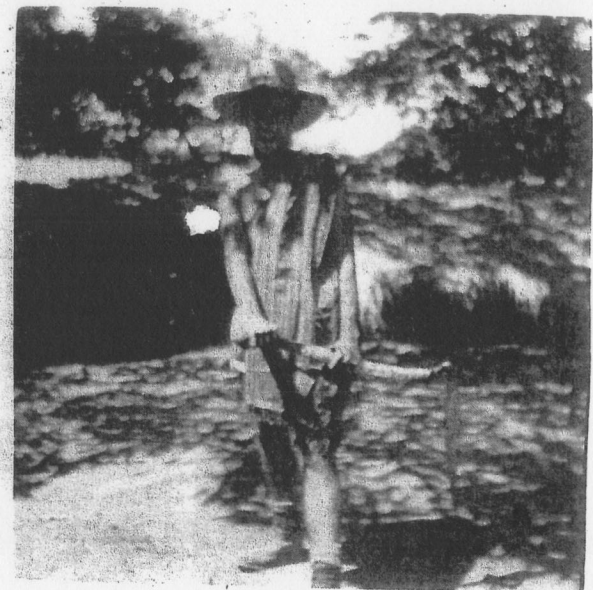


Lt. Eric Smyth. Bull Laidlaw. Major Callinan

1. 1. 1.

Dec. 11

1911



Box 8,
Lark-Catwalling.
November 18th. 1948.

Dear John,

Well, John dear, we were all so pleased to get a letter from you in such an early time too-wishes us feel yours getting closer to us.

I rang up the store on Monday night-Pop was there-also Joe-Joe-as popped over and your Mum came over to stop, and we had a good talk.

They are all well John, and had 3 letters from you on Saturday (14th). The news is better now, let us hope for big things to come, and I guess you know, just one thing, we are all wishing would happen soon.

I do ~~now~~ hope you are getting plenty of food and glad the native boys are your friends.

There are such a lot of things one is anxious to know, but will just have to wait until you come home again.

Had a letter from Laurie last week, he is still at the same spot, says he is feeling the heat ~~not~~.

Still no word of Andy Pearson, six months now.

Also got a letter from Vasily Gordon from the Middle East some weeks back I had been sending a fax along to him and he wrote a few lines to thank us.

Cleve is doing well I hear, hopes to have a few days home before Xmas, I had had one letter from him since he started flying-he is full of fun as usual.

Yes- I can imagine Pop at the V.D.C. job, its quite a business, they have about 60 members here, Harry has his full gear, believe me he finds that 4 lb or leather a bit of a drawback-only washing them once a week.

About 10 days ago I posted a small, well wrapped parcel to you. I hope it gets through to you-nothing very much in it, but will send you a few things, every little while. Let us know if anything in particular you are wanting. I hear a cake got through from Mrs. Brake. Your Mum posted a small one yesterday. I have written about 4 letters to you this year, 16 you got any of those early ones, and did you ever get a parcel, I sent one about this time last year, a little later really, I hoped you got it before leaving. I included a few Ginger Meggs comics in parcel, hope you don't ~~think~~ think we reckon you are getting childish over there, but do hope you get a laugh out of poor old Ginge. Will also post some small reading matter, just in hopes, if they don't send it, well it won't matter-will be nothing lost, can send quite a lot for id.

We are all well, Fair is a very busy person, shortage of staff etc., he is manager of Fernaven Brights branch here, is on reserved occupation list. He has one of the heads up tonight.

My Dad is still with us, he was 70 recently, but is pretty well.

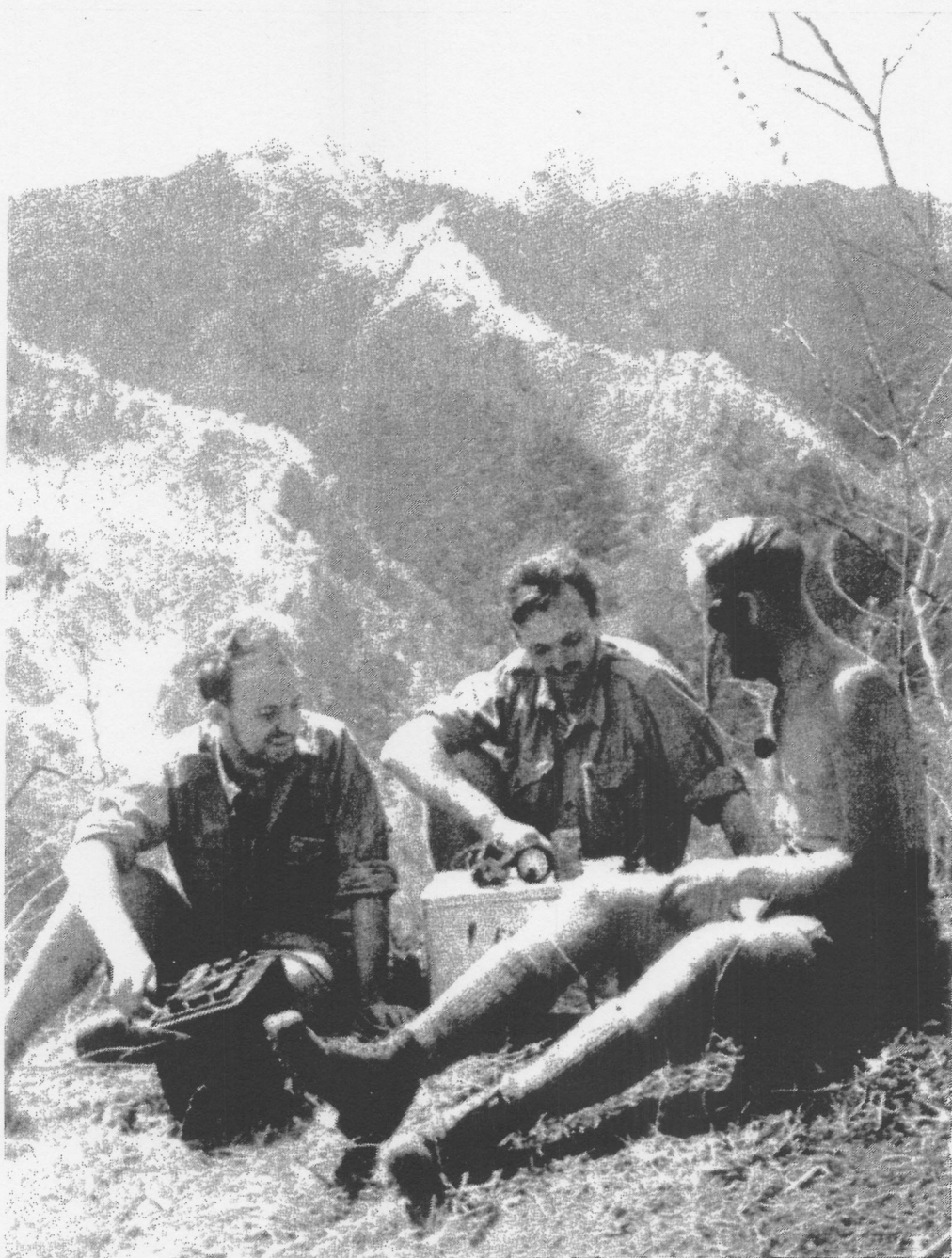
The kiddies are well now, exams are the talk of the day ~~now~~, Cleve is in 4th now and appears to be doing well. Both send their love to you, want to write, but I think it best for them not to-as I guess the censors have plenty to do otherwise.

Do you know a Lieut. Chapple over there-the other day when buying the bankies to put in your parcel, I mentioned to the mercer, that I just saw the chap first-aid where you were etc., anyway he was telling me today that he had a letter from a friend of his, Master Hosiery traveller, Charles and he was telling him about having a son, a Lieut. in ~~the~~ the ~~army~~ army or having a letter from him. I don't think the mercer (Geo- Road, strange to say a cousin of Harry Road, that used to be in a bank at Hill ton years ago-do you remember him) knows the young chap, but said when I wrote to you to mention about it. I guess your Dad knows the Master traveller.

Best love from everyone of us, shine up-look after yourself

at love from Harry, Jess & Cleve & Co

- ① Photo of OFFICERS "Pause"
John is Back Row 2nd Right.
② 1st SNIPER "Pause" (John)
3 2nd Newspaper Report "Pause"



Resumption of radio contact with Northern Force Headquarters ended fifty-nine days of isolation and made it possible to supply the survivors of Sparrow Force from Australia with the food and equipment needed to continue their campaign against the enemy. (Australian War Memorial, 13764)

^{the} *Kuru* would then embark its own passengers and, accompanied by the *Armidale*, return to Darwin.

The night of the first evacuation came. Signal fires were lit and at 10 p.m. recognition signals were exchanged with the *Kuru*. However, the two corvettes did not arrive and, after waiting until the appointed departure time, the *Kuru* set sail with over seventy Portuguese — mainly women and children — crammed on the tiny ship.

Meanwhile the *Castlemaine* and *Armidale* had been sighted by a Japanese aircraft about 190 kilometres from their destination. After making several bombing runs the aircraft departed. The ships' crews prepared for further attacks which they knew would have to come. Before long they were subjected to two bombing attacks by formations of five enemy bombers, but escaped harm. The ships reached Betano by 3.30 a.m., but the *Kuru* had gone, the signal fires had been doused and the beach was deserted. Once satisfied that the *Kuru* had left, the corvettes departed south towards Darwin, heading as far from Timor as possible before daybreak. Soon after dawn the *Kuru* was sighted some 110 kilometres south of Betano. Her passengers were transferred to the *Castlemaine* which then headed towards Darwin, while the *Kuru* and *Armidale* turned back towards Timor with orders to complete the evacuation that night. The ships set courses which would take them back toward Timor independently and soon were out of sight of one another. But the Japanese, alerted by the sighting of the corvettes the previous day, were on the alert. The *Kuru* was soon located by the enemy and suffered repeated attacks from Japanese bombers throughout the day. On occasion bombs fell within 2 metres of the ship. R. Hermon Gill, the official Navy historian, quotes the Report of Proceedings by the captain of the *Kuru*:

Two on my bows, about ten feet off, one aft which blew up our assault boat, which was being towed by ten feet of line. This straddle shook up the ship's clock, an eight day striking clock, and rang the bell. One of the ratings, Signalman Jamieson, looked up at the planes and said, 'Tojo, you've got a bloody cigar'.¹¹

Despite damage suffered in the air attacks the *Kuru* was ordered to return to Betano to complete the operation, but at 8.05 p.m. news was received that two Japanese cruisers had been sighted about 95 kilometres south-west of Betano and the operation was aborted. There had been no news since 12.54 p.m. from the *Armidale* and at 3.15 p.m. she was attacked by nine bombers and three fighters. After a brief battle in which a Japanese bomber and fighter were shot down by Ordinary Seaman Edward Sheean manning the aft Oerlikon gun, the *Ar-*

midale was struck by two torpedoes and a bomb. The ship turned over and sank in a matter of minutes. Among those lost was Sheean who, although wounded, remained at his gun still firing at an attacking Zero while the ship went down.

At the time of its sinking, the *Armidale* carried a complement of eighty-three plus three AIF men, two Dutch army officers and sixty-one Indonesian soldiers. Many of the Indonesians died in the bombing when their mess suffered a direct hit. The survivors were left in a motor boat, on a Carly float and clinging to wreckage. They were machine-gunned from the air, resulting in further deaths. The next day, 2 December, the survivors managed to construct a raft from wreckage. After waiting to see if Australian reconnaissance aircraft were searching for them, the motor boat, carrying the *Armidale*'s commanding officer, Lieutenant-Commander Richards, seventeen members of the ship's company and four Netherlands East Indies soldiers, including several wounded, set off for Darwin to get help. At 10.15 a.m. on 5 December the boat was sighted by a reconnaissance aircraft about 240 kilometres west north-west from Darwin and the *Kalgoorlie* was despatched to pick them up. After avoiding attacks from Japanese aircraft, the *Kalgoorlie* located the *Armidale*'s boat with twenty survivors (two of the original company having died) at 11 p.m. on 6 December. Meanwhile the other survivors, fifty-five ship's company, three AIF and twenty-two Netherlands East Indies troops, had found the *Armidale*'s whaler which, although holed, was sufficiently repaired to float although continuous baling had to be maintained. Twenty-six of the *Armidale*'s crew under Lieutenant L.G. Palmer, together with the three AIF soldiers, set out for the allied reconnaissance area, leaving twenty-eight of the ship's crew and two Dutch officers with nineteen Indonesian troops on the raft and Carly float. On the afternoon of 7 December the rafts were sighted by searching aircraft. The next afternoon they were sighted again, this time by a Catalina flying boat which was unable to land due to rough seas. The aircraft crew reported that the number of survivors on the rafts had dwindled to twenty at most. Despite extensive searches, nothing more was seen of the rafts.

The survivors in the whaler were more fortunate as it was spotted by the Catalina which was returning to Darwin after sighting the rafts. The *Kalgoorlie* was despatched again and picked up the twenty-nine survivors on the afternoon of 9 December. On Timor Callinan was unaware of the Japanese air attacks on the evacuation ships and the loss of the *Armidale*. He did know that Portuguese refugees and some Dutch troops

had not been evacuated as planned and that the Dutch reinforcements had not arrived, leaving a gap in the defensive line. In addition he received warning from Darwin that the further stages of the evacuation would be delayed. This was serious news. All the carefully arranged plans had to be altered. Platoons were told to remain in their areas and to send out patrols to prevent the Japanese suspecting their intentions. As a final blow Callinan learned that the Dutch replacement troops had been lost and there was no one to take their place. He had to rearrange his forces to meet this contingency immediately and in turn had to request a 24-hour delay. Captain C.D. Murphy's platoon of the 2/4 was moved to take over the Mindelo area, Captain Thompson's was to cover the Same-Ainaro region, while Captain O'Connor's platoon was to remain east of Dili and continue observations in that area.

The first stage of the second evacuation was set for the night of 11 December. The Dutch destroyer *Tjerk Hiddes* had been called up from Perth after the failure of the first evacuation and the subsequent loss of the *Armidale* and was to take off the 2/2 Independent Company's D Platoon (now commanded by Lieutenant Doig), sick and wounded personnel, the Dutch troops and some of the Portuguese. But on the morning of 10 December the Japanese struck an unexpected blow. Doig had concentrated his men at Same, having taken over that area from Dexter's platoon which was covering the beach-head. Just before dawn Doig's rearguard withdrew from the saddle above Same. In the township a pack train loaded with rifles and supplies for a small group of men from Captain Thompson's section, who were training and arming natives in the Ainaro area, was waiting while its escort of three soldiers breakfasted with Doig's rearguard. As the party prepared to move off after breakfast, Japanese soldiers positioned around the town opened fire. Sapper L.C. Moule of the rearguard was killed. The ponies, laden with rifles and supplies, bolted. The surviving members of the rearguard and the escort party fought their way out of the town, although Sapper D.A. Sagar was wounded.

Later that day, several hours after the Japanese occupied Same, Sergeant Hopper of the 2/4 signals had a lucky escape. As he rode into the town, accompanied by his criado, he was confronted by a Japanese soldier. Hopper yanked his pony around and attempted to make off as the Japanese fired from a range of about 5 metres. He missed, but the blast nearly knocked Hopper from his pony. Having ridden straight into an ambush, Hopper abandoned the pony and ran for his life, pursued by a fusillade of shots. As the Australian and his criado

sprinted up a hill they saw a party of Japanese moving to cut them off. The criado led Hopper to a hiding place in the scrub where they remained until nightfall while the Japanese searched fruitlessly for them.

Unfortunately, Hopper's pony had been carrying a new set of ciphers which had been devised and copied painstakingly by Lieutenant E. Hayward, the cipher officer. As these were abandoned along with the pony, Hayward had to start work on a complete new set. The loss of the rifles and supplies was a serious nuisance, and the need to evacuate the wounded men created further difficulties. The presence of the Japanese in Same created a further problem for Callinan as the enemy was perilously close to the proposed embarkation point at Betano; consequently, the place of departure was changed hastily to the mouth of the Qualan River, about five hours' walk from Same. Despite this change Doig was able to get his platoon, except for the wounded Sagar and Sapper M. Dennis who remained with the wounded man, to the embarkation point on time.

At the appointed time the *Tjerk Hiddes* arrived and after an exchange of recognition signals the evacuation commenced. All proceeded smoothly and after a little over two hours the destroyer was carrying the first group of the 2/2 Independent Company, hospital patients, Dutch troops and Portuguese evacuees to the safety of Darwin.

Of the remaining three platoons of the 2/2 Independent Company Dexter's A Platoon and C Platoon, now commanded by Captain McKenzie, were placed to cover the outlets from Same in order to observe any Japanese movement from the town and to lead the enemy away from the Qualan River. A small detachment of the 2/4 Independent Company was posted above Alas to observe and warn of any Japanese move in that direction, and B Platoon, now commanded by Tom Nisbet, was sent east of Alas to cover any northward move by the enemy.

The final phase of the evacuation was set for the night of 15 December. In readiness for the evacuation the remnant of the 2/2, except for Nisbet's platoon, had moved to the area around Fatu-Cuac and Betano.

Early on the morning of the 11th B Platoon observed the Japanese moving towards Alas. B Platoon opened fire from ambush positions with rifle and machine-guns at a range of 700 metres. The enemy deployed at once, returning fire. After a two-hour battle the Australians were forced to withdraw to Alas. The enemy pushed forward to Alas, and the Australians under intense rifle and machine-gun fire were forced to withdraw to the east. The Australians observed the enemy making

camp in Alas, and at dawn on 12 December they were seen moving towards Betano. B Platoon had no further contact with the Japanese.

Dexter's A Platoon was in position covering the Betano beach-head. Upon learning that the enemy had entered Alas Dexter set off alone to reconnoitre an ambush position along the Fatu-Cuac track, and nearly ran into the Japanese force. Hearing footsteps approaching, Dexter hid himself in a clump of bamboo beside the track and watched some 200 Japanese soldiers pass within touching distance. Eventually Dexter made his way by various routes back to his platoon.

The enemy force which had nearly trapped Dexter reached Fatu-Cuac. The Australians opened fire on them, inflicting casualties. As the Japanese deployed, the Australians withdrew. One Australian who had arrived on the island as a reinforcement a short time before was hit by a bullet which penetrated his steel helmet. The bullet ran in a circle inside his helmet cutting a furrow almost right around his scalp. Fortunately his injuries were minor.

During the withdrawal Lance Corporal C.V. Pacey and signallers G.F. Greenhalgh and A.R. Addison, all from A Platoon, were able to retrieve a heavy 101 radio set and batteries while under heavy small arms and mortar fire. A Platoon then lost contact with the enemy, until Sergeant Cash and Corporal Foster set out on a patrol to find the Japanese force. They found the enemy camped at Betano. This suited Laidlaw as he could move his men eastward to the Qualan River by nightfall and carry out the embarkation a safe distance from Japanese interference.

While this was happening, the men of the 2/2 Independent Company were moving for the last time across the mountains and valleys of Portuguese Timor as they made their way to the embarkation point. It was not before time. Many of the men were racked with malaria, wasted by dysentery and afflicted with scabrous tropical ulcers. In addition to disease the lack of good food had had its effect and some of the men were little better than walking skeletons. But not all their sufferings were physical. The men, who had from the time of the Japanese invasion fought continuously against the enemy during the period when they stood alone, and who later during the August defensive had been harassed by the numerically superior forces of the Japanese, were showing signs of stress. Some, including those who had fought especially valiantly during the preceding months, were beginning to crack up. Their job was done. It was time for them to go home.

Harry Wray, then attached to Captain McKenzie's platoon

near Mindelo, remembered the final march to the coast which commenced late on the night of 14 December.

When we left at 10-00 p.m. light rain was falling and the countryside covered with a blanket of mist. We marched all through the night over rough mountain trails for the most part, the going far from easy, what with the rain, mist and pitch dark night. Just as dawn was breaking we came to a . . . deserted village and stopped for a rest. We lay down in our tracks and slept for 2 hours.¹²

At daylight the party could see Same below them. As they did not know whether the town was occupied by Japanese they examined it through Wray's telescope. It seemed deserted and, as they had little time to waste, the party pressed on. After a brief stop at a grass hut occupied by two commandos who were keeping watch over the track, they continued on to Alas, which was the first rendezvous point for the march to the coast, arriving at about midday on 15 December. There they had a few mouthfuls of pig meat and shared some coconuts, the first food they had eaten since the march had commenced the night before. By this time the town was filling up as men came in from all directions.

At 2.30 p.m. McKenzie's platoon set off on the last leg of its journey. The men were soon strung out along the track, as those most weakened by illness and deprivation fell behind the others. Some were able to keep moving only because they knew they were going home. Further behind the soldiers their criados and native porters trailed along carrying the packs and equipment. For hours the men walked over hills through soaking tropical rain until at last they reached the coastal plain. There they found themselves in rain forests ploughing through deep slush and mud so thick that it almost sucked their boots off with every step. Soon after dark they were halted and told the beach was near. The men scrounged for food, but there was little to be had except for a few handfuls of plain boiled rice. Then the time came for the final brief march to the beach. Harry Wray wrote later that:

After some delay we set off into a thick belt of trees and travelled some distance floundering in soft sand, and stumbling over sticks and stones in the deep darkness under the trees. One of my knees had suffered an injury on the trail earlier that afternoon and by the time we had halted it was becoming most painful. The spell had allowed me to become cold, and my knee had stiffened; every step I took after we moved off again was agony. I just prayed that we would soon reach the beach, and after a fairly long walk we were halted in an open space among the trees. We could hear the sea close by . . . Before we set out for the coast all the cash that Mac



Timor 1942

[McKenzie] had, all in silver, and provided to him for the purchase of food and so on was shared out by him among all hands. We had between ten shillings and a pound each. The understanding was that this money was to be handed to each man's native criado [porter] as a reward for their loyal and faithful service. I know of only one man who was mean enough to keep the money . . . I gave Paulino all the money and my haversack also a pair of shorts and shirt . . . All I took with me was my waterproof sheet and that only because we heard the sand flies were so bad on the beach . . . The scenes from the parting with our boys were most affecting, the boys weeping and embracing their Australian friends, and saying Tuan Australie come back some day? We had a lot to thank the natives for, that is those loyal boys who stuck to us through thick and thin, guiding us and finding food for us.¹³

After saying their final farewells to the Timorese who had helped them so faithfully through months of danger, the commandos moved onto the shingle beach and sat in groups about 10 metres from the water's edge. Behind them, where the bush bordered the beach, three beacon fires were lit to guide the Dutch destroyer to shore. The men on the beach saw a shadow out to sea, then a flashing pinpoint of light as the *Tjerk Hiddes* gave its recognition signal. A signaller on shore replied. Suddenly, out of the darkness large flat-bottomed surf boats came bumping onto the beach with the sea surging around them. As the boats hit the sand, men from the 2/4 Independent Company ran to pick up the stores and equipment hastily thrown to the beach by the sailors in each boat. The men raced up the beach to dump their loads, then ran back for more. Hardly a word was exchanged. The first boat was soon unloaded, and a strange procession made its way across the beach to the boat. Headed by two nuns carried in sedan chairs there followed several more nuns and two priests who had been evacuated from an isolated mission.

After the boat carrying the civilians left shore, the men of the 2/2 Independent Company were carried off. Dexter's A Platoon, which was guarding the beach-head, was last to go, accompanied by Laidlaw, the company commander. Once clear of the beach the boats were collected by launches and towed to the destroyer. The men scrambled up nets from the boats to the deck where waiting sailors pulled them on board. Once aboard the commandos were taken below decks and fed fresh white bread, the first they had seen for almost twelve months, butter, cheese, jam and hot tea. For many men it was the first substantial meal in days. All that night and through the day of 16 December the *Tjerk Hiddes* raced across the Timor Sea while many of the commandos slept, exhausted by the march to the

evacuation point. Others lazed on the deck yarning with English-speaking sailors.

Late in the afternoon of 16 December the *Tjerk Hiddes* reached Darwin. As they sailed up the harbour the commandos saw the ruin of the jetty from which they had left a year before and near by, stranded in the mud, was the wreck of the *Zealandia* which had carried them to Timor. The *Tjerk Hiddes* docked at a makeshift jetty where a reception committee of senior army and naval officers was waiting for the men of the 2/2 Independent Company. 'Bull' Laidlaw recorded that:

To the crowd waiting on the wharf we must have appeared a remarkable sight, most of us had beards of varying shapes, sizes and shades, our clothing was tattered and torn, our headgear varied from battle stained slouch hats to pieces of cloth tied on pirate fashion. Although our arrival was veiled in secrecy we were accorded a warm welcome and everything possible was done for our comfort and convenience.¹⁴

After a year the Australians had returned to Darwin. Laidlaw commented on their response:

It was with mixed emotions that we stepped once more onto the soil of Australia. We had thought of this moment for so long that it seemed unbelievable that it had really come true. We had been on Timor for over 12 months, but it seemed a lifetime. We had been completely cut off from the outside world for over two months. Many of us had been posted missing. We had not had mail from home for over five months nor had we been able to communicate with our people for the same period. We had spent ten months chasing the Jap and being chased. Our diet was often scanty, always monotonous. We had lived hard and fought hard and now we were back in Darwin — back in Australia — BACK HOME.¹⁵

The men were disembarked quickly and taken to a camp on the outskirts of Darwin which they reached after nightfall. They were lined up at a mess hut, given mess tins, knives and forks then marched inside to a tea of cold meat and salad, jellies and tinned fruits. The cooks had made cakes decorated in icing with the 2/2 regimental colour patch, a red double diamond on a grey field. The commandos, their stomachs shrunk through lack of food, were unable to do the meal justice. After dinner the men showered and were given a Comforts Fund parcel of tobacco, soap and other luxuries. Their showers completed, they were told to abandon their old clothes and every man was issued with a complete new set of clothing. Then, fed, showered, shaved and reclad, the men marched to straw-lined cattle trucks



John Rose, in "Salt" magazine, Landing in Darwin

for transport to Larrimah Army Camp. The commandos found this the nearest to a rest camp that the Army could provide. The general commanding Darwin area provided two bottles of beer for every man at his own expense. As beer was rationed and difficult to obtain under normal circumstances, the troops appreciated his gesture. From then on the men of the 2/2 were permitted to go to the open air picture theatre each night. Special seats were set aside for them, and Military Police were posted to ensure that no one else took the reserved seats.

However, these arrangements were not just the result of kindness or appreciation. The 2/2 Independent Company was in quarantine. Many men collapsed with recurring malaria, while others were debilitated by dysentery, scabies, tropical ulcers and other exotic diseases. Yet others affected by the strain of the months of guerilla warfare suffered nervous breakdowns. For some it was the beginning of months in hospital. In many cases the effects of serious illness, lack of food and unremitting stress would manifest themselves years later in cancer, heart disease and other serious conditions. For these men the campaign was over, but the effects of it would continue.

After being held at Larrimah for three weeks during which time they were quarantined and given anti-malaria treatment, the majority of the 2/2 Independent Company were moved south via Mount Isa to Brisbane. At the end of January 1943 the troops were given twenty-one days leave. With the leave completed the unit concentrated at Canungra in Queensland early in April 1943. There training for fighting in New Guinea commenced.

Brother, Kevin finishes the story.....

At Katherine Hospital, a mate and John went 'wako', and went bush to escape the Japanese. Years later, a friend, Joe O'Conner, was contract stripping our crop and his brother Cyril came to help. Cyril told me he and a dozen other troops had to go out and round John and his mate up. They were completely bare!

John was transferred to Adelaide, but did not know anyone or anything as he probably suffered from post-traumatic stress syndrome. When mum and dad arrived, he started to improve but it was a slow recovery.

In 1944, they made him captain and he began instructing and training other troops. They heard of the P.O.W in Borneo and were preparing to rescue them as the war was progressing well for us. They practiced parachuting and were well trained for the rescue operation but Generals Blaney and Mac Arthur would not authorize planes even though there were plenty of spare dakotos. We never forgave them as these boys all died on the march across Borneo.

I was in Sydney doing a carpentry course in 1949-52. Dad told me to visit John and his wife Nancy who lived at Harbord. John could not get work due to his poor memory. Dad kept them with money and often paid the grocer "Singi" where Nancy shopped. Dad and Singi became good friends. It was a tough time for all John's family, and children, John jr, Tony and Karen. Eventually, Dad was able to persuade them to come to Hillston which made them a lot happier. Three times we tried to get a pension for John but all to no avail. Kevin Rose.

APPENDIX

List of Awards granted to officers and men of 2/2 Australian Independent Company during service in Portuguese Timor, 16 February 1941 to 17 December 1942. Ranks shown are those held at the time of the action for which the Award was made.

Baldwin, Captain R. R.
M.I.D. (twice)
Callinan, Captain B. J.
M.C., M.I.D.
Curran, Corporal K.S. M.I.D.
Denman, Lance-Sergeant J. R.
M.I.D.
Dexter, Lieutenant D. St. A.
M.I.D.
Dunkley, Captain C. R. M.I.D.
Ewan, Lance-Corporal R. L.
M.I.D.
Fowler, Lance-Corporal J. F.
M.I.D.
Haire, Corporal J. T. M.I.D.
Hodgson, Corporal E. M.I.D.
Holley, Private W. I. M.I.D.

Johnson, Lance-Corporal R.
M.I.D.
Keenahan, Private J. M.I.D.
Laidlaw, Captain G. G. D.S.O.
Langridge, Lance-Corporal B. C.
M.I.D.
Loud, Corporal E. M.I.D.
Loveless, Private M. L. M.I.D.
McKenzie, Lieutenant C. F. G.
M.C., Dutch Bronze Cross
Martin, Private C. R. M.I.D.
Morgan, Lance-Sergeant H. J.
M.I.D.
Nisbet, Captain T. G. M.I.D.
O'Brien, Lance-Sergeant J. S.
M.I.D.
Parry, Private R. N. M.I.D.
Poynton, Private J. W.
D.C.M., Dutch Bronze Cross
Press, Sergeant F. A. M.I.D.
Rose, Lieutenant J. A. M.I.D.
Scott, Private N. D. M.I.D.
Servante, Corporal J. M.I.D.
Smith, Signaller M. A. M. M.I.D.
Spence, Major A. D.S.O.
Stanley, Corporal G. A. M.I.D.
Turton, Captain D. K. M.I.D.
Wray, Corporal A. H. K. M.I.D.



Recovering in Adelaide Repet Hospital.



With Mom & Dad, Adelaide hospital.

Slouch hat jogs memories of a boy soldier and crack commandos

Mark Dodd
Herald Correspondent
in Dili

At 71, Akiu is still fighting fit although slightly stooped, has a shock of grey hair, lively piercing eyes and an ugly scar running from his right ear to his neck.

The scar covered by his collar-length hair is a legacy of his days fighting alongside Australian commandos engaged in a bitter guerilla war against the Japanese in East Timor.

In 1942, in Fato Cuac hamlet near Betano, the teenage Akiu and his East Timorese companions were caught by a group of Japanese soldier and pro-Japanese supporters.

"They came up to me and said: 'Where are the Australians hiding?' I said, 'They have gone'. Then they [Japanese] got very mad. I would have been dead if they found any Australians near by.

"They started beating me with a shovel. Some of my friends were killed, some managed to hide but others like me were unable to escape." Suspecting Akiu had been helping the Australians, pro-Japanese Timorese serving with Japanese soldiers speared Akiu in the neck before leaving him for dead.

Akiu, or Joaquim da Silva, his baptised name, is a Chinese-Timorese who was born in the mountain town of Aileu.

He now lives in Dili and still works as a mechanic.

He is full of pride recalling the years spent in the mountains with the Australian Sparrow Force commandos of the



Akiu, at 71, wearing his new slouch hat, and, above, as a teenager in 1942, who protected the Australian commandos even though it almost cost his life.

Photo: Jason South

2/2nd Independent Company in the vicious guerilla campaign in which neither side took prisoners.

"They [Australians] behaved beautifully. We all ate together, shared sleeping quarters, food and drink, and then we went to war together," he said. "When it came to fighting, I wasn't scared when I was with them."

On Friday, Akiu was introduced to Commander Darryl Watter, the Chief of Staff of the Australian National Contingent in East Timor, and presented with an army slouch hat and badge. He said the sight of the hat brought long-forgotten memories flooding back.

After the Australian commandos left East Timor, Akiu managed to hide out. He recovered from his injuries by treating his wound with natural remedies.

He later trained as a mechanic under the Portuguese and sur-

vived the 1975 Indonesian invasion and 24-year occupation. His house in Dili and all his belongings were destroyed by pro-Indonesian militia during the political violence that followed the 1999 referendum for independence.

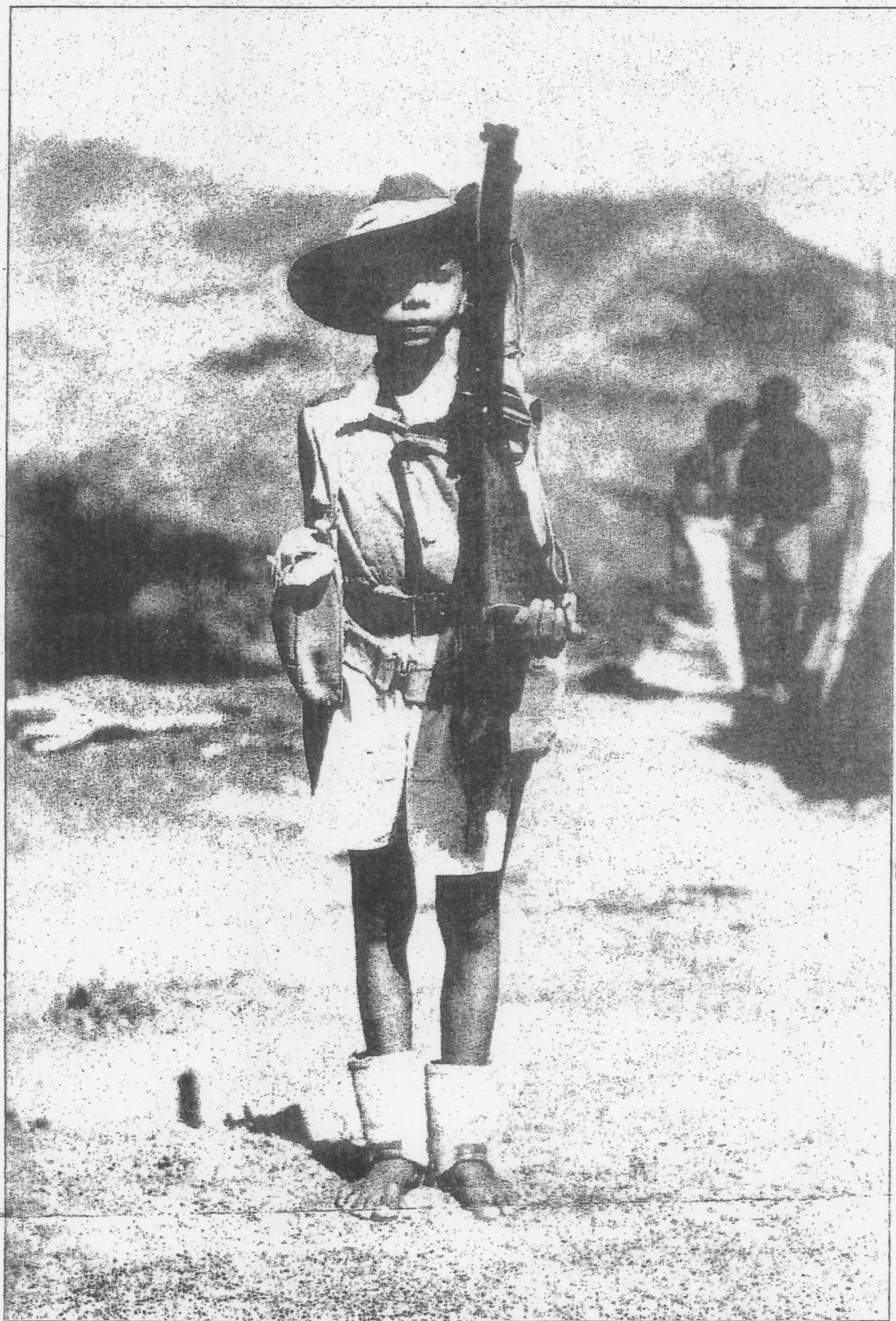
Akiu believes the arrival of the Australian-led International Force in East Timor (Interfet) in September 1999 saved many more Timorese from being killed. "They [Indonesians] had a plan to kill many East Timorese but the Australians stopped them," he said.

When the Australian troops first arrived in Dili, Akiu said he could not recognise them, because their uniform was different to the commandos fighting the Japanese.

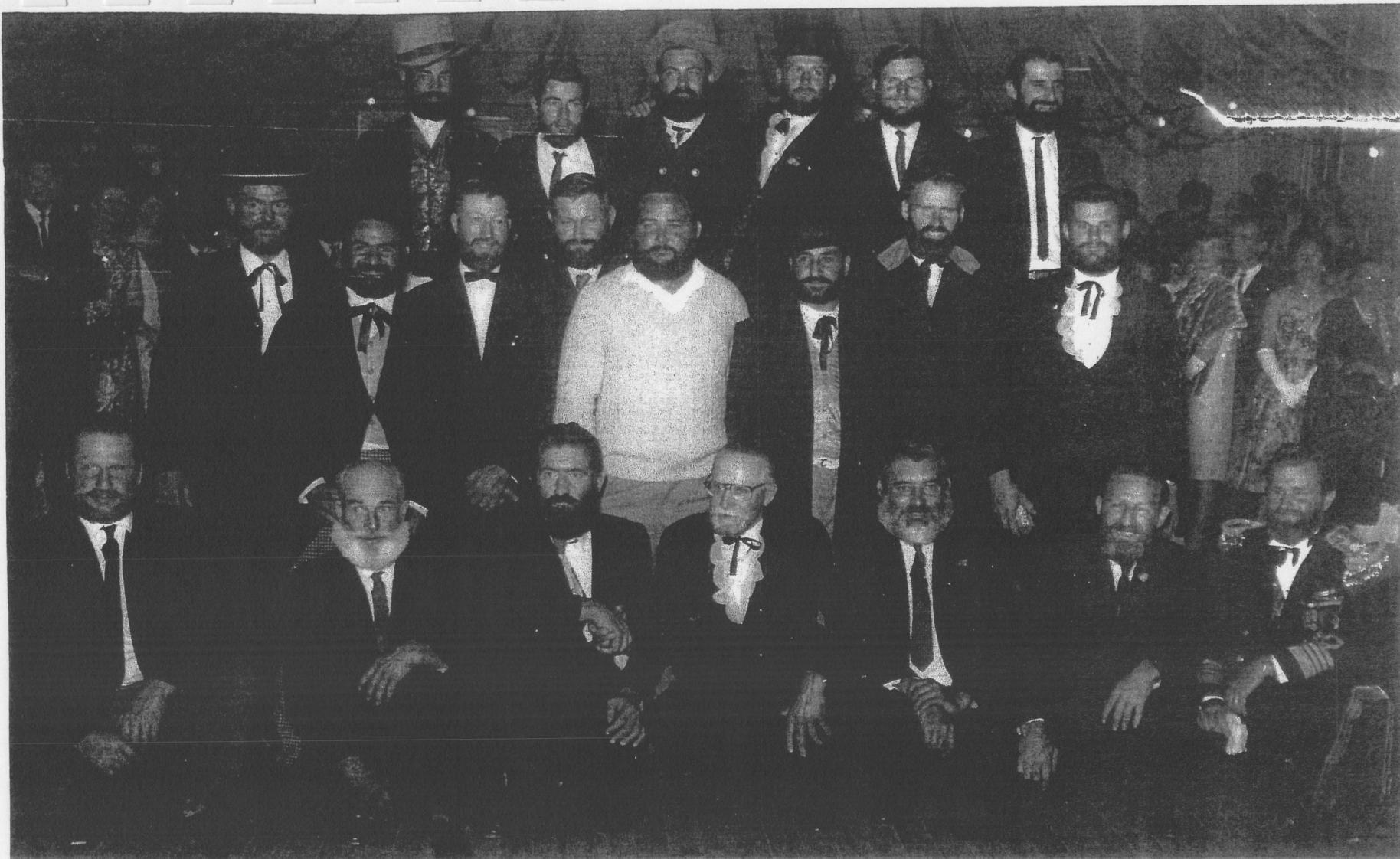
When someone told him they were Australians, he said he wanted to "jump and shout".

"I was so happy. I knew then I was not going to be killed."

The Sydney Morning Herald



As a Boy.



Beard Competition Centenary Year 2 1963

W Rose & Rule. Rule J Rose

EmcMaster D. PARKER

J. Rose S. Anthony ^{A. Taylor.} W. Shields & Gordon J. Sark

J Fenson & Knight.

R, "D" "J" ,, K u t i . . . i n



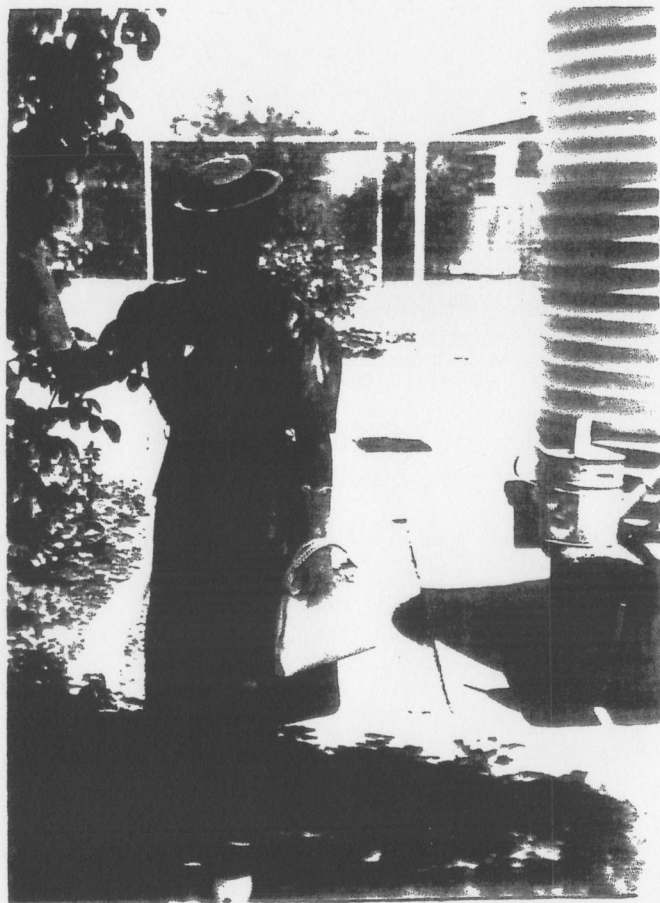
John Albert Rose
Sigs 2¹/₂ "Z" Force

John George Rose
Sigs. 6¹/₂ "H.B."

Tony. Rose
Sigs. Vietnam



Nancy and John



Nancy Rose



Nancy Rose at Home.



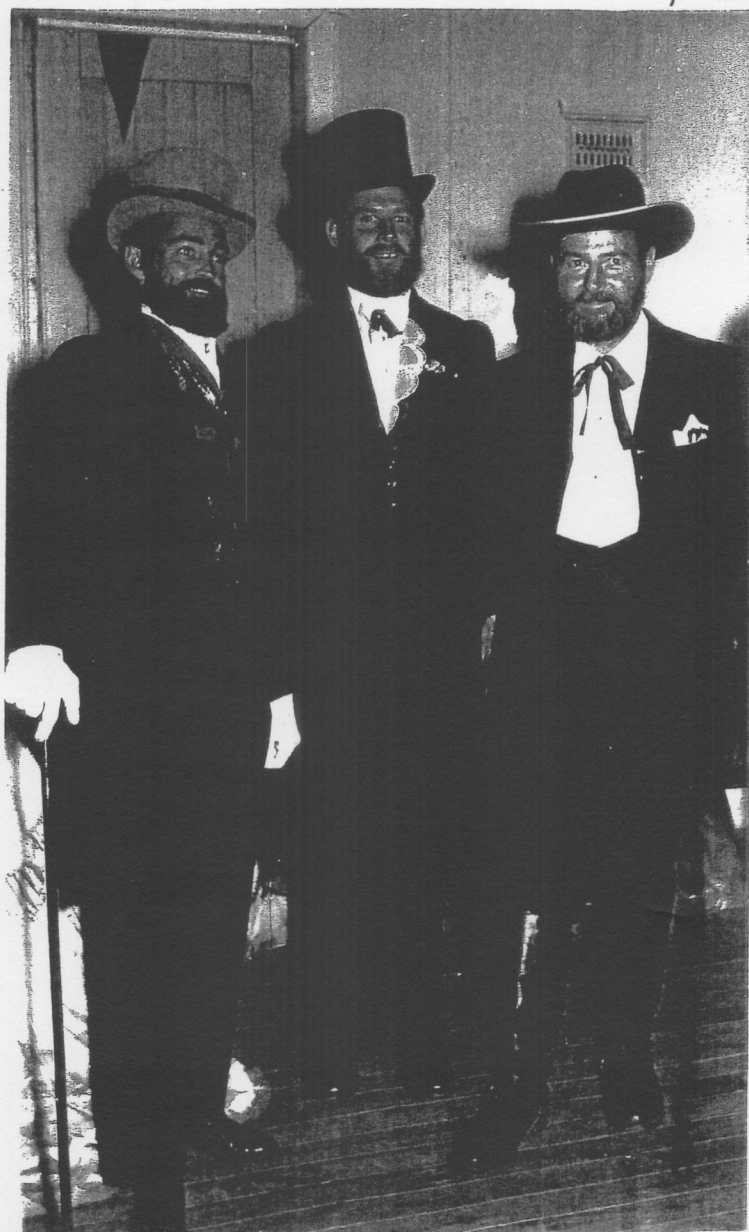
Henry Bruce John Rose after Holding up Vintage Train 1963.



Neville & Joan & John At Hills Grave
1963



Nancy Rose John Joe Rose Neville Rose
Cleve Rose Stan Flottman Peter McKinnon 1963



Neville Joe John 1963





Lena Strong George Conville John Reese
Near Bank High St 1963



N. L. T. R. K. W. J. C. V. J. P.
 Mon. 19 Hills Grove 1963

remember you", three of their Timorese companions known as criados are coming to Australia to be honoured on Anzac Day.

Rufino Alves Correia, a frail 89-year-old who was wounded by Japanese soldiers, can't imagine what it will be like to be a focus of the parade through Melbourne's streets.

But at a reunion afterwards with the handful of surviving "Sparrow Force" commandos, Mr Correia will reminisce about the hit-and-run tactics they used against 20,000 Japanese troops in one of World War II's most successful guerilla actions.

"The Japanese were coming to a place where the Australians were hiding," Mr Correia recalls, his face lighting up. "I grabbed a rifle and opened fire on them. There were about 50. Then I ran down into a creek bed but I was shot in the neck." Somehow the Australians helped Mr Correia to escape and survive.

By the end of the war, between 40,000 and 50,000 Timorese, in a population of only 650,000, had been killed or starved to death, mostly for helping the Australians.

The commandos of the 2/2nd and 2/4th independent companies have complained bitterly since their withdrawal from Timor in December 1942 that the story of the heroism and bravery of their criados has never been properly acknowledged in Australia.

One veteran of the Timor campaign, John Jones, 86, from Hawthorn, says the presence of Mr Correia, Armindo Monteiro, 86, and Manuel Ximenes, 75, in the Anzac Day march will help to address that.

"It will be an opportunity to say thanks to our friends," says Mr Jones. "Our lives depended on the Timorese. Our members have been writing letters to Australian governments for years trying to obtain recognition for what the Timorese did for us, particularly when the Indonesians invaded them in 1975."

The Australians landed in Portuguese-run Timor days after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour in December 1941. Portugal was officially maintaining its neutrality in the war.

The arrival of the Australians committed the people of the half-island territory to unimaginable suffering at the hands of the Japanese, who attacked Dili with a force of 4000 crack troops on February 19, 1942.

Almost half the 40 Australians who died in East Timor were killed in the first hours of the Japanese landing.

Then, helped by the Timorese with whom they struck remarkable friendships, the commandos became the only Australian force still in action in

A heroes welcome for forgotten fighters



One good turn ... Rufino Alves Correia, 89, was shot in the neck by Japanese troops while he was trying to protect Australian commandos who were in hiding. In turn, they saved his life. Photos: Glenn Campbell

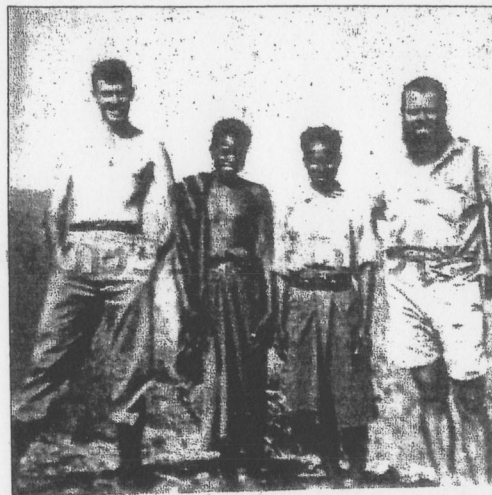
enemy territory after the Japanese conquest of South-East Asia.

Speaking in Dili this week after the Australian embassy had issued him a visa to travel to Australia, Mr Correia rattled off the names of the commandos he remembers.

"They never came back to help us after the war ... but it's better late than never. I am pleased to be going to Australia. It's important for our sons and grandsons to know what happened."

Virgilio Dos Anjos, a commander in East Timor's military, is the son of Celestino Dos Anjos, the only East Timorese to receive an Australian decoration for bravery during the war.

Virgilio, who fought as a guerilla for 20 years, said: "Many of the guerilla tactics that we used against the Indonesians after they invaded in 1975 we learnt from the Australians." with research by Jessica Ardley



Brothers in arms ... Rufino Alves Correia (second left), a man called Evaresto, Lieutenant Tom Nesbitt and a Captain Laidlaw (right).



Thanks ... Armindo Monteiro, 86, in a digger's hat presented by former "Sparrow Force" commandos.

P.S.S. Looking at those
sparrows, your wife could
have earned a good living
as an artist. Raddy

J.P. Kenneally
28 Wilkins St.
Yagoona 2199.
7-1-2007

Dear Kevin

Thank you for the copy
giving your Brother John's correspond-
ence home, and descriptions of life
in Portuguese Timor 1941-1942. John's
description of actions, and ambushes
he was part of are accurate and true.
actually it does not give all the missions
he was part of or led. John was our
Sig. Officer, he could have lived a safer,
and better life, even in Timor had he
remained so, as we were out of commun-
ication with Australia. A Sparrow Force in
Dutch Timor had surrendered, Sig Work
was limited, so John went a roving,
running slap bang into a truck load of
Japs near Villa Maria. He and his comp-
anion, had little time to inspect their work,
as more trucks & Japs arrived at the
scene. From that time onwards it was the
life of a section man for John.
When D. Platoon was formed he was
given one of the sections, he also did work
with C. Platoon. He was too good an
active service leader to keep in the sigs.
consequently John spent most of his
time in Timor with a fighting section

By the way when contact was made with Australia in April 1942, Sergeant Jack Sargent was the man Portree wanted identified. Not Captain Parker. They wanted Jack Sargent's home address and his wife's name. Back came the reply. correct address, and wife's name Kath. of course Christopher Wray's information came from his father who was a sig. But he was not connected with the work on "Winnie the War winner". It was Joe Loveless's knowledge, & Joe's ability that produced that set.

The Dantas set provided nothing. cpl. John Donovan came back empty handed from Stambua. what happened in Stambua was a bloody disgrace. unfortunately all Unit histories are written to portray the successes, all the wars are excluded or glossed over. consequently nothing is learned, and the same old mistakes continue to occur.

Best wishes to you and your family, May 2007 bless you with abundant happiness and good health.

Raddy Kennelly

P.S. I know a lot about the Dantas set, I knew Kat da Luz quite well Post war. also John Donovan, who had returned to Stambua, foraging for w/f. parts. There were none Raddy.

The Australians were using Natives to attack rebel natives, both sides were burning villages. Food was practically unprocureable within that area, John by this time had a section in C Platoon as Callinan had finally sacked the Platoon Commander, and one of its section officers in action he should have ~~saw~~ 5 or 4 months previously Australia had the brilliant idea to reinforce us, or relieve us in September, so they sent the 2/4th Coy. into starring Timor. The Voyager was aground landing them. so more troubles for the area John was in as stated.

John from March to December when we were taken off Timor spent all his time in the toughest areas we operated ~~on~~ in within that time.

Nova & I are well. I hope you enjoy porning over the maps. Good Luck

Racholy Ken really.

P.S. Kevin Read what's printed in the New map, I'm sure you will find it of interest all this done in a hurry so please excuse any errors.
Racholy

Mick and Bill and the others remember...

Sydney Morning Herald 26-28 Jan 2007



Before Milne Bay and Kokoda in Australia's military history there was Rabaul. Most Australians these days know only vaguely where Rabaul even is. Fewer know what happened there 65 years ago this week. The Japanese invasion of Rabaul, the tiny capitol of New Britain, in the early-morning darkness of January 23, 1942, suddenly brought World War II shockingly close to mainland Australia. It would get closer, but Rabaul was the first "Australian territory" attacked (Darwin was bombed a month later) in any war time. Yet Rabaul has been all but forgotten. So, too, its tiny 1942 garrison of 1400 Australian troops. Only 24 are still alive. They are all that remain of events the politicians never even acknowledge.

Rabaul, you see, was a disaster.

And like most countries, if we can't turn our battlefield defeats into heroic tragedies or someone else's fault, we try to ignore them. Five years ago, during the various 60th anniversary military remembrances marking 1942, Dr Peter Stanley, the Australian War Memorial's principal historian at the time, gave a speech in which he told a story that makes the point.

Stanley recounted: "The Victorian RSL magazine, *Mufti*, published an article in 1954 headed, 'Forget the Bad, remember the Good'. It recorded that only 20 people had attended a ceremony at the (Melbourne) Cenotaph to remember the twelfth anniversary of the fall of Rabaul (even though the ill-fated Australian militia battalion that garrisoned Rabaul in 1942 was a Victorian battalion). The anonymous writer was not lamenting that so few people had turned up. He was arguing that the anniversary should not have been

marked at all. 'Defeats,' he wrote, 'are depressing enough...without dwelling on them.' He urged that if Rabaul was to be remembered at all it should be on the anniversary of its recapture in 1945."

David ('Mick') Smith thinks differently.

Smith is one of the 24 citizen soldiers of the 2/22nd AIF battalion still alive. He survived the invasion of Rabaul to escape to Australia and return to the war in New Guinea in 1943 with the 2/22nd Pioneers for the allied drive from Lae to Shaggy Ridge. He'd been a 22-year-old St Kilda apprentice plumber when he enlisted in Melbourne as a private in June 1940 and was discharged with the rank of lieutenant in November 1945. He now lives at Bateau Bay on the Central Coast. Last year, just before his 89th birthday in October, Smith wrote a letter of some heat.

He urged I write about his old battalion and the terrible events that followed the Japanese rout of the ill-trained, inexperienced, under-equipped Australian militiamen of Lark Force that January morning in Rabaul 65 years ago. It was an anniversary, he argued, never remembered. Yet very many Australians had died, some dreadfully, including civilians, among them children, through no fault of their own. Surely they deserved to be remembered, too.

Peter Stanley detailed the genesis of the Rabaul disaster in his War Memorial speech five years ago.

"From 14 January two brigades (six battalions) of the 8th Division had just entered action (against the Japanese invasion of Malaya). The division's other three battalions (the 2/22nd, the 2/23rd and the 2/24th) were distributed in an arc across Australia's north at Ambon, Timor and Rabaul. They 'protected' the northern-most Australian territory of New Guinea and the airfields linking Australia with allied territory in South-East Asia.

"These small forces were Sparrow Force on Timor, Gull Force on Ambon, Lark Force on New Britain (Rabaul). There will always be debate over the wisdom of the strategy of garrisoning what was grandly called the 'Malay barrier' with such small forces. They proved far too small to hold the larger Japanese forces sent against them. The best the defenders could do was to make the Japanese fight for objectives they would certainly take. The inevitable tragedy unfolded (for all three forces)..."

In Rabaul, the RAAF's small defending squadron attached to Lark Force suffered "heavy losses". Said Stanley: "The signal sent by Wing Commander J.M. Lerew to air force headquarters in Melbourne before taking off - 'Those who are about to die salute you' - testifies to the fatalist courage of RAAF aircrew. The 2/22nd battalion contesting the landings by sea were ordered to disperse and to make their way to safety as best they could."

Mick Smith remembers events more graphically.

In a new year message, he recalled the Australian area commander insisted "every man must stand his ground". Yet by mid-morning of the day of the Japanese invasion, after less than eight hours' fighting, the order was given to withdraw, that it was now "every man for himself".

Peter Stanley recalled: "The ordeal of the escape from New Britain is an epic story of endurance, heroism, luck and, for about 400 men, survival. For almost all of the Australians taken prisoner, however, tragedy was to follow. A large party of those fleeing were captured near Tol plantation on New Britain's east coast. About 300 of them were killed in what became known as the Tol massacre. Of those brought to Rabaul, further

tragedy would follow. A few of the prisoners, including six nurses, were taken separately to Japan (by freighter) and held there for the rest of the war. Incredibly, all of the nurses were liberated in 1945 – thin, ill but alive.

“But none of over a thousand military prisoners and civilian internees would survive. In June 1942 they were taken aboard a ship, the *Montevides Maru*, bound for Japan. It was unmarked. The Allies had no idea it was carrying prisoners. On July 1, 1942, in the South China Sea, an American submarine torpedoed the ship. All of the 1050 Australians on board were lost in the greatest single maritime tragedy in Australian history.”

As heart-rending was the fact relatives did not learn their loved ones had died – and how – until Japan’s surrender 3 and a half years after their capture. As Stanley recounted: “The peculiar cruelty of this disaster was not that it occurred inadvertently at the hands of allied submarines. It was that these men’s fate was unknown at the time, and remained unknown for years. Not until well after the war’s end were their deaths confirmed.”

As for those Australian troops executed in New Britain’s Tol massacre in February 1942, Bill Sweeting, of the official Australian war history unit, would record in volume 5 of the histories published in 1957: “Officers of the War Graves Commission in 1945 unearthed remains of 158 victims. How many were soldiers and how many were civilians will never be known. The difficulties of sheeting home such crimes were demonstrated after the war.

“Investigating officers eventually traced the names of two of the principals concerned – a lieutenant-colonel and a doctor. But both committed suicide. As a result, no war crimes trial has ever taken place in connection with this atrocity.”

There were some extraordinary stories among the six soldiers who survived the massacre. One of the saddest involved Private Bill Cook, from Campsie, who was bayoneted 11 times, his hands tied behind his back. He later recounted: “I was stabbed five times. I pretended death and held my breath. The Japanese walked away. The soldier lying next to me groaned. A Japanese came back and stabbed him again. I could not hold my breath any longer. When he heard me he stabbed me another six times. The last thrust went through my ear and into my mouth. I lay there and heard the last two men being shot.”

The official history records: “Cook untied the cloth which connected him to his (dead) mates and staggered towards the sea 50 yards away. Even in his weakened state he walked along in the water to avoid leaving a blood trail. Next morning he found a small party of soldiers under Colonel John Scanlon (Lark Force area commander) who dressed his wounds.”

Cook survived the war but lost his voice. In 1957, at work in Sydney’s railway yards, he was knocked down and run over by a train. He lived, but lost both legs.

Mick Smith was one of those who walked to safety down the New Britain north coast and was evacuated, eventually by sea to Townsville. He was flown back to the war in New Guinea within 18 months. He was one of the lucky few. Sixty-five years later he is still alive. Think about them all as you watch the cricket and the tennis this Australia Day weekend.

J.P. Kenneally
28 Wilkins St.
Yagoona 2199
11-4-07

Dear Kevin,

Hope all is well with you and your family. I am enclosing a map, its the same one as the one you admired when at our place, when on your visit to Sydney. Believe it or not, but it isn't nearly as accurate as the tattered and patched one I am enclosing. The latter, gives its legend of information, and would owe much but does not acknowledge information gleaned from Portuguese sources.

I will name a list of places within which hundreds in which your brother John operated. As you know John was our sig. officer. But being an active participator in the units every day operations was more to his liking so from March onwards, he left running the legs to ~~the~~ sergeant Frank Press, and John proceeded to take more direct action, in opposing the Japanese. I am happy you enjoyed "all the Bullmen" it has one fault the author did not endeavour to put it in chronological order. Any one looking for any special references has to do their own research.

Well Anzac day is on the way, most of the diggers have faded away, we who are left will hobble and stagger, squar what is left of our shoulders, drunk sparingly, in the interest

of self-preservation and dream dreams of days
of yore, when the world was young, and so
were we, and that's how we will remember
comrades. So good luck, health & happiness to
you and your family.

Rachely Kenicelly

areas where John operated from March to
August 1942. Bounded by the following places,
Glenc-Valley, Emera, Villa Maria, Lettoko,
Hatoia, & Railako.

Following the Japanese offensive in August 1942,
during the offensive, Callan did not know the
position from Mape to Suai on the south coast.
So he sent John on a patrol to that area. Force HQ
was at Mape, but when it was bombed. Force HQ
took off, and no one knew where they were for
about 4 days.

John went to Mape, with four men. Salvaged what
he could, and destroyed what he couldn't. He then
had to head back to Anaro area, as Bolomaro
was being attacked and he would have been cut
off, which wouldn't have worried him much,
but he would also be cut off from all information
on what the position was for the company.

After the August offensive the position in Timor
altered drastically, the Timorese rebelled, and the
Japanese used it to advantage. John was then
operating in the Maubisse, Sutu, Hato Railiko,
Mundello area, from September to ~~December~~ November it
was the area where all the action was. Japs were
using rebel natives to harass the Australians.