

PRIVATE VINCENT PATRICK (PADDY) WILBY (VX60836) –
1920-2010
SAPPER, ENGINEERS SECTION

<https://doublereds.org.au/history/men-of-the-22/vx/vincent-patrick-wilby-r737/>

BIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES



PADDY WILBY AND THE TIMOR PONY STORY

INTRODUCTION

Its readily evident that the motorbike rules as the dominant form of personal transport for Timorese now, both in Dili and rural areas. Motorbikes have become increasingly affordable for many families and are used for work, shopping and social interaction. As the motorbike and vehicle based public and goods transport has become dominant, the Timor Pony is rarely seen in Dili now but out in the districts it still has an important role to play, particularly in transporting heavier loads from remote hamlets to market days in the villages and towns.



Timor ponies tethered at the cemetery – market day, Maubisse, 27 April 2014

Today's circumstances are vastly different from those prevailing during the commando campaign on Timor during 1942 where the Timor ponies played an essential logistical support role. Sapper Paddy Wilby, an experienced bush horseman, is credited with getting the Timor pony trains into effective operation early in the campaign by using them to relocate ammunition and other stores from their vulnerable situation in Hatu-Lia to Atsabe and other platoon HQ locations further south. Once communication was re-established with Australia and regular supplies were provided by ship, Timor pony trains were used to transport weapons, ammunition, food, clothing, currency and other goods inland from the southern landing places at Suai, Beco and Betano to where the fighting men were located. The signallers were particularly reliant on the ponies to carry their heavy radio equipment and became very adept at loading them up in a timely fashion when having to move at short notice.

To read a fuller account of the Timor ponies contribution to the commando campaign go to the post on Doublereds: <https://doublereds.org.au/forums/topic/236-the-timor-pony-story/>

THE TIMOR PONY DESCRIBED

The 'Area Study of Portuguese Timor' (1943) provides the following description of this unique and interesting animal:



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P00707.022

PORTUGUESE TIMOR. 1942. HORSES (TIMOR PONIES) BEING LOADED WITH GEAR, PART OF A
PACK TRAIN USED BY MEMBERS OF THE 2/2ND INDEPENDENT COMPANY

The Timor pony will take a load of 100lbs., and it should not be overloaded. It has a speed of about 2 ½ miles an hour on an average, and it can maintain this for long periods. Normally, only males are used for transport, and these are always stallions, the mares being kept for breeding. Mares were used by our troops for transport. The loading of a Timor pony, which stands from 8-10 hands high, is either by pannier or packed on to a wooden saddle. Saddle sores are a constant source of trouble. There are no statistics as to the number of the animals, but it is known to be very considerable. In many districts it is estimated that there would be more than one pony for each family in the area. Timor ponies are extremely hardy and live off the country. They are tethered for grazing when not turned out to run in the hills. If grass is not plentiful, they are fed with maize or grain. This is particularly necessary when engaged in heavy work.

Note: The Japanese brought to Timor some Australian type horses which they had taken out of Singapore. Some of these horses died shortly after being put to work in the hills. They were probably mismanaged and not fed, but even so this illustrates the well-known fact that the local ponies will stand up to the arduous conditions and non-nutritious pasture much better than

imported animals. Mules also have been tried on several occasions, but reports on the results are conflicting. [1]

[1] Allied Geographical Section, South West Pacific Area. - Area study of Portuguese Timor [cartographic material] / Allied Geographical Section, South West Pacific Area. - [Brisbane] : The Section, 1943: 56. <https://repository.monash.edu/items/show/26455#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0>

DOIG'S ASSESSMENT OF THE TIMOR PONY

Col Doig also wrote perceptively about the Timor pony:

Magnificent Little Animals

Everything else seemed to grow small and be in miniature. We will deal with the Timor pony first. These were magnificent little animals, real thoroughbreds in miniature - beautiful hoofs and lovely carriage and came in every equine colour imaginable. The best were real beauties. They did not go in for castration on the Island - everything was an entire either stallion or a mare. The stallions were the riding stock and the mares used for carrying things. As they broke down, they were turned out and these were the ones most likely to breed and the breed was inclined to go backwards because the worst stock was doing most of the breeding.

Luckily the Portos and others had gone to the trouble to establish studs to upgrade the stock. It is said that normal horses taken to Timor will pygmyise in passing generations, the reason being given the lack of iodine in the mountainous areas. Much the same as happens in the Alps in Europe.



Mural on wall outside the old Portuguese stables, Bobonaro – 30 April 2019

Sousa Santos's Stable at Bobonaro

As said the best had to be seen to be believed; there was one establishment at Bobonaro where the native cavalry was ensconced. This was a huge circular stable with all the mounts graded for colour. The piebalds together, and then skewbalds, blacks, greys, bays, chestnuts, roans and what have you. They were well looked after as Sousa Santos the Administrator was a very keen disciplinarian and kept everyone upon the collar. As an old cockie from way back I don't remember a sight in my life to quite outdo his contingent of at least 100 horses. They used to be fed on the local grass and it was a great sight to see a string of young boys come in daily with a sheaf of grass on their heads and carriers all dressed in the "Bari Pole".



Old Portuguese stables, Bobonaro

Sousa Santos' personal mount was a magnificent piebald stallion as frisky as they come and named "Whisky" after the famous brand of Scotch. The horse would come out of his stable with his ostler practically walking on his hind legs and as soon as Sousa mounted him would prance about and take off at a solid canter. Generally speaking their gait was an amble meaning that the legs on the off side moved together as did the other side in the same manner as a modern pacer.

Loading and Riding the Ponies

Unfortunately, the saddles both riding and pack were abominable, made of raffia and cane tied on with rope or "tarley" and these didn't take long to give a horse a sore back and some of them were a hideous sight after a short while.

The ability of these ponies to carry loads over terrible tracks was truly amazing. Your author had quite a bit to do with packing horses in the Kimberly in WA and these little beauties would out carry Australian packhorses any day. It was not uncommon for these ponies to be loaded with a 90 to 100 lb. box of ammunition on either side of the saddle or a peco of rice or tobacco on either side - a peco is 62 lbs. An Aussie horse would be lucky to carry 25 lbs either side. I

really think these animals were grossly overworked, especially on this impossible terrain. The riding saddles were much the same except a primitive bridle of rope. The horses were not mouthed in any way and of course with the narrow tracks this was not really needed. [2]

[2] A history of the 2nd Independent Company and 2/2 Commando Squadron / compiled by C.D. Doig. - Carlisle, W.A. : Hesperian Press, 2009: 100-101.

PADDY WILBY AND THE TIMOR PONY TRAINS

Paul Cleary has told the story of Paddy Wilby and the Timor pony trains in his book 'The men who came out of the ground' [3]:

[3] Paul Cleary. - The men who came out of the ground : a gripping account of Australia's first commando campaign : Timor 1942. - Sydney : Hachette Australia, 2010: Ch. 9 'People and Pony Power', esp. pp.116-119. <https://www.hachette.com.au/paul-cleary/the-men-who-came-out-of-the-ground-a-gripping-account-of-australias-first-commando-campaign-timor-1942>

Beginnings

The ammunition left near Hatu-Lia was still within striking distance of the enemy, and had not been safely hidden, so Callinan told a small party of men to pay the Timorese to help move the stores to a safer place. One of the men whom Callinan relied on to carry out this crucial task was not a senior officer or even an NCO; it was a lowly ranked sapper, or private, in the engineers corps. Vincent Wilby, 20, from Bendigo, Victoria, had met Callinan years before when he worked for a short time as an assistant in Callinan's drafting office, and Wilby had joined Callinan on his journey into Dutch Timor. While returning to Portuguese Timor, Wilby had acquired a team of Timor ponies that he had stolen along the way. Callinan later admonished Wilby for taking the ponies, insisting that he should pay or at least promise to pay for any property that he acquired. These first few ponies proved to be very useful, forming the nucleus of the transport corps used by the 2/2 Company. [4]

[4] Vincent Patrick (Paddy) Wilby, VX60836 <https://doublereds.org.au/history/men-of-the-22/vx/vincent-patrick-wilby-r737/>

Wilby's Background

Wilby was one of the more worldly men in the 2/2 Company whose horizons in his teenage years had been unlimited. After the death of his father when Wilby was four, he was raised in a strict Christian Brothers' orphanage in Melbourne until the age of 14. Wilby then travelled around Australia with his swag, hitching rides on freight trains, before working his way to the United States as a merchant seaman. By the time he enlisted in the army, Wilby had been to every state in Australia, working odd jobs during the tough Depression years, relying on the charity of people in the bush. During those bleak years, Wilby avoided cities because he found them full of despair, whereas people in rural Australia would give him a meal and other help when he needed it. Wilby found that all he had to do was ask for help.

Bere Mau

Again, in Timor Wilby found himself in a desperate situation with no money, but the resourceful sapper knew instinctively how to get help. After two months in Timor, Wilby possessed a good

ability in *Tetum* and an exemplary rapport with the Timorese people. He had settled into life in the mountains of Timor better than most, and he was enthralled with the place. He had gone on patrols up into the mountains and seen forests populated by monkeys and *postos* on the hilltops ringed by terraces, flowers, and creepers. He had seen rainbows straddling the island after the afternoon dump of rain. For Wilby it was a fascinating place of endless 'hills and hollows'. He was one of the first to gain the support of a Timorese offsider, whom the men came to call *criados*, meaning servant. Just after the Japanese invasion, Wilby met a Timorese boy who was fleeing Dili and heading back to his village at Atsabe. The boy was hungry and when he met Wilby he said *makan*, the Malay word for food. Wilby thought the boy, Bere Mau, had a commanding presence and might be a useful aide, so the two teamed up.

The Timor Pony

When Wilby got his assignment from Callinan, he and Bere Mau went off in search of more of the Timor ponies, a hardy animal that is believed to have been bred in the colony from ponies brought from Flores Island and India. The Timor pony had a strong connection with Australia, as the horse ridden in Banjo Paterson's 'Man from Snowy River' had a 'touch of Timor pony'. The Timor ponies formed the backbone of the transportation system on the island; as many as 100,000 were believed to be hauling goods and produce up and down the mountains. Standing at 1–1.2 metres tall, the ponies could carry as much as 60 kg. Wilby and Bere Mau garnered as many as 39 ponies, together with 59 Timorese who handled the ponies or carried goods themselves, with the aim of moving all the supplies left at Hatu-Lia to Atsabe. Each pony was capable of moving 500 rounds of ammunition, which Wilby thought was 'a bit too much', but they got through. The extra load meant that the pony train could move about 30,000 rounds of ammunition on each round trip.

While the Timor ponies held up, an old man keeled over and died during one journey. The Timorese rushed him back to his village for burial, and then returned to the pony train. [5]

[5] Paul Cleary interview with Vincent 'Paddy' Wilby.

To Atsabe

Wilby personally took part in six return trips to Atsabe, each leg taking about a day, traversing the rugged terrain on narrow walking tracks, until they reached a hiding place just outside Bere Mau's home village. Some of the journeys started early in the morning and took until late in the evening; others went through the night. The hiding place was located about 200 metres from the town in a cave. The cave could only be entered by going through a ravine, and then up a steep slope. Over the course of six weeks, the pony train hauled a steady stream of ammunition - over 100,000 rounds of .303 bullets for rifles and Bren guns, 45,000 .45 inch bullets for the Tommy guns, and 2,000 grenades. [6]

[6] Wilby interview with Paul Cleary; B. Callinan, *Independent Company*: 50.

Frank 'Grandpa' Browne

As the ammunition was being put into safe hiding, the soldiers realised that some of it had become wet after being stored outside at Three Spurs. It had to be dried quickly before the brass casing corroded and made the bullets unserviceable. One of the older men in the unit,

Frank Browne, knew of a practice of using pig fat to grease ammunition and suggested it to his senior officer. Before working in the outback mining town of Big Bell, WA, Bristol-born Browne had served with the British army in Afghanistan after the First World War, among other places, where animal fat had been used on ammunition. Browne was officially 39 when he enlisted, but he was undoubtedly much older; the men in the company called him Grandpa Browne. [7] The men asked the Timorese to find as much pig fat as they could obtain. Fortuitously, the 2/2's hospital had been set up in Atsabe, so able-bodied patients were sent down to the cave to grease the ammunition day and night.

[7] Francis (Frank) Ernest Browne, WX8263 <https://doublereds.org.au/history/men-of-the-22/wx/francis-ernest-browne-r35/>

Surats

Wilby succeeded in pulling off this Herculean logistical effort without actually having any money. Callinan had told him that the Timorese should be paid to move the stores, but given that the company had no money of any value, he could only write a promissory note—known in Malay as a *surat* - in order to get the job done. Wilby wrote out numerous *surats* in the local currency; a rate of 1 *pataca* per day for a handler and pony, and half a *pataca* for porters. The *pataca* converted into 1 shilling and 8 pence, about a third of the daily salary for an Australian soldier. The Timorese accepted these *surats* even though Wilby's company had no conceivable way of honouring them, given that it had no radio contact with Australia. Still, the Timorese accepted Wilby's word that one day they would be repaid.

The 'Hide-Out' Principle Put into Effect

Over time, the Australians spread out their reserves of ammunition and weapons in bases held by each of the four platoons. They put into place the 'hide-out' principle conceived of by Callinan and Baldwin a week after the invasion - bases for operation that contained reserves of ammunition, weapons and food. But they quickly realised that they could hide nothing from the Timorese. They were entirely dependent on their 'goodwill' as it was impossible to conceal anything whatsoever from their 'ever-watching eyes'. Instead of hiding their reserves, they placed them in the hut of the village chief, 'and we lost nothing', wrote Callinan. In mid-March, just days after Wilby had hauled the last remaining cases of ammunition from Hatu-Lia, the Japanese arrived in force. Callinan later wrote of Wilby's incredible effort: 'The situation is fabled to produce the man, and Sapper Wilby certainly came into prominence'. [8]

The pony train demonstrated that the Australians were innovative and adaptable and had established a very good relationship with the Timorese people.

[8] Bernard Callinan. - Independent Company : the Australian Army in Portuguese Timor 1941-43. - Richmond, Vic. : Heinemann, 1984: 50. See also (a) 'Vale - Paddy Wilby - VX60836' Courier September 2010: 7-11 <https://doublereds.org.au/couriers/2010-09%20-%20Courier%20September%202010.pdf>. Paddy's vale includes the reprint of one of his reminiscences of working with the pony train 'Shades of Caruso' and (b) Paddy Wilby 'Timor Memories - Series 10 "Dutch Courage"' Courier June 2001: 19-21. <https://doublereds.org.au/couriers/2001-06%20-%20Courier%20June%202001/>

NOT THE END OF THE ROAD FOR THE TIMOR PONY'S MILITARY ROLE?

Taking on the point made in the last comment by Cleary, Captain James Barrett has made some interesting observations about Timor ponies in an article in the 'Australian Army Journal' primarily devoted to the Army's experience with camels in recent desert environment peacekeeping operations [9]:

[9] James Barrett 'In their steps: the ADF and camels' Australian Army Journal Autumn 2019, Volume XV, No 1: 117-132.

https://www.army.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/australian_army_journal_-_autumn_edition_2019_volume_xv_number_1.pdf

Since then, conflicts have continued to demand resourcefulness from the Australian soldier, and there is a need for a non-motorised support platform. Despite the effects of mechanisation, the precarious early battles of the World War II in New Guinea may not have ended in our favour if we did not have the support of both local human portage and our own pack animals along the Kokoda Track.



Fig 3. Ultimate monsoon season all-terrain ARMY logistics vehicle, East Timor 1942 and 1999 +. The Timor Pony. AWM via The Australian.

At the same time, our commandos in Portuguese Timor had guidance from their faithful 'criados', food and shelter from the local population and the trusted Timor pony to do the heavy lifting in the mountains and valleys. Over 50 years later, when Australian forces returned to East Timor with INTERFET, it was again the Timor pony that offered occasional support, along the high border tracks beyond vehicle range, taking vital supplies to observation posts and re-trans sites. [10]

[10] See Robert Garran 'Timor pony patrols restock spirit of Sparrow Force' The Australian, 1999 Dec 31, p.7. and Doug Macdonald 'East Timor RAAF Caribou operations - Wallaby Airlines reborn' National Emergency Response, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2000 Mar: 26-7.

Barrett concludes by making the following recommendation:

Regional Engagement Options

Animal transportation could be seen as an alternative engagement opportunity. Regionally, our important military association with Timor Leste, as documented, goes back to World War I. The

Timor pony helped our commandos at a critical time in our national history. If the ADF wished to further engage with the Timor Leste Defence Force (F-FDTL), a combined animal transportation activity could provide a practical opportunity. This would allow ADF members to formally understand the use of small ponies in mountainous environments and share with the Timorese our knowledge of camels in the desert. The activity could help to maintain our valued historical links to the Timorese people and nation, allow the Timorese to display their own military heritage with the pony, and further develop our professional relationship as defence forces.

Beyond our engagement, there would be opportunity for the United States, New Zealand and Timor Leste to share common learning in common terrain: joint participation at respective military exercises employing animal transportation.

Prepared by Ed Willis

Revised 20 May 2026

volunteered. He surprised the instructor with a swift drop kick to the chest, got him in a headlock and finished up applying the Boston crab and hold thus winning a brief contest. Not bad for a 16 year old. He turned 17 on 7th November, a month before war broke out with Japan and would have been our youngest member. Tom served in No. 1 Section A Platoon under Dave Dexter. Dave had a good section which included Jack Denman, Doug Fullarton, Merv Cash, Jack Maley, Fred Otway, Terry Paull and Tom Foster to mention a few. Tom always pulled his weight and was a good soldier.

When discharged on 14th June, 1946 Tom returned to Kalgoorlie but in the early 1950's went to Young, NSW where he remained for the rest of his life. He met Dulcie whom he married. They had 14 children in 21 years and over the years Tom's family grew up, married and at the time of his passing had 143 grand and great grandchildren. All 8 girls and 6 boys are still going well – what a man!! Dulcie passed away in 1998. Tom took a keen interest in the old unit, enjoyed the Courier and was generous to the Association.

May he rest in Peace.

Lest We Forget.

J Carey

The Association extends their sincere condolences to Harry Handicott who lost his beloved wife Amyce on 16th September and also to the Claney family in Victoria on the passing of their loving mother Dawn on the 3rd August.

May they Rest in Peace

VALE – PADDY WILBY - VX60836

This Eulogy was kindly delivered by his family.

On behalf of Nanay Josie and the rest of

our family, we thank you all for joining us here today to celebrate Dad's amazingly fruitful life as a thoughtful and loving stepfather, husband, grandfather and a dear friend to many.

My mother and dad married 27 years ago and quite easily, dad carried on into his new role as our stepfather. His 'instant family' started with six children but throughout the years extended into five sons and daughters-in-law and 10 grandchildren. Although not given to public displays of affection, dad was a perpetually caring person and genuinely welcoming to his extended family, and yes, even to the cats and dogs that came to stay in their house.

A child of the Great Depression, dad was a frugal man, but only with himself. In fact, to everyone who knows him well, he was an unfailingly generous person. However, his generosity is not only confined to tangible matters, dad was also generous in supporting his family, in whatever way possible to achieve our dreams and to live fulfilling lives.

Dad lived a life of quiet inspiration. At the age of 82 he wrote and published a book in 1998. Titled 'Australia's Great Field of Human Endeavour', the book is a compilation of his 'ramblings' about issues in our society, including unemployment and harnessing natural energy to name just a few. Although not destined to be a bestseller, the book gave us a sneak peek into dad's dream of living in a fair and equitable society; no matter who you are and no matter where you came from.

Unbeknownst to many, dad was a budding inventor. Even at a later part of his life, dad was so passionate about his 'hydro-electric project'. With my husband like as his willing sidekick they would design, re-design, apply and re-apply their plans to make the project work. Almost to the point of obsession, these

two stooges would spend weeks talking and plotting about the 'project'. Despite sniggering and rolling of eyes on my part, dad and Ike stuck by their guns and continued with their experiment. Whether they achieved their goal or not is another story. Ike swears they're in the 'blue print' stage. Yeah, right.

Typical of men of his generation, one of dad's legacies is for his family to appreciate and acknowledge Australian history. He imparted his appreciation of the past by religiously joining the ANZAC marches every year even at the time of his failing health and sight. Perhaps it was due to dad's strong sense of 'mateship' that pushed him to join the marches. But whatever it is, we come to realize how dad loved this country and all the past events that made it what it is today. The country that he loved so much and the country that we now call home.

We take pride of being an integral part of dad's life as he did to each and every member of our family. His life is worth emulating as it was a life of great faith, fairness and generosity; it is a life of simple joys and adventures.

Dad, we once again thank you for everything that you brought into Nanay's life and our lives. You mean a lot to all the people who have come to know and love you. In our hearts, we hope we have thanked you enough. We love you dad, you will be sorely missed.

Ron Archer has kindly provided the following on Paddy.

Vincent Patrick (Paddy) Wilby was born at Bendigo on the 19th December, 1920 and passed away on the 4th July, 2010. For part of his early life he was a bushman in Queensland but he enlisted in the AIF in Melbourne on 1st August, 1941. He joined the 2/2nd serving as a Sapper in the Engineers Sectional and played an active role in the East Timor Campaign in 1942.

Shortly after the Japanese landed on 19th February, 1942 events moved quickly and as the company had no usable vehicles, Paddy, who had a way with horses, was put in charge of recruiting pony trains which he did very successfully. He was able to organize the famous Timor ponies and their Timorese helpers into effective teams which carried important gear, food supplies, and ammunition and at that time sick personnel over the rough terrain. Flooded rivers and landslides tested his teams to the full but he did this with a minimum of loss and it also spoke volumes for the hardiness and strength of the Timor ponies. A modest man with a good sense of humour Paddy loved his ponies and always treated his Timorese helpers fairly.

We are not surprised about Paddy's hydro-electric project and his book 'Australia's Great Field of Human Endeavour' he was always very versatile and could turn his hand to anything or any problem.

Fred Otway, Lyn and Ron Archer attended his Thanksgiving Mass on 4th July, on behalf of the Association and Members convey our deepest condolences to Josie and the family.

Lest We Forget

NB: Paddy could write a good story, a number of which appeared in the Courier. This one 'Shades of Caruso' which was in the September 1991 Courier is worth repeating. It is a tribute to one of his many talents.

Editor

'Shades of Caruso' from V P Wilby

It would have been early May 1942 when we first moved into Lucki Arma. We were at starvation level: little did we know it then that it would develop into a reasonable district to supply us with food.

The stage for this had been set by Babe

Teague, who had done a few trips with me on the pack trains a few months before. Babe had a very powerful voice and had been trained in Sydney to sing as a baritone. The 'boller boller' bush telegraph had also been some help too. Previous to Babe's stint on the pack trains my creado Berimo taught me how to make use of the Bolla Bolla, bush telegraph, when I was trying to make arrangements to obtain some pack ponies for my next trip. The Bolla Bolla was a centuries old arrangement of communication, used long before Australia was discovered.

This is how it was done. Berimo would stand on a hill at evening or night when sound appeared to travel a lot easier and further. He would face the direction in which he intended to send his voice. Then he would open his mouth and shout or Bolla out my request to the next village building up to a crescendo then lapsing off to a sort of sing song question. Some male in the next village would pick up the shouted message and send it on to the next village on, and on it would go. Sometimes it would take from a quarter of an hour to an hour to complete the first round. Then Berimo and I would send another Bolla inquiring whether the recipients could meet my requirements. Then we would wait and listen while that message did the rounds until we got a satisfactory answer. Sometimes the whole process could take up to two hours or more. Various sections used it quite often. But sad to say I suspect undesirables from West Timor used it against us towards the end of the campaign. (But that's for someone else to write about!)

While most of us remain mere mortals there are others who go on to generate enough power to move mountains, so to speak.

Babe and I had left the hideout above

Atsabe and were on our way down to Hatolia to load up another pony pack train of ammo and explosives when Babe turned to me and said 'Paddy, are you sure there are no Japs around here?' I assured him by saying 'I wouldn't be here if there were'. We are in the safest part of Timor. The fighting sections are out patrolling all the time making things very safe for us while we are moving all the ammo etc to the hideout. He appeared to be very satisfied with my answer and decided to get in some practice by singing 'Rose Marie' followed by the 'Indian Love Call'. It was then that I knew that he really could sing. So did the natives. And I told Berimo that there was an Italian singer by the name of Enrico Caruso who had such a powerful voice that he could crack a wine glass if he held it a foot away from his mouth while singing. Berimo passed this information along the line to the rest of the horse handlers (osilyers) who seemed to dwell on this latest topic of conversation and seemed to be turning it over in their minds wondering what they could do with it. Back came this suggestion. How about a Dansa sing song at Numery Num on our way back from Hatolia. With Babe doing the singing and the Timorese doing the dancing Babe agreed. So out went the message on the Bolla Bolla bush telegraph informing all of the coming event the night after next. Many Timorese turned up for it bearing gifts of food and a few extra pack ponies. A good night was had by all, marveling at the power of Babe's voice. Oh yes, the war was still going on.

But Babe and I didn't appear to be in it, well not just then but tomorrow would be a different day.

The next morning at daybreak we loaded up the ponies and were on our way back to the hideout. We had only been going a quarter of an hour when our leading ponies ran into trouble. They started

sinking up to their bellies in mud. Babe and I and Berimo rushed up to relieve them of their loads and extricate them, meanwhile instructing the rest of the natives to remain on solid ground and move back 100 yards if necessary. We had four ponies in strife, 2 with ammo and two with cases of gelignite. We joined the lifeline ropes together. With the ponies struggling to get out they turned the soft ground into a brown soupy ooze making things worse for all of us. However by hanging onto the lifelines that the natives on solid ground had tied to safe trees, we were able to unload all of the ponies who eventually struggled free though they were badly bruised and had abrasions. We then concentrated on salvaging the cases. By this time we had about a dozen natives in there helping us manhandle the cases back to solid ground. Two cases of gelignite were getting away from us and drifting away with the mud. By now we realized we were on a landslide. Thank god for the lifeline. We knew we stood a good chance of returning to dry land as long as we had it. Babe had turned himself towards safe land when 2 natives threw a 50lb. case of gelignite towards him. It hit him in the back. He let out a great bellow. Natives rushed in to rescue him and lay him on dry land. He was in great pain. We just had to let those two cases of gelignite drift away and attend to Babe. The natives made up a bamboo stretcher and carried him up to Atsabe for treatment. Come to think of it. I was never to hear Babe sing again after that incident.

Meantime we reorganized on dry, safe land. We cleaned up the four ponies that had abrasions as best we could. The natives from the local village promised to look after them and a couple of our natives who had been knocked about by rocks and tree roots on the landslide. Berimo and I copped a bit of bruising and

abrasions ourselves but not enough to deter us from carrying on with our job.

We loaded up again using some of the spare ponies, then detoured well up the mountainside away from the unsafe landslide area and arrived in Atsabe that night with a few sad tales to tell. We visited Babe at the Poste. He wasn't in a singing mood but he was coming along okay. Later that night I heard a few loud noises. Some of the HQ staff said it was naval gunfire way out to sea. I knew what it was all about. It was the landslide dropping bit by bit into the river. I wasn't letting on as such information might cause a panic as our Company HQ staff were in a few rooms at the Atsabe Poste which was on the edge of a sheer cliff, and as landslides were on the menu that day the less HQ knew about them the better.

Our 2IC, Captain Bernie Callinan insisted that there should always be at least 2 Aussies on these big long, haul pack trains in case we were strafed or bombed. One man up front, one at the rear and if possible it would be better if we could have an extra 2 Aussies in the middle of the pack train which would make for good control if trouble should arise. As it would be better to get in with half a pack train than no pack train at all.

I approached Sgt Major Craigie (Wimpy) for a couple of extra Aussies to go with me on the next trip to Hatolia. He said no can do, but how about taking a few Dutchies with you to replace Babe. Then I said – no can do! Those bludgers are too heavy handed when dealing with natives. They would desert in the first half hour and take their pack ponies with them. Sgt Major 'Wimpy' agreed. He went inside and saw Don Turton who said Bluey is around here somewhere on an errand. You two always get along okay. Take Bluey Pendergast with you and the job will be sure to get done.

I caught up with Bluey and through various means we formed up another pack train and headed down the mountain towards Hatolia to pick up another load. We camped the night at Numery Num not far from the landslide.

We were a very long time trying to get off to sleep as the bush telegraph had started up, inquiring about Babe, Caruso's name was also mentioned. The bollering seemed to go on for hours with the chiefs in the various villages debating who the best singer was, Caruso or Babe. They didn't think much of Caruso and his voice as he could only crack wineglass whereas the power of Babe's voice could move mountains, as happened yesterday.

Cop that Pavarotti!!! **Paddy Wilby, 1992.**

NB: Babe Teague passed away in October 1988.

2/2nd COMMITTEE MEETING

John Burrridge, Dick Darrington, Bob Smyth and Jack Carey attended a meeting held at Bob and Margaret's lovely home in Nedlands on Tuesday 24th August at 10.30am. Meetings have been few and far between in recent years. In WA we are down to 13 members. 4 of whom live in the country and with an average age of 89 years meetings are not easy to come by.

The main discussion centered around the coming handover of the Association's affairs to the Trusteeship under Chairperson Jenny Beahan (Ray Aitken's daughter). Jenny has a crew of 5 to assist her, they being John Burrridge (Jnr), Peter Epps, Murray Thornton, Colleen Ward and John N Carey.

Our financial situation is reasonably sound and it was agreed that all our assets would be passed on to the Trustees when the present Association

is wound up on the 31.12.2010. Our declining numbers has resulted in donations for the Courier, generously received from members and friends of the Association over the past 60 years are now but a trickle and we have drawn heavily on our reserves. It was decided to make a final appeal to members especially those who served in Timor, to contribute for the last time.

The few members who replied to our request for their thoughts about the future of the Association were mixed with some saying the Trust Fund should cease and others saying it should carry on. It was agreed that with no Couriers, members in their respective states will have to do their own communicating.

The committee agreed the Anzac Day march and luncheon along with the Memorial Service in Lovekin Drive should continue. A number of sons and daughters have offered their services to see that they do.

It was resolved the Association should go ahead and have a plaque placed in the Darwin Memorial Centre along with the many plaques of other units who served in Darwin and South Pacific areas. The cost of about \$800 will be met by the Association and the plaque will be in place before the end of December.

The committee plan to have a meeting with Trustee members in October. There will be plenty of things to discuss and be finalized.

Special thanks to Margaret for providing a delightful morning tea.

J Carey

A LAST APPEAL

As mentioned in the Committee Report the Association is lodging it's last appeal in this issue. The contribution to the upkeep of the Courier and our various appeals over the last 65 years by our

body my mother considered to need the inflammation reduced. This was usually my poor little chest but occasionally round my neck for swollen glands. This delightful dressing was then covered with flannel so the heat could not escape too easily and bound round with a piece of sheeting. This plaster was left in place, under protest, until it was cold and dry, at which time it was deemed to have done its job and was removed.

Mark remembered having a sore throat painted with a feather dipped in kerosene. How did he survive that one?

I got off lightly by having to gargle with salt and water for the same complaint (except that it made me vomit). We both remembered camphor bags hung round our necks to keep us from colds and from all our friends too!

There was Eucalyptus, three drops on a spoonful of sugar, and also rubbed onto our throats and chests until we were red raw. It used to work though, no self-respecting cold germ would dream of coming near us. If we had a stuffed up nose, we had to hang over a bowl of very hot water with a towel draped over our heads and inhale the steam from the water, to which had been added stuff called "Friars Balsam".

We must have been quite hardy to survive some of these treatments and who is to say they were not good for us?

After all, we have survived poverty stricken childhoods, the Great Depression years, World War 11, the Sex Revolution, and we are still hanging in there, coping with the Age of Technology. To paraphrase one of Julie Andrews' songs

"Somewhere in our distant childhood
There must have been something good."
Elsie Jordan.

Timor Memories. Series 10.
"Dutch Courage".

The unsung heroes of the Timor Campaign were the pony train leaders. In this article, Paddy Wilby who did his share in this field, writes of the hazards associated with han-

dling pony teams and of his concern when his creado Berimo, his right hand boy had a big problem. (J. Carey)

These days I seldom go into a pub but when I do I search the shelves to see if there are any bottles of Bols Gin. I don't like the taste of that liquor but it reminds me of something that happened in Timor in April 1942. From what I heard of it the Dutch troops had many cases of Bols Gin stored away in a secret place near Maubara on the North Coast and as the Japs were getting closer to Maubara someone in authority either Dutch or Aussie reckoned it would be a good idea to either rescue or capture all that gin and ration it out to the troops. So in due course the gin cache was "captured and distributed to the various platoons, headquarters and then the sections where every man was to get a measure of this gin until the supply was exhausted. Everything went according to plan with everyone receiving his daily measure for a few days.

My creado's name was Berimo, who nearly always was smiling as he had a good set of teeth to display.

He and sapper George Strickland had a shyacking match going, always poking fun at each other or at me. One night we had the guards out doing their usual things guarding the camp and the rest of were sitting around the campfire sipping gin slowly trying to make it last forever when suddenly the old chief sitting opposite us picked up a hot coal out of the fire and flicked it onto Berimo's chest. He didn't yell out. The chief then said a few words. Then Berimo started to sob uncontrollably. I drew him aside and asked him "What's all this crying about?" He told me he had been cursed by the old chief and that he had been sentenced to die. More sobs. The chief's action had something to do with a dispute that had occurred between the chiefs and Berimo's family years before and as Berimo's father had already died naturally Berimo was next in line to inherit the curse and he had just turned up at the wrong place and the wrong time to receive the curse.

Stricky said to me, "Paddy, this is something like the aboriginals in the north-west of Aus-

tralia do. If someone offends them they point the bone at the intended victim and the victim goes away lays down and is prepared to die even though the procedure may take a week or so. Nothing but their death will bring the out of that self induced trance." Oh hell!" says I, "We've got plenty of trouble on our hands with Berimo".

I wasn't going to leave Berimo to his fate. He was a valuable creado to me and others wanted him too should anything happen to me. During the Jap naval shelling of Dili he had been in jail there and escaped and came to me at Railaco where we were very busy salvaging ammo and explosives and other gear from the dump there. I noticed he was used to authority and knew how to handle the other natives in doing his bidding. He told me he was a future chief of his tribe in the mountains above Atsabe. All this I was yet to see. Later on he and I swam plenty of ponies laden down with ammo etc across flooded rivers. We would get 10 to 20 across to a safe place on the other side. Sometimes we would lose some ponies in the process. We would find most of them and their handlers washed up about 100 yards downstream but finishing up with all or some of their ammo on the intended riverbank. Sad to say some didn't make it at all. They finished up being washed out to sea, ponies, handlers, ammo, the lot. Blokes like Paddy Kenneally and others who worked on the early pony pack trains can tell you it wasn't all beer and skittles. There was a fair bit of danger attached to it. Well, I suppose that's war.

Sometimes these pony pack trains would consist of 40 to 50 laden ponies and the shot was to lead by example. And that's why Berimo and I and some willing natives would swim across first hanging onto a ponies tail whenever we could. After arriving on the opposite bank we would join about ten or twenty feet pieces of rope together to use as a lifeline, tying one end to a reliable tree if one was available if not we would just have to rely on the strength of the natives to hold it. (It never entered my head they might let it go if things got too tough.) Berimo and I would then swim back across with the lifeline and tie it to something on the other bank. If not

we would just have to let it go loose and trust in luck or God. Once that was done we would make each fearful handler grab his pony's lead rope then get a good grip with the other hand on the lifeline. Berimo would then get on the down side of the lifeline whilst hanging on to that with one hand he would urge the first handler and pony into the water. The others would follow, I was at the back threatening to shoot them (later on) if they didn't but once they were all in the water hanging on to and moving forward they all became lightheaded and treated the job as though they were setting out for a picnic. Berimo and I would have to yell at them to take the job more seriously or they would get washed away. The beauty of all this was once a boy had done one safe crossing he was looking forward to the next. All this is an introduction to what a valuable person Berimo was to lose to a silly chief's curse. Later on Berimo went on many patrols, o.pips etc. But back to the gin and the curse in April 1942.

Berimo settled down to his dying by wrapping a white band around his head. By this time as well as crying he was sweating profusely. Stricky said "We will have to do something about making him forget about dying – hows about filling him up with gin?" We put this suggestion to a few of the blokes present, some were in agreeance to giving him a tot or two from their own ration, others were dead against it especially Sgt. Slim James who said "What are you trying to do? Turn him into an alcoholic. In future whenever anything goes wrong in his life he will want to turn to the grog". We conceded that Slim did have a slight point, but this was a drastic situation and something had to be done quickly. So I said "Give Berimo my ration and see what happens". Stricky said, "He can have mine too". After a bit of a struggle George and I poured my gin ration down Berimo's throat. After about a quarter of an hour it began to take effect. Berimo stopped crying and appeared to forget all about the curse and even smiled. Then Piffy, Piffy (he couldn't say 50-50) Jimmy Veales creado, was silly enough to remind Berimo of the curse. Other creados then began doing likewise. By now there were three schools of thought regarding the curse. Us Aussies, who were once sceptical, now

for our own peace of mind, regarded it as all bullshit. Then the local natives who strongly believed in the curse and the non locals whom we had picked up in our travels who also reckoned it was all a load of bull.

So after Piffy, Piffy undid all our good work on Berimo he started crying again. So George and I poured George's ration down Berimo's throat. Slim piped up, "There I told you you'd turn him into an alky". Then our section leader Sgt. Gerry Green arrived on the scene and wanted to know what was going on. I did my best to explain. He asked me "How many pack train trips have you yet to do from Hatolia?" I said "At least two". He said "Well get out and do them immediately and above all make sure you take Berimo while he is entering into a forgetful and happy mood". That night we both slept well in the open. When Berimo awoke he asked me what happened yesterday. I said "Nothing, as far as I know". He replied, "I think something funny happened yesterday". And started smiling his continuous smile again. I wondered what sort of spirits he was seeing now. Whatever they were I hoped they were good spirits and they would hang around for a while longer. Three cheers for Bols Gin!

Paddy Wilby, October 1992.

A. Luby, Dee Why, N.S.W.

Dear Jack, I'm trying to get in early this time to save a last minute panic, and to give you an opportunity to sort out your copy!

Also these days I just have to grab what time I can between Edith's needs and appointments. Believe me, it's being a long haul back.

Her knee replacement in itself has been quite successful, but the side effects such as deep bruising, ulcers, and staph infection are slow in healing and have sapped all energy. I am not complaining but it has become a full time caring job and debars me from many of my usual contacts. I recently read a comment that "the job isn't hard if you're doing it for someone you love" and I guess that's a good philosophy.

The March Courier presented us with a great word picture of your activities over in W.A. – what a pity we are so far away and so de-

pleted in our own numbers that we can't have a similar report.

I must get busy and send my deposit to Mildura and hope to be there next year. If not it might buy a drink in the Long Bar at the old Mildura Hotel.

Had a very pleasant phone call from Bert Bache in late January whilst he and Sylvia were in Sydney to take in some of the Arts Festival. Thanks Bert. Thanks too for the many phone calls we have had from members and widows who keep in contact. That includes Hap Greenhalgh and his regular reports from the North Coast and Harry Handicott in the Newcastle area.

I hope many of you saw the Centenary of the Australian Army Parade a couple of weeks ago – a real cavalcade of progress and most spectacular in its presentation on a perfect day. By the time this issue goes to press the 4 R.A.R. (CDO) will have relieved 1 R.A.R. in Timor and be well settled in. There was a suggestion that some 42 veterans might be able to go with them particularly to attend their Anzac Day service at our Memorial, but our latest advice is very much in the negative.

I trust some of the information I have been sending to you and Bob Smyth will help to co-ordinate some of the aid to those Timorese who really need it.

Anzac Day is drawing close and I doubt if this will reach you in time but will phone a greeting through beforehand. I guess we will only have four or five present on parade due to our losses and the ills of ageing.

I must call it a day – will leave it to you to use what you need and can only hope we have no bad news to add to the next edition.

Best wishes to everyone from N.S.W. and particularly Edith and myself. Keep as well as you can.

Alan Luby. 2/4/01

Paddy Kenneally, Yagoona, N.S.W.

Dear Jack, This is for the Courier, that is if it is not too late. This is very hurried, I hope you can read the scrawl. By the time you

PADDY KENNEDY?

Tuesday 30 January 1996.

Vincent Patrick Willey
166 Stradbroke Avenue
Wynnum 4178.

In answer to your phone call last Sunday

January 28th/1/96 Brisbane

Dear Col.

Please find enclosed a rough draught of my first story for you in your latest appeal.

It needs a fair bit of cleaning up, with spelling punctuation etc. But you know how to do that. Anyhow.

Theres nothing for nothing in this once free world.

I think I can write about another 10 short stories relating to the Saffer Section mostly in humorous vein, As that's the only way I know how to write. Even in serious things like Work Creation which is the main theme of one of my books that I've been working on for 25 years I've wrote about 500 pages of it so far. Every year I say I'll finish it this year, next year, may be, the year after. I live in hopes.

So writing for you would be a type of relaxation for me. If I could write humourously without degrading anyone of consequence, and they are many. As for others, it doesn't matter.

I have some notes here for those 10 stories. To name a few Bluey and I on the Primavera patrol
Jerry and I on the Dille patrol.

Bluey and I amongst the Gammie Juacca trees. (Brewing)
Jeervies and I amongst the pigs at Artus - Bulecco. (Naturalia cure)

Babe and I on the park trains ✓✓ September 2001
Ditto Bluey.

Old Lewis patrol Beau Heely flats (ringworm) (goitre) etc.
Stricky and I on O.P.P. (may be) (prison) ←

Our blokes eating raw buffalo and grass.

Boy Howell and I with 2nd/4th (May be)

I

The trip to the sulphur springs at Kopya MOROBO.
AND AND AND. The daddy of them all.
Don Turtons pet dog a puppy at LACKI-ARMA. (Stew)
This one is true, so very very true. J J PRINTED

Of course none of those stories will be as long as the one I'm enclosing to-day. where I just had to go into a long digression to give the story some foundation work.

Oh oh. Heres another The Buffalo scare, in fact 2 buffalo scares spread over 6 months J J

Oh oh Bluey's credo butted in the balls by a goat when Bluey and I were on an O-PIP.

Oh oh Jimmy Deale and the tape worm at Cablac.

It doesnt worry me if DON TURTON dejects. Well get the treatment, just the same. Its something for him to look forward to, in his old age. no objection.

Later on I might write a few stories for Jerry about me and the Santa Claus scene over here. Im not commercial about it. I do it for fun amongst friends at the social areas I belong to.

Well Boss this should do until next week when Ill write another story for you. How about Don and his Pup.

Regards Vince "Paddy" Willey
P/S This is a private note Not for publication Just your benefit
Col.

Monday

April

Relating to sometime ~~May~~ 42 in Timor.

These days I seldom go into a pub, but when I do I search the shelves to see if there are any bottles of Bols Gin. I don't like the taste of that liquor. But it reminds me of something that happened in Timor in ~~May~~ April 1942.

From what I heard of it, the Dutch troops had many cases of Bols Gin stored stowed away in a secret place near Maubana on the north coast and as the Gups were getting closer closer to Maubana, someone in authority, either Dutch or Aussie reckoned it would be a good idea to either rescue or capture all that gin, and ration it out to the troops. So in due course the gin cache was captured and distributed to the various platoon H.Q's and then the sections, where every man was to get a measure of this gin until the supply was exhausted. Everything went according to plan with everyone receiving their daily measure, for a few ~~of~~ days.

My creaker's name was Berri, BERRI-MO nearly always smiling as he had a good set of teeth to display. He and Sapper George Strickland seemed to have a Shyacking Match going, always poking fun at each other, or was it me.

One night we had the guards out doing their usual things guarding the camp, and the rest of us who were gathered around sitting around the camp fire talking and sipping slowly sipping gin, trying to make it last forever. When suddenly, the old chief sitting opposite us picked up a hot coal out of the fire and flicked it onto Berri's chest. He didn't yell out. The chief said a few words. Then Berri started to sob uncontrollably. I drew him aside and asked him. What's all this crying about?

2

He told me he'd been cursed by the old chief and that he had been sentenced to die. More so. The ~~the~~ chief's action had something to do with a dispute that had occurred between the chiefs and Berrimo's families years before, and as Berrimo's father had already died ~~his~~ naturally. Berrimo was next in line to inherit the curse, and he had just turned up at the wrong place, at the wrong time, to receive the curse.

Stricky said to me, Paddy. This is something like the aboriginals in north west Australia do.

If someone offends them. They ~~point~~ Point the Bone at the intended victim and the victim goes away, lays down and is prepared to die. ~~Even~~ Even though the procedure may take a week or so. Nothing will bring them out of ~~that~~ Nothing but death will bring them out of that self induced trance. Oh hell, says I. We've got plenty of trouble on our hands with Berrimo.

I wasn't going to leave Berrimo to his fate. He was a very valuable creado to me, and others wanted him too should anything ~~unlucky~~ untoward happen to me.

During the Jap naval shelling of Dilli he had been in jail there and escaped. And came ~~and~~ to me at Relaco. Where we were very busy salvaging ammo and explosives ~~from~~ and other gear from the plump there. I noticed he ~~was~~ was used to authority and knew how to handle the other natives, in doing his bidding. He told me he was a future chief of his tribe ~~in the~~ in the mountains above At-sabe. All this, I was yet to see. Later on, he and I swam plenty of ~~horses~~ ~~times~~ ponies ~~to~~ ponies laden down with ammo etc across flooded rivers. We would get 10 or 20 across to a safe place on the other side

X their

X RELACO

3

x their

Sometimes we would lose some horses in the process. We would find ~~the~~ most of them and handlers washed about 100 yards downstream, but finishing up with all, or some of their ammo on the intended river bank.

Sad to say, some didn't make it at all. They finished up being washed out to sea. Ponies, handlers, ammo, the lot.

And folks like Paddy Kenneally and others can tell you who worked on the early pack trains. ~~pony pack trains~~ can tell you. It wasn't all beer and skittles.

There was a fair bit of danger attached to it. Well, I suppose, that's war.

Sometimes these pony pack trains would consist of 40 or 50 laden ponies. And the shot was to lead by example. And that's why some of ~~more~~ willing natives and Berrimo and I would swim across first, hanging on to a pony's tail, whenever we could. After arriving on the intended ~~to bank~~ bank we would gain about 10 or 20 ft. pieces of rope to - gether to use as a lifeline. Berrimo and I after tying one end to a reliable tree if one was available. If not we would just have to rely on the strength of the natives to hold it. (It never entered my head that they might let it go if things got too tough.)

Berrimo and I would then swim across with the life line and tie it to something on the other bank. If not, we would just have to let it go loose, and trust in ~~St. Luke~~ Luck, or God. Once that was done. We would make each fearful handler (or ~~handlers~~) grab his pony's lead rope then get a good grip with the other hand on the life-line. ~~I would~~ Berrimo would then get on the down side of the lifeline ~~then~~ whilst hanging on to that with one hand, he would urge the first handler and horse

x GRAB . x OR

x too valuable

4

x O-PIPS

into the water, the others would follow, because I was at the back threatening to shoot them, (later on) if they didn't. But once they were all in the water hanging on to the lifeline and proceeding forward. They all became light headed and treated the job as though they were setting out for a picnic. Berrimo and I would have to yell at them to take the job more seriously, or they would get washed away.

The beauty of all this was. Once a boy had done a safe crossing. He was looking forward to the next.

All this is just an introduction to what a valuable person Berrimo was, to lose to a silly chiefs curse.

Later on Berrimo and I went on many patrols, x OPIPS etc.

But back to the gin, the curse on ~~day 42~~ April 42.

Berrimo settled down to do his dying by wrapping a white band around his head, by this time, as well as crying, he was sweating profusely. Stricky said we will have to do something about making forget about dying. How about filling up with Gin. We put this suggestion to a few of the whites present, some were in agreement, to give him a tot or 2 from their own ration. Others were dead against it especially Sgt. Slim James who said. What are you trying to do turn him into an alcoholic. In future, when anything goes wrong in his life, he'll want to turn to the grog.

We conceded that Slim did a slight point. But this was a drastic situation, something had to be done. So I said give Berrimo my ration and see what happens. Stricky said he can have mine too. So George Strickland and I poured my gin ration down Berrimo's throat.

After a bit of a struggle. George Strickland and I poured my gin ration down Berrimo's throat. After about

xHIM

xHIM xHAVE

X the curse

X Un-did ⁵

X sceptical

X THE CURSE

For a quarter of an hour it began to take effect Berimo stopped crying and appeared to forget all about the curse, and even smiled. Then Piffy Piffy who couldn't say 50-50 (fifty fifty) Jimmy Yeales created was silly enough to remind Berimo of the curse. Other creators then began doing likewise. By now there were 3 schools of thought regarding the aussies who were once sceptical, but now for our own peace of mind, regarded it as bull-shit. Then the local natives who strongly believed in the curse. Then the other non-local who we had picked up in our travels also reasoned it was all a load of bull.

So after Piffy Piffy undid all our good work on Berimo, he started crying again. So George and I poured Georges ration down Berimo's throat. Slim popped up, there I told you, you'd turn him into an Alpy. Then our section leader Sgt. Gerry Green arrived on the scene, and wanted to know what was going on. I did my best to explain. He asked me how many pack train trips have you yet to do from Katolia I said at least 2. He said. Well, get out and do them immediately ~~while~~ and above all. Make sure you take Berimo while he is entering into a forgetful and happy mood. I quickly rounded up my pack ponies and hurriedly left before Berimo ~~he~~ went back into recovery mood. That night we both slept well in the open when Berimo awoke. He asked me what happened yesterday. I said nothing as far as I know. He replied I think something funny happened yesterday and started smiling his continuous smile again. I wondered what sort of spirits he was seeing now. Whatever they were I hoped they ~~can~~ were good spirits and that they would hang around. Three cheers for Bols Gin. for a while longer
Three cheers for Bols Gin.

Tuesday
Wednesday

Sometime May 42.

My stint with the main pony pack train had come to an end. We had moved all our reserve ammo, grenades, firearms, and explosives to our mountain hideout, roughly in the centre of Portuguese Timor. It was time for me to regain the rest of the Suffer section preparing explosive charges for blowing bridges culverts or anything else in need of such treatment, there was also ~~hard~~ hard foraging fighting and reconnaissance patrols ~~also~~ setting up Observation Posts (O.P.P.s) where necessary. Don't know about the rest of you blokes, but there was never a dull moment in the Suffer section, we were always doing, or appearing to be doing something.

I caught up with my mob at the 5 sisters, a group of 2 Bay bumbo and straw huts to the east of Mt-Sabe. They had just returned from a fight with the Gaps up on Mt-too-too ridge. As well as being riddled with malaria they were lousy and half starved and rebellious. They had found some old horse corn in one of the huts and were boiling it up to soften it so that they could eat it.

But above all they were sadly in need of a few hours rest as they had been patrolling and fighting for a week or more, and it was really beginning to show.

Lieut Don Turton in charge of our Suffer section, was trying to eat a 1/2 cob of hard uncooked ~~success~~ ~~corn~~ without corn, without much success. He turned to me and said Paddy. Lately, you've spent a lot of time in, out, and around, the Katolia area. You should know it very well, I said I certainly do. He then said Grab your gear, we are off to set up an O.P.P. on a saddle mountain saddle in that area. Then the mob ~~ra~~ roared out.

X hard

2

2

LICKR - Am #1

Don Furton and his Saddle Sitting Sappers." Don gave a weak smile. He knew they were having a shot at him and there was little he could do about it. At least, they hadn't completely lost their sense of humour, and that may be what made him attempt a smile.

With Don still hanging on to his useless corn cob, we set out for the mountain saddle at Lucky-Poma above Katolia. Don instructed the others to follow on after they re-capitated, meanwhile, he and I would set up the O. P. P. at Lucky-Poma. On the walk there, though keeping a watchful eye out for Gaps or any other unwelcomes. Don started to reminisce on the things we had achieved since the day the Gaps landed. And that we were on the way to becoming a well organized fighting force, that the Gaps and others would learn to respect. Amongst all the Don's other talents he was certainly a morale builder. He sounded very impressive, as I was only a half-trained soldier, I'd come to the Unit before it went on pre-em leave and was always at a loss trying to fully understand what the fully expertly trained blokes of our Unit were doing at times. Thus I didn't have the comprehension of the other Blokes.

But, one thing, I did know was. Morale is everything without it, you can't do much at all. Only ^xgood people to do your bidding, and once you ease the ^xgood everything collapses again, back to where it was. And morale is very important, and unknown to me then. We reminded that morale a few hours later in the Sapper section through a most unusual occurrence, started by Don. Well, we suspect him.

~~When I first joined the Army one of the first things I learnt~~
~~One of the first joined the 8th Div engineers training camp~~
~~was if you are ever in trouble or have a complaint to~~

X GOOD ~~make~~

3

3

x help.

One of the first things I learnt when I joined the 8th Div. Engineers training camp before joining the 2nd/2nd was this. If you're ever in trouble or have a complaint. Make sure your officer knows about it, as he can usually help you. The mark of a good officer is measured by the way he treats his men. Looks after his men.

When Don and I arrived at the Lapy - Arma saddle to set up the O.P.I.P. He gave me his officers field glasses so that I could scan the road out of Hatalia and other interesting places that the gyps might use. While he went off down to the native huts trying to rustle up something and cook to cook for when the rest of the section arrived.

I was doing my scan when a very small white whippet type of pup came up to me, I patted it and after a while it became very friendly, doing the usual puppy antics.

Don came back up on the O.P.I.P. telling me that the village looked as though it had been recently deserted. No people anywhere, but there was plenty of water, and cooking pots; a fire still warm, no food, a lot of young pumpkin vines, chillies mint tea fern thyme and some other herbs. Sweet potatoes. He said he thought he would be able to make up some sort of a stew from all that to feed the section. Later on. So away went the master cook to prepare the meal.

I found out later that half the village inhabitants had gone to the markets in Hatalia and the other half had gone to a funeral. Hence the unoccupied appearance of their village.

After about an hour I could smell the aroma of Don's stew x wafted up to the O.P.I.P. I thought Boy what a stew this was going to be. The feed of a lifetime. The section came wandering in 2 twos. First Bluey and Babe, then Sam and Ben, then Stricky and Wilf, Silby and Boy.

X is XWAFTED X At - Duke

4

4.

Cisco and Geaves Slim and Eddy, Smack and Jerry. Then a few others followed up by Old Leo and Grand-Ja Brown, Tex and Ritchie. By this time they were all following their noses, and the closer they got to our new camp the faster they went.

But I ~~note~~ I didn't notice the little puppy dog about the O.P.P. Not to worry, he'd turn up later on somehow.

Nearly all our section were knockabout types, and had cast iron constitutions, eat anything and drink almost any type of water without any ill effects, but not Alby, who had a ~~gentle upbringing~~ a rather gentle upbringing.

Don came around placing the men in defensive positions and told them to go down to the village one by one for a good square meal, but not to leave any position unguarded. So away went one of each two-some. Bluey & Babe had had his meal and was sent up to the O.P.P.

Bluey and Babe I already had eaten their meal and was sent up were sent up to the O.P.P. to relieve me.

When I got down to the village Alby was there, and so was Don ladelling out his famous stew into dented tin dishes. Everyone appeared to be enjoying it (within limits) but not Alby, who seemed a bit wary. So then I made a big mistake. I said to Don, I wonder where that little pup got to. He looked at me, both dogish and sheepish at the same time, and tried to smile, but couldn't. Alby explained. What? Was there a little dog here when you arrived, and he's not about here now. I said that's right Alby, a real playful little fellow. He then said, If he's not about, he must be in ~~the~~ THERE, as he pointed to the great pot of stew. Then he began heaving his meal up, and between heaves, he kept saying X exclaimed

5

5

You bastard Don. You'll kill us all yet Don't eat it Don't eat it

The rest of us were not to be dissuaded. Some even lined up for seconds. Even grand-pa Browne had seconds. He said, I'm disappointed in you Alley. Don has gone to a lot of trouble to cook us up a decent meal, and you're wasting it.

Now this was a Grand Statement coming from grand-pa, who nearly always disagreed with whatever Don did. It made Don's day. At long last they were about to make the pile of peace.

It's marvellous what an empty belly will do.

I could see that Don was angling to get me aside and deny my remarks about the puppy dog being there, and I wasn't giving him the chance to do just that.

So he would use another approach in front of the mob. He said, Paddy. You've had several severe attacks of malaria, and if it's left to go untreated for a long time it can play havoc with the victims mind, where they begin to imagine things. Now you didn't see a pup here, did you. Neither did it go into the stew because it never ever existed. I said, well what sort of meat did you use in the stew. It certainly wasn't a rabbit as there's never been any on this island. He said, that I agree. I then said. Anything for a quiet life Don. We'll have it your way and let matters rest at that. While everyone is in good spirits.

That matter was never mentioned again until now. 53 years later

And now it's up to you to decide whether the then Lieut, later captain major Don Tuxton ever cooked up a dog stew to save his men from starvation in Timor in May 1942.

Boo, Woe Woe, Boo Woe, Boo Woe, Boo Woe. I wonder what caused that to happen. It must be something I ate years ago.

Regards Paddy Willey

