

LIEUTENANT JOHN ROSE (NX65630) – 1920-1972
OC NO. SIGNALS SECTION

<https://doublereds.org.au/history/men-of-the-22/nx/john-albert-rose-r579/>

BIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES



and Delys Carey, Bernie and Babs Langridge, Ted Monk, Bill Howell, Grace and Clarrie Turner and Eric's sister who became an adoptee of the 2/2nd Commandos. It was a great get together. We were very excited to be able to attend at Hobart and followed it up with an extra week travelling around with Tom and Mary Foster when it was over.

In 1983 with my brother and his wife we spent 12 months caravanning around Australia. We took the address book and were able to catch up with many of the 2/2nd families. The bond has never lessened over the years.

The last "do" in Perth and the activities that went with it was a fitting finale but it is wonderful to still have contact across Australia through the trusty little "Courier". Thanks Jack.

With ageing bones and slowing down in the latter part of 60+ years I realize how blessed I have been to marry a Commando and gathered to my self a host of wonderful friends.

Thank you, all of you for making my life all the richer for meeting you.

Twy Smyth – 1944-2008

JOHN ROSE

Happy Greenhalgh kindly loaned me "Sparrow Force" the war history of John Rose who was our Signals Officer on Timor. Extracts of his letter files make interesting reading.

My Dad and Mum were married immediately after the First World War in 1919 and moved to 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. I had three brothers, Cleve, Neville and Kevin.

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 32K 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' parties and to carry out guerilla warfare against an attacking force.

In the words of Captain Spencer Chapman, in charge of field craft, "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, signal officers and NCO's and men under their command and a medical officer.

The majority of the men who were to form the 2/2 Independent Company were West 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.

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.

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

After a night's stay at Terowie remembered for the stolen sheep incident we 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 our 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 the 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. Our destination was Timor, arriving there on 12 December.

On 14th December we were told we would be heading for Portuguese East Timor to take over Dili and their aerodrome.

On the 17th December 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 Forces.

We also found we were poorly equipped for war in the tropics. The 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 to our section. It was a lovely Christmas treat!

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

Brother Kevin tells how his brother John was affected on his return from Timor.

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 was probably suffering 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 POW 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 Blamey and MacArthur would not authorize planes even though there were plenty of spare 'Dakotas'. 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..

Those involved with him in these actions were always relieved to survive them. He was a good soldier and a fine Australian. How he came to be refused a disability pension is beyond belief and a great injustice.

John was married in Sydney in September 1943 to Nancy Elton and they had three children – John, Tony and

Karen. After the war he lived in Sydney for 15 years moving back to Hillston in 1961 to work for the family firm of J.G. Rose & Sons.

John took an active part in a number of worthwhile community projects forming a Boy Scouts and Cubs group which he virtually ran on his own for several years. He was Vice President of the RSL Branch for 12 years and also spent time raising funds for Legacy besides being an active member of the committee of the Ex Service Mens & Citizens' Club. A keen golfer he was President of the Hillston Golf Club for 3 years.

His great depth of charity and friendliness made for him a countless number of friends in all walks of life.

Worn out, he died on the 18th January, 1972 at the age of 51. His funeral was



John Rose

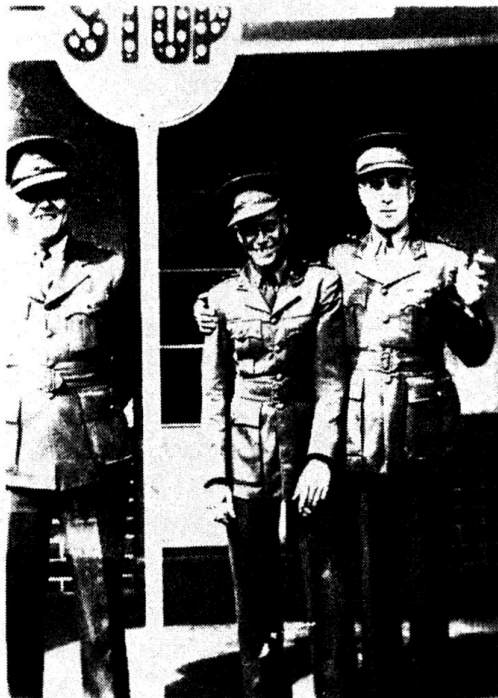
the biggest ever held at Hillston with 400 mourners paying their last respects to a war hero and a much loved citizen.

His youngest brother Kevin, better known as Joe is visiting Perth in April and will join with us on the Anzac Day Parade. We look forward to meeting up with him.

Lest We Forget

Letter written 11/6/42

Dear Dad, Mum, Nance and all at home,
Just a few lines to let you know I am okay and well. Our mail service will be infrequent so don't worry about not hearing from me for weeks. I can only write one letter per service, so will have to make it a community one. Hundreds of things have happened to me since I last wrote but suffice to say am still at large and fighting. From what we can hear things are happening in Aussie. We



*At Foster's Bus Stop
The Bull, Col Dalg, & Doc Dunkley
May 1941*

get the BBC news and an occasional paper. The people with whom we are living are natives and they have been wonderful to us. They are great friends of the Aussies and nearly all of us have a boy to carry our packs (wouldn't that) but joking aside, they are invaluable as guides, philosophers and friends here. My little boy has been in action with me and his name is Cris-a-mo, he reckons he will come back to Aussie with me after the war. We did not receive any letters or any parcels at all, the enemy got them.

Though this mess will drag on for a considerable time yet, we will clean the cows up, don't worry about that. Don't send any more parcels or cakes Mum as they cannot get here. Tell pop to keep out of the Army or Air Force, he will do a better job at home, they mess you about too much.

A few days ago we gave the Native Chiefs a feast with a buffalo we shot for them. They drank "Tuaca" a native plonk made from the juice of a tree. It tastes like ginger beer when fresh and rye whiskey after one hour. That night they had what they called a "Teebee" a dance and song which is wonderful to watch and hear. While they sing and dance they pound rice from the husks with their feet (some method) and do all night. Excuse pencil all that is available. Many happy returns to Cleve for his birthday.

Love from John.

Fearless in the field John took part in some daring escapades against the Japs which he seemed to thrive on

J.Carey

ANZAC DAY THOUGHTS

With Anzac Day approaching I thought it only fitting to repeat a poem written by Laraine Denman wife of John whose father, the late Jack Denman was our first President. Last Anzac Day John marched with his daughter Laraine and her young son Lachlan and they all enjoyed the experience. On returning to John's home Laraine asked Lachlan how he felt marching and he replied "Tall" whereupon Laraine put her thinking cap on and came up with this little gem.

SPIRIT

My Grandson marched this Anzac Day
With his Mother and his Pa
He's six years old and I wondered
Would the distance be too far

My Daughter marched this Anzac Day
With her Father and her Son
Emotional, but in control
Her love of family strong

My husband marched this Anzac Day
With his Daughter and Grandson
His Father's medals on his chest
So proud to put them on

And when the march was over
And we gathered one and all
I asked my Grandson how he felt
He said that he felt tall

Now I do believe that the spirit stays
When the physical body has gone
And the Great Grandfather would be touched

By the words of the Great Grandson

Laraine Denman 2007

No doubt John, Laraine and Lachlan will be marching again this year.

J Carey

Cleary, *The men who came out of the ground* :

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They set off with the aid of Timorese guides towards the Japanese, passing the plantation centre of Vila Maria, which struck Wheatley as a 'pretty place'. There they met the head of the company's signals section, Lieutenant John Rose, 22, from Mudgee, NSW, who was living in a colonial house surrounded by rose gardens. From this vantage point, Rose and two other signallers, Don Murray and Ron Sprigg, watched the Japanese trucks go past every day. When Wheatley suggested that Rose join him, he and his men agreed, even though as signallers they had undergone even less training in how to fight guerilla war than other men in the company. Rose's men thought he was a little crazy, but still they followed this officer armed only with a pistol close to the clutches of the enemy.

The party of five headed for an expected truck movement along a windy, hairpin-bend road linking the centres of Ermera and Hato-Lia, leaving behind their Timorese aides who were to wait with their heavy gear. Upon reaching the road, Rose showed that he had little idea of how to stage a roadside ambush. He chose a location that the men feared would get them all killed because they would have to cross the road to make their getaway. Sadler told the senior officer bluntly that it was a 'suicide spot'. Wheatley agreed, so Rose told him to choose another position. Wheatley moved them to the other side of the road and then climbed up to a position with a commanding view. Wheatley thought it was a nice spot as he was able to rest his rifle's 66 cm barrel on a log and get clear shots of the road. The position also enabled Wheatley to cover the retreat of his four mates below, who hid themselves in scrub and 2 metre tall coffee trees.

And so this gang of five previously untested soldiers began a nervous wait before their first enemy encounter. Signaller Murray, 20, a radio technician from Perth, was so nervous that after about an hour his bowels began to rumble, so he walked some distance away to relieve himself. Just as he was in the throes, a truck loaded with about 15 Japanese troops arrived on the scene. Murray just managed to re-join his mates before the first shots were fired. The riflemen opened up, stopping the truck and prompting the Japanese soldiers on the back to leap off. Sadler couldn't get a clear aim with his Tommy gun so he stepped out onto the road and fired a long burst at the soldiers who were jumping off the truck and had begun to return fire. Sadler's powerful gun kicked to the right as he fired the long burst but it silenced the enemy fire momentarily. Sadler was 'terrified' as he met the enemy at a range of just 5-6 metres. The Japanese, with their 'hands covering their faces, were more terrified'. When Sadler went to continue firing, he discovered that he only had one bullet left in his magazine; so frightened was he that he had fired 19 bullets in that long burst, instead of the 3-4 round bursts he had been trained to fire.

Moments later, a second truck laden with more troops approached. Rose waved his arm in the air, signalling the retreat, even though the job was only half done. Rose's men fired some shots at the second truck and then bolted down a track towards a small stream before ascending a steep slope to make their getaway. One of the men fell over as he splashed through the water,

and in his panic to escape Sadler dropped a magazine and then lost the track. He tried to climb straight up but the steep slope made his exit impossible. The surviving Japanese returned a burst of fire from a light machine gun as Sadler found the track and he ran up the slope, crouched low, and came upon Wheatley, who was still firing. The surviving enemy soldiers ran around wildly as they tried to find cover. Some continued to return fire; at this moment it seemed that some might survive their terrifying encounter with an unseen enemy.

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Worse still, the men on the airfield could not even radio the Three Spurs camp, located 13 km away, from late afternoon onwards. As it was the wet season, heavy clouds descended over the town, leaving the small force at the Dili airfield one of the most isolated groups of soldiers in the Asia-Pacific region at the time. The cloud cover also prevented a 'Lucas' signalling lamp from being used to reach the Three Spurs camp. One of the signallers, Gordon Stanley, who had worked for the PMG in Melbourne before joining up, had warned the officer in charge of the signals unit, Lieutenant John Rose, that the lack of communications put the small force in a perilous position in the event of an attack. 'They will come in the middle of the night and there will be nothing we can do to warn the force in the hills,' Stanley said. [13] Rose, a salesman in civilian life, was in command of the signals section despite having no previous experience in communications. The Australian Government had deployed forces to the neutral territory without providing adequate clothing, medicine, or means of communication.

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THE WHEATLEY ambushes gave the small unit an enormous lift and encouraged others to be equally bold. From the end of April onwards, the scattered and largely unorganised patrols of the company began hitting the enemy every two or three days. Like the Wheatley ambushes, most of these attacks were carried out by just a few men. In May, they began striking the Japanese in the camps and outposts, taking advantage of the poor security at their perimeters. In early May, the 'brave but foolhardy' Rose was ready to have another go after his epic encounter at Vila Maria. He teamed up with another soldier and the two prepared for the attack by stripping to their boots and shorts and covering themselves in charcoal grease from the cooking pots at a Timorese village. Rose had heard that a nearby village called Atoora in the Ermera area had been occupied by the Japanese, so they set off, guided by two Timorese boys. After watching the Japanese eat their evening meals and settle in for the night, they crept up close to the huts and lobbed grenades and raked them with Tommy guns. Rose reported that the attack had left behind a body count of 20 men. After going on the raid with Wheatley, it seemed that Rose was now much more interested in practising hit-and-run warfare than running the Signals Section. A few days later, Sergeant Harvey James, 23, mounted a solo raid on an outpost. After observing it for two days, he killed all 12 enemy soldiers.

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The support from the Timorese that had saved the 2/2 Company men featured in the letters. Lieutenant John Rose told his parents in June 1942:

'The people we are living with are natives and they have been wonderful to us. They are great friends to the Aussies and nearly all of us have a boy to carry our packs (wouldn't that) but

joking aside, they are invaluable guides, philosophers and friends here. My little boy has been in action with me and his name is Cris-a-mo, he reckons he will come back to Aussie with me after the war'.

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The head of the 2/2 Signals unit, John Rose, showed signs of post-traumatic stress disorder immediately after returning from Timor. While recovering in hospital in Katherine he escaped the grounds and a search party found him in the bush completely naked. Rose had taken part in some of the most daring actions of the campaign, but as head of signals he bore a heavy conscience for the failures that led to the massacre of 15 men. He did not remain with the company after returning to Australia and died at the age of 51.

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Callinan, *Independent Company*:

I was not observed in my movements and eventually reached our outpost at Rotai that had been the object of the morning's shelling. There I had some food and then pushed on to Atsabe, where I saw Turton. He thought I had been captured, and was relieved to see me. We arranged a quick reorganization of all troops in that area, and sent them up to Rotai under Rose, who once again took over a difficult post.

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I arrived back at Atsabe, and Turton went off to Mape to train his platoon in three days. The next day I went up to see Rose, who was doing a good job; he had his posts well arranged, with a regular system of reports, and a well-organized food supply.

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Rose, sitting up in his hut looking over the valley to Lete-Foho and beyond towards "Sappers O.P.", was receiving continuous native reports of a Japanese outpost of twenty men in a village midst the high country above Vila Maria. Each day the natives confirmed the report. One evening he called for all the dirty cooking pots of the village, and he and a soldier stripped off except for their shorts, boots and socks, and blacked themselves, much to the amusement of the natives. Then, with a "Tommy" gun and plenty of grenades, they set off for the Japanese village. They took two native guides. Arriving at the village he found there were five huts, but the Japanese occupied only two. He sent the natives in to examine the huts, and they reported which ones were occupied by the Japanese. The Japanese either had no sentry or he was asleep, so Rose and his "Tommy" gunner treated both huts with grenades and the "Tommy" gun fire. By dawn he was back in his hut, watching for undue movements. Later reports credited him with having either killed or wounded the lot, and there was no further Japanese outpost in that area.

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Company headquarters at that stage consisted of myself and Sergeant Press, who was the signals sergeant, but as we were using **Rose** for other work he was acting as officer in charge of signals.

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From these. charming headquarters I set about some further reorganization. From Doig, who had become very ill with combined malaria, diarrhoea and pleurisy, **Rose** took over the command of what I named "Section Thirteen". This was actually more than a section and a half in strength, being over thirty strong, and it was in effect the reserve for the company. **Rose** went down to Cailaco to take command, and then moved back to Maliana as from there he could better watch the frontier and report by telephone to me at Bobonaro. As usual he did well, and soon had patrols pushing along the frontier. By this time the Japanese had occupied the whole of Dutch Timor, and were in all the main towns on that side of the frontier. They would occasionally send a convoy around by road into Portuguese Timor to Balibo. We could not extend our line further by garrisoning Balibo, but **Rose** instituted a system of regular patrols to there in the hope of catching enemy convoys, but he had no success. Hearing on one occasion that some Japanese had moved in, he set off in the middle of the night to catch them, but when he arrived there the following morning they had gone. So he waited for two days, hoping that they would return, but as there was no sign of them he came back. That night he rang me to say there were no Japanese in Balibo. I asked him what time he had left there and he said eight o'clock, so I told him that I had just heard through Sousa Santos that the enemy had entered the town at nine o'clock. He was most disappointed, especially as he felt the Chinese at Balibo had knowledge of the Japanese coming, and had deliberately misled him to avoid a fight in the town. He had told them to prepare breakfast for him at six o'clock that morning, and was annoyed to find it ready for him shortly after four o'clock; but he had taken it then and, after a final look around the area, he had departed.

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Plans were being made to bring McKenzie's and Turner's sections over to the Cailaco-Maliana area and to place the platoon under the command of Dexter, and then to move **Rose** to Ainaro, where his section could receive some medical attention and some of the benefits of the training areas there. These men had acquitted themselves very well in the withdrawal from Koepang, and had since been covering a large area that was highly malarious; they were badly in need of a rest.

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Doig, Ramblings of ratbag:

There were quite a few officers on the camp staff, we were quick to make some friendships, especially as it was bandied around that most of them had a few bottles of beer cached under their tent boards. **Lt. Johnny Rose** and I promptly helped them to get rid of this surplus grog and it was then I discovered that dear Johnny was well and truly over the hill mentally.

Somehow, he acquired a motorbike and was blurting around the lines laughing in a maniacal way, and to cap it all off, he was at the hospital one day and took a liking to a silver rising sun badge a nurse was wearing on her dress, and snatched it dress and all, and the poor lass was yelling blue murder. After that episode Dr. Dunkley and another medico put him in a strait jacket and sent him south for urgent treatment. I later found out that Johnny had contracted cerebral malaria quite early in Timor and when he later came good his memory had failed him about halfway through the Timor campaign. [?]

Random Harvest

RON TRENGROVE, of 46 Hillcrest Ave., Mona Vale, N.S.W., writes:

Somewhere about the time of the push that Smash got picked up and then got away, I think it was before, I know I received a new Bren in its box. We were at Hatabalica and we were running messages every day to a small village about half way to Maubisse where an honourable China gave us coffee, peanuts and sausage at the front door and sent a boong out the back with a "surat" for the Sons of Heaven.

We were called or we called ourselves amongst other names, the mobile or reserve sections for Dave Dexter, Turner, or whoever may need help. Well apart from running the message every day two of us at a time in turns, I climbed one day up Ramaleau and got well above the clouds some 9,000 odd feet and it was something to be remembered apart from the view. Everyone of the Section thought I was crackers. Another pastime, as ammo was plentiful and we had a lot of old stuff, some of us to keep our eye in would stand on the patio of the Posto at the back where the garden fell away down the mountain side. This garden was infested with rats (four legged, not yellow). Well we spent many a pleasant hour or so snap shooting at these rodents with whatever you normally carried, Tommy, Bren, 303, Dutch rifle, etc.

We also at that time took turns in the kitchen as cook. We hadn't got round to letting the creados do it for us. Suffering snakes, when I was cook what stew. I remember Max Daxies walking in taking a look at the kero tin I was making it in, shaking his head and going back to some Bols Gin. I have often wondered why.

We had all settled down one night in the Posto sleeping on the deck. There was about six or eight of us in one room. I was asleep with my right arm underneath my head. When I woke up with what at first I thought was a warm clammy hand on my forehead. Then I could feel something hanging down over my ear. I thought, hell, it's a snake. I moved my hand ever so slowly out from the back of my head and with one

mighty sweep I swept it sideways, letting a mighty yell out at the same time. It landed on Peter Cannon on the other side of the room where more yells came. When someone produced a light in time to see a great rat scurrying out the door down the hall and with Peter Benno and someone else with bayonets drawn after it. Into the bathroom. The rat jumped into the bath but apparently could not get down the plug hole. When I got there here were the three hunters, one at each end perched up on the bath and one in the middle making stabs as the frantic rat raced around the wall of death to escape, eventually clearing the edge only to be stabbed as it made for the door. After arousing the whole place everyone finally settled down to the usual quiet night. The bath was badly pock marked and I wouldn't mind betting still is.

Hato Balica was also the beginning of a sad breakdown for Ace. One morning early someone said: "Has anyone seen Ace?" No one had since the night before. His boots were still at his sleeping spot. Nothing else gone except the clothes we all wore and slept in.

We called, looked everywhere, then John Rose and Max decided to send out patrols along the main tracks. One of these found him on the track about an hour's walk towards Ainaro, wet from the heavy fog of the morning, sitting outside a native hut making the natives laugh. When they got him back no sense could be got out of him at all and if I remember correctly three of us, Arch Macrury, Arch Bowman and myself took him down to Dr. Dunkley. This may not be strictly accurate but I remember later during the Jap push the two Arch's and myself brought food up to Hata Balica for the sections who had been forced to retreat from Atsabe and other places below. Exactly who they were now I think could be checked in Bernie Callilan's book.

I recall that our section under John Rose's command were told to go down to a spur half way between Hata Balica and Ainaro the name of which eludes me now (have rechecked Numa Mogga) but there

was a small Posto or half way house built there but if memory is right no village handy. Our food supplies came up from Ainaro every few days or whenever two of us went down and came up again with a small pack train taking and bringing back info for John.

It was here we found that a kapok tree was so soft as Eric Herd snap shoot off the hip with his Tommy at various ranges and found that in some cases the slug went right through.

It was also here that John decided that his odds and sods needed some brushing up on their grenade throwing. After a lot of instruction from Max and Jack John decided as we were encumbered with an odd box of seven second grenades we might as well use these live. The infants among us all showed how it was done with perfection. By the way, the place we were using out the back of the Posto was a continuation of the spur it was on and at its widest was some 10 to 12 feet, so that when the grenade exploded it was well down the slope and not dangerous when well placed. Yours Truly came to the dias to receive the final instructions and John standing near to watch and see an expert in action gave the order: "Let 'er go". I pulled the pin, moved the arm back for a throw guaranteed to land on the Same Saddle some three hours' march away, brought it over in classic style, held on to it until the last second and it landed three feet in front of us. "Go!" someone yelled, and go we did, straight over the back behind us bodies going in all directions as it was fairly steep, waited what seemed until Christmas (then being about June or July) before the bloody thing went off.

All of this proves my contention long held—that any weapon held in the hands of an inexperienced person is a very dangerous instrument. John, Max and all the others agreed with this and John said that's all for today chaps. I think his confidence was shattered in us after that but not in my tongue.

It was here that the section was split up, some going to various other better known sections throughout. Of course John Rose fought hard to retain me as after all my recent exhibition he thought and knew what

was best for the rest of the Company (and safest).

You are all probably wondering why and what has brought on this spate of stories about Timor and myself mostly concerned. Well just recently I read Bernie's book and various sections of it reactivated my memory by thinking and trying to remember what I was doing when certain things were happening elsewhere and once started I thought I might as well see if I could put some of it down on paper and hope that it doesn't sound like as if I am flying a kite, but I am sure that if a few more of us who handle a pen and who have recall were to read Bernie's book over again a lot of things would come back to them and now in the "Courier" would make excellent reading especially those who saw more of the Japs that I did.

I have always been sorry that I never kept on writing in 1943 and 1944 while my memory was so fresh as names and places and words that were spoken, anecdotes amusing as well as sad, were so fresh. Like the time we were at Calaico and the place was hit by a decent earth tremor. Everything moved. How we laughed after at the various reactions of people, animals, etc., serious and otherwise.

While on this subject isn't there someone amongst us who can tell or write some good stories of New Guinea or Rabaul? Come on Paddy, have a go. It's a good way to relax.

Heard This?

While hunting, a man saw a nude and beautiful woman come running out of the woods and disappear across a field. Just as she got out of sight, three men dressed in white uniforms came running out of the same woods.

"Hey, you!" yelled one of them. "Did you see a woman come by here?"

"Yes," replied the hunter. "What's the trouble?"

"She's an inmate of the asylum, and gets loose every now and then. We're trying to catch her."

"I can understand that," said the hunter, "but why is one of you carrying a bucket of sand in his hand?"

"He caught her last time," was the reply, "and that's his handicap."

NAME ROSE, John Albert

Award M.I.D. Reg. No. NX 65630 Rank LT. Service A.M.F.

Recommended by Governor-General on

31/7/43.

Promulgated in *London Gazette* on

23/12/43.

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Other Awards

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The joyous party of some 150 people wished them happy birthday. It was good to see so many of the Unit people present especially those from the country. These included Vince and Pam Swann from Esperance, Clarrie and Grace Turner from Capel, John and Jean Fowler ex Wongan Hills, Reg and Dot Harrington from Wyening, Tony and Carol Bowers from Kojonup, Don and Vida Turton from Wandering, not forgetting Ron and Nan Dook from Canberra. It was voted a good party by all present and the weather was delightfully kind.

Most pleasant to run in with Ron and Nan Dook who were in W.A. for a holiday. They spent quite a lot of it at Mandurah and the rest at Cottesloe. Both looked in the pink and reported having a great time.

Bill Epps has been in hospital for a further operation but now is back at work and sparking on all cylinders. Good to see you back in the fold again, Bill.

By the time you receive this issue Joe Poynton will have celebrated his 50th birthday with a party at his

home in Mandurah on April 8. This year and next is going to see a big number of the gang reach their 50th birthdays and it might be a good idea to hold a big swing bang party early next year to cover all these chaps who cheated a bit with their ages to join the army.

Nice to see Clarrie Varian at the Doig-Dingle party with his son who was also celebrating his birthday on the same day. Clarrie looked pretty well and hope his health holds up like this for a long time.

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New South Wales News

We held our usual monthly meeting at Arncliffe R.S.L. on Feb. 7. Present: Alan Luby, Ron Hilliard, Mick Devlin, Alan Addison, Tommy Fields, Tom Martin, John Darge, Jack Hartley, Bill Coker Paddy Kennally. Apologies received from Bill Bennett.

This was a much improved attendance for our monthly meetings. We hope the trend continues. To achieve this end Alan Luby suggested that each member present tonight attempts to influence a member to attend the next meeting. I hope this means bigger and better meetings and it should if we carry out the suggestion.

I reckon if the Cabramatta area gets cracking we could have one of the strongest Branches in the Association. What about you blokes along that Liverpool line?

It is with sorrow I report the death of John Rose, at Hillston Hospital, on Jan. 25, 1972. The

sympathy of the Association goes out to his wife Nance, sons John Jnr., Anthony, and daughter Denise, in the loss of a loving husband and father. John Rose had his share of troubles over the last few years, and yet he greeted all with a smile and a joke. When he lived in Sydney he never missed marching with the Unit and spending Anzac Day with the crowd. Apart from Frank Press he was the only officer to do so. I know of at least three more in the Sydney area who haven't been sighted since the year dot. Good-bye John and may God grant you peace. You deserve it.

The thanks of the Association go to Alf Hodge, Roy and Joyce Martin, who travelled from Griffith to Hillston to represent the Unit at the funeral and present the wreath.

We members also wish to be remembered to Ruby Dos Santos. We remember with pleasure the interlude and celebrations at her home

