

2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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Address all Association Correspondence to: Box T1646, G.P.O. Perth 6001

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COMING EVENTS

ANNUAL COMMEMORATION SERVICE

LOVEKIN DRIVE, KINGS PARK

Sunday, 18th November at 3.00pm

LEST WE FORGET

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

Friday, 7th December at 11.00am

at Anzac Club, Perth

Please Wear Your Name Tags

CHANGE OF VENUE!!

50th ANNIVERSARY

Queensland, N.S.W. and Capital Territory

Please Note: Change from

COFFS HARBOUR to PORT MACQUARRIE

See Notice and loose leaf Reply Sheet inside

EDITOR'S NOTE

This November issue of the Courier is a one off! Reasons:

(1) This is to cover reports on the visits to Timor by Paddy Kenneally and Tom Nisbet.

(2) To put out appeals for help by getting urgent returns to:

- (a) Peter Epps
- (b) The Editor

If you can assist, please do in both cases. Re-read the articles contained in this Courier, do not relegate them to the dustbin!

Thanks so much in anticipation of your replies where applicable.

SUGAR DIABETES

URGENT REPLIES NEEDED!

The W.A. Branch of the Association seeks your co-operation in finding out how many 2/2nd members have contracted this debilitating blood disease so that we can go in strength to the Repatriation Commission.

Why?

(1) Charlie Pierce has battled with them for a long time and still has not obtained a full War Service Pension. He has lost both legs, is practically blind and now has a barrister going in to bat for him, along with Ivan Davies who has done so much for our Association in this field of diabetes in particular.

(2) The incidence of diabetes among 2/2nd members is quite high and we need to know any of our boys who have diabetes, plus those who have passed on and were diabetics.

(3) We must build up a case for an approach to the Repatriation Commission for 'acceptance without demur.'

The following questions have been produced for all involved to answer:

- (1) Name and address.
- (2) Where they served. For widows, we can fix this if you are in doubt.
- (3) Confirmation of contracting diabetes and whether this was adult onset diabetes, treated by tablets only.
- (4) Whether their condition has been accepted by the Repatriation Commission as being war caused, and the reason why they accepted it, if possible.

THIS IS URGENT. To those involved, please send a reply as soon as possible. It could help you to help yourselves.

The Editor.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

To All Queensland, New South Wales and Capital Territory Members and Widows

The Jubilee Dinner to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the formation of No. 2 Australian Independent Company, later 2/2 Commando Squadron, will now be held at **Port Macquarie R.S.L. Club on Thursday, 11th July, 1991 at 7.00pm (1900 hours) in the Nissen Hut Function room instead of Coffs Harbour.**

As this date falls in a school holiday period, and high demand, it is essential to advise me of your intention to attend, along with a deposit, as soon as possible.

We have a tentative booking at Port Macquarie Hotel/Motel (5 mins walk) approximately \$42 double. Higher quality \$68 and above. Caravan parks also available.

Please act now, and help to celebrate this important event. It's much better to gather together on a happy occasion like this, than at a funeral.

Even if you've been out of touch, come and join us.

Alan Luby

PETER APPEALS FOR HELP

EDITOR: *Peter has done a tremendous amount for the Association over the years and this is his second appeal to get information for its completion. The undermentioned letter from Peter is a final appeal. Please lend weight to his enthusiastic efforts.*

If you have already supplied the required information, this does not apply to you. Read on.

Peter Epps
P.O. Box 39
Hillarys 6025

Dear Members and Widows,

For the past 7 years I have been compiling your Unit Nominal Roll and now I am ready to have it published. It will be alphabetical and, where possible, have a photo of each member, with his service details. I am hoping to have approximately 4 members per page.

At present I have 687 names of men who have served with the Unit. Of the questionnaires I sent out, approximately one third were returned. I have checked the records held at the W.A. Archives, unfortunately only W.A. members, and therefore I know the service details of only 400 odd members. Unfortunately, all I have for many members is the surname (not always spelt correctly) and an initial, there again not always correct.

What I require is a photo, in uniform if possible, and service details, the more I have the more can go into the book.

I require the photo and service details no later than July 1991. If I do not receive the above, then I will use what I have, even if it is incorrect.

The service details I require are:

1. Regimental number.
2. Full name.
3. Did member serve with Unit on Timor, New Guinea or New Britain?
4. Was member wounded? If so, when and where?
5. Did member receive an award with the Unit?
6. Did member receive any other awards, either military or civilian?
7. Rank on joining?
8. Rank on leaving Unit?
9. What sections did member serve in?
10. What other military service?

The minimum I require can be found on the members' medals or on discharge papers and that is regimental number and name.

I hope to gain a favourable response as I feel strongly that this is an important part of Australia's history, not only for the members but also future generations.

PADDY RETURNS TO TIMOR

June 6, 1990

Today is the 46th anniversary of 'D' Day, the code sign for the landing by allied troops on the beaches of Normandy. You could say 1066 in reverse. No mention on any of our radio stations of the events that took place on the 6th June, 1944. I'm beginning to think the people of 1990 are about as knowledgeable of the events of 'D' Day '44 as they are of William the Conqueror's landing at Hastings in 1066. So, any of us who think our deeds or lack of them will live on when we are moulding in our graves, forget it. The memories scarcely survive one generation.

This brings me to April 18, 1990, when I landed

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This is a re-run of Jim Smailes poems. Would N.S.W. and Victorian members obtain their books from Alan Luby and Harry Botterill.*

Message to all members. Get in early, they are going fast.

Reprint Of "THE INDEPENDENTS" By JIM SMAILES

With a masterly foreword by Major Rolf Baldwin, this unique and remarkable Narrative Poem, written by the Author while on service in TIMOR is available once again in limited numbers.

This will be the last chance to lay hands on a masterpiece which will be of outstanding souvenir value as the years roll by.

A further feature of this great work is that the cartoons amplifying various verses are the original work of the great Paul Rigby on his arrival in W.A. This gem of a production would be great as a gift to Children, Grandchildren, Relatives and Friends, especially on such Anniversaries as Christmas, Birthdays and other Great Occasions.

Priced as below, you should snap up as many as possible while they are available.

**1 or 2 copies — \$4.00 per copy
3 copies for \$10.00**

Extra Special Offer — 10 copies for \$30.00. All plus postage.

Postage:

1 copy W.A. 80c	Interstate 90c
2 and 3 copies W.A. \$1.20,	Interstate \$1.40
4, 5 and 6 copies W.A. \$1.90	Interstate \$2.50

in Kupang, West Timor, blazing hot and I'm in a lather of sweat while I stand in line waiting to pass through Immigration and Customs officials, all exceedingly polite, apart from the fact that it was a forerunner of things to come. Irish passport and Australian citizenship was a little puzzling to the immigration officers. We straightened it out, thanks to their knowledge of English. My Indonesian limited to one word 'makin' (food). I picked up one or two more during my sojourn in Timor, East and West.

Being grey headed and apparently not quite the brightest are God given assets. The good Lord blessed me exceedingly on those two counts. I got out of countless awkward situations just by looking vague, tapping the table then my head, and saying "I don't know." In West Timor officialdom bent over backwards to make life easy for this poor old forlorn geriatric. The Customs man said I could get a taxi into Kupang for 300 rupiahs, but looking at my old pack, my big boots and my generally dilapidated appearance, he added "If you walk a kilometre or two you can get a bus into Kupang for 200 rupiahs." I walked the two kms, a tout for one motel on my right side and a tout for another motel on my left side. I stayed in a private home — didn't save me any money by the time I had taken them out to dinner plus a few other things, but it didn't cost me any more either. It did, however, give me a fund of information on Kupang. Believe it or not, the man was a friend of Peter Spillett of the Darwin museum. Peter stays with him when he is in Kupang. The man in question Dr. N. M. Nape, not a medical degree, he is a doctor of administration in a Government department.

This man took me on a tour of Kupang — I went to one of the gun sites of the six inch naval guns that the Australians placed and manned prior to the Japanese landings. There were only two of them and even we, I surmise, didn't put them that close together. The one I saw is the only one left, protected by a barbed wire fence, tilted forward on its muzzle and rusting. It must have been hard work getting it up there in 1941. It commanded a magnificent view of the harbour and bay. It never fired a shot in anger. The Japs landed on the south coast and came overland.

In 1942 I was ashore in Kupang for only about six hours and there was no difficulty in seeing most of it in that time. The men of the 2/40th and the attached units would not know the place now. Population of about 120,000, noisy, teeming with people and full of life. I was wringing wet with sweat all the time I was there which was only a day and a half. I really had a Cook's tour of the place as Dr. Nape had a vehicle.

I decided to go to Soe, about 120 kms east of Kupang. The roads in West Timor are pretty good. If heading east it is not difficult country for road construction, out along the coast for a while, then inland and up through the foothills to an upland valley, rice paddies, grazing cattle everywhere, and mile after mile of habitation, with plenty of schools. This is a very wide valley bounded by mountain ranges north and south, and another range to the east. We cross a big river spanned by a good bridge, then begin climbing the eastern mountain range. The road winds its way up

like a huge spiral, hard to get any view from these mini buses, particularly as we are crammed in like sardines. Goods, baggage, people, chooks, a couple of dogs, everything taken aboard. Reaching the top I get a good view of where we've come from. I can see the full length of the valley looking westward towards Kupang, and a magnificent view of the mountains north and south, which hem the valley in. The river bed would have been a couple of hundred yards wide, with a narrow stream of water heading for the coast. This part of Timor very dry and very rocky. The wet season has been bad, little rain compared to normal wet seasons. Once more we are in an upland plateau. I reckon this runs all the way to Atamboa and south east from there towards Suai in East Timor.

Soe, I tumble out of the bus with my swag. Standing there, not knowing which way to head, surrounded by street Arabs and high school students, I opt for the students, they can speak some English. They don't know the particular place I'm looking for so they ask the street kids. Two know, surrounded by a horde of youngsters all demanding a couple of hundred rupiah I set off through the mud of the market place on to a track and up a great big hill, down an equally steep one to a road "This not far," up to date about 2 kms, however, not far more. He's taking me up another mountain track when I balk. It's like the Tower of Babel, no one understanding anyone, until a young girl comes up and says "I speak some English, can I help?" — she sure can. I show her the address. "Yes, I know this man, he is a friend of my father, my brother will take you to him." She sacks the horde of followers and her two young brothers take over. I didn't contact the man I was looking for, he wasn't home but I did meet the Namseo family, ten boys, four girls and about ten grand children. The girl and her brother spoke English and, as they get little chance of meeting English speaking people, they insisted I stay with them, all the conversation in English.

The road through Soe, Keefe and on to Atamboa must have been the way the 2/40th men came on their way to East Timor. Atamboa, a big place now, about 60,000 population if my information is correct. A magnificent Catholic Church flanked by a convent school, up the road a Government school and opposite this a Muslim Prayer House. The predominant religion in West Timor Protestant, many Lutherans. Kupang and Atamboa big Catholic populations, the Muslims would be mostly Javanese.

Concerning Dutch Timor, the information I got was the 1st and 3rd Battalions 228 Regiment under the command of Major General Ito had the task of capturing Kupang

plus, of course, the Paratroops who landed, I presume, east south east of Kupang. The only conclusion I came to is that the numbers of Japanese troops landing in East and West Timor greatly exaggerated. The 2nd Battalion of 228 Regiment was given the task of capturing Dili. More on that later.

I enjoyed my stay in Soe and also Atamboa where I met a Javanese cattle dealer who told me he shipped 2,000 head of cattle very year from Atapopo to Java for the Muslim feasts. He was also married to one of the most beautiful women I've ever seen, tall, beautifully proportioned and elegant. There was certainly a trace of white or Chinese in her blood line. She was a stunner, a good hostess too, she provided half a dozen bottles of ice cold Birtang. I was being well entertained in a beautiful home, the only thing out of place was me — blue dungarees, flannel shirt and big boots.

Left for East Timor next day on the bus going to Maliana. My map, pre 1975 full of misinformation. No troubles in West Timor with police, civil or military, in fact I didn't see any of the latter. I didn't have to report anywhere, no one wanted to see my passport. All that was about to change. Atapopo, a fairly busy port these days, near the border with East Timor. There were three freighters tied up at the wharf. The road down hill all the way from Atamboa, and a good one. The last I was to see until I got to Eremera. My acquaintance with the Indonesian military police commenced at Atapopo and was an on going and regular occurrence all the time I was in East Timor.

By the time I got to Batugade I had to produce my passport three times, answer all the questions, each time all taken down and entered in the form used for this purpose, which I had to sign. At Balibo I had to fill out five such forms. Many of my difficulties with the military police arose from the fact that I had an Irish passport, claimed Australian citizenship, and the Gaelic and English on my passport puzzled many of them as well. Other factors were suspicion on the part of the military police, this was not a general attitude, insufficient knowledge of their duties caused some strife too. If they just copied it down on a bit of paper, you could bet pounds to peanuts I'd be visited again. A very suspicious character in Aileu visited me three times for the same information. In Remexio they wanted to take my passport away. That's when I ceased to be docile, dumb and vague. "You are not taking my passport, you will bloody well leave it well and truly alone, take me if you want to, but the passport stays with me." About ten minutes of heated argument convinced them.

Along the track between Remexio and Daralau, was the nearest I came to having my

pack searched and a personal search on myself. He was connected by phone with his superior. I was kept about 20 minutes while they discussed me. I was allowed to continue. Ainaro two visits and more suspicion. Balibo two hours, I was pulled in off the road. I didn't have my passport, I'd left it at the Mission. This happened on my first day in East Timor and I thought as they had seen my passport and questioned me three times before I got to Balibo, they wouldn't worry me any more. I learned the rules of the game that day and made sure I contacted them first rather than be hauled up before them. That's all I'll say about military police now, apart from an incident in Dili later on.

Batugade, a ramshackle place on the coast, with a background of glorious mountains. The road winds and twists its way up the range to Balibo. I jumped off the bus at the Mission which is about a kilometre north of the Posto in a magnificent position. From the front steps of the church the view extends all the way down to the coast and Batugade. One of the freighters I saw at Atapopo was sailing west. Bathed in the light of a blood red sunset, a rusty old freighter was transformed into a Royal Yacht before darkness descended. Not much left of Balibo, the damaged buildings either erased or restored. A high tower surmounted by the heroic figure of a Timorese rending asunder the chains of Portuguese bondage and colonialism. Believe me, that chain has been replaced by an invisible cord, strangling the very life from a people cowed down by fear of the military might of Indonesia. Once crossing the border near Atapopo I was back in the Timor we knew so well in 1942, even by the time I got to Batugade I could see the condition of the Timorese I met was even worse than it was in those days. The numerous Chinese community of Balibo non existent. Many Chinese were exterminated by the Indonesians in this area, at about the same time as the journalists were murdered here in October 1975. I think I said those men were murdered in December when the official invasion commenced. The Indonesians were fighting in the Balibo area in October 1975. Many agents from West Timor had infiltrated the area months before that. There was a big fifth column contingent right through the border area, well and truly before the fighting broke out between U.D.T. and Fretlin. East Timor was doomed, and I have no doubts that Whitlam's Government knew all about it long before the blow was struck.

The Priest at Balibo, Father Yoseph Kapitan S.V.D. (Divine Word Missionary — we saw many of this Order's Missions in New Guinea, Bundi, Dengelagu etc.). He is a big, well set up man, with an engaging and pleasing personality. Speaks excellent English, attends to his

pastoral duties and the education of his parishioners assiduously. From my observation he looks after his people well, including the widows and children of the Fretilin men killed in the mountains. He says his first Sunday Mass in Tetum, even though this language is frowned on by officialdom. Balibo was a ray of light in the long night that has descended on East Timor. I will state here and now that the only hope I can see for the people of East Timor is in the stand taken by the Catholic Clergy in this unfortunate country since 1975. They have succoured their people, pleaded their cause, and openly condemned the atrocities, brutalities and the persecution and discrimination the East Timorese suffered, and are still suffering under Indonesian military. I've had a belly full of bloody pragmatic, agnostics. Unfortunately our country is swamped by them, no wonder nothing was done about the unprovoked invasion of Timor.

The gravel road from the border to Balibo not too bad, I've left the bitumen behind in West Timor. Left next morning for Maliana, and changes all round. Down hill to the river, a vast wide expanse of gravel, no bridge. The river was running fast and wide, broken up into a couple of channels here and there, then rejoining the main stream. The driver did a reconnaissance of the river before driving into it. The two conductors ran in front feeling for big rocks and throwing them aside, all the time guiding the driver across the cleared bed. How he kept that Mitsubishi mini bus going through the mud along the flats beats me. The longer I was there, the more I appreciated the skill of the drivers. Maliana is a fairly big place now, very busy market place. The Dili road goes through here. The whole Plain is a rice bowl, cattle and water buffalo grazing the unused rice paddies. Many Indonesian settlers here. I took one look around and decided I would carry on to Bobonaro although I was advised against going there. "The position there is far different from Balibo. Everything, including security, is tighter." Actually the military policeman in charge there was pretty decent to me. Leaving Maliana, we commenced climbing almost immediately. A bridge spanned a seething cauldron of white water dashing itself against huge boulders. Looking at that bridge I thought we would join the rocks below. I'd transferred to a truck by this time. Walking round like a headless chook in Maliana, seeking transport I bumped into a man who was not frightened to talk Tetum.

I asked in my best Tetum if I could get a lift with him to Bobonaro. His answer "Si Senhor," so I have myself a lift to Bobonaro, and found out some more about the behaviour of the Indonesian troops. His father had been a

Portuguese soldier and stayed on when the Portuguese administration pulled out. He was killed fighting the Indonesians round Bobonaro. He left nothing to the imagination when describing the killings and the rapes. The gravel road in very poor condition and much of it almost washed away. It's a long climb up to Bobonaro from Maliana. It was my first time in this area (in 1942 the furthest west I got was Marobo, then up through Cailco to Atsabe). The mountains rise sheer above the road and the rain came in torrents. I thought it was just as well we were over those rivers. The road into Bobonaro off the main road is not even a good bullock track, it was a quagmire. I expected to be bogged any minute, but he kept it going. There was a wide section where he had a turning point, then he reversed down that sea of mud, backing on his rear vision mirrors. I wondered why he was backing, and soon learned. Had he been driving down he couldn't have made a right hand turn, the road was too narrow, so he backed into a side track, and was thus face on to the main road into Bobonaro, past the Church on the hill and down into the Posto itself, these days looking a forlorn, decaying huddle of buildings. The rain accentuated the dreariness and complete lack of vitality in the place. Bobonaro's days of glory are gone, the once fine stables of Timorese ponies no longer exist, but one can still note the blood line and breeding in the odd Timor pony one sees around here these days. I remember Neil Scott and myself taking a pack train of 50 Kudas from Fatu Moquerec to Betano in September 1942. We would have to cover a lot of Timor to find 50 ponies nowadays. One of the mysteries of Timor. Where have all the horses gone? A wet, miserable day, bleak and cold. The military policeman insisted I stay with him and his wife. He is Balinese, his wife Javanese. He is 28 years of age, came to Timor in 1983, and has another three years to serve here, before he returns to Bali. Two years there, then more than likely back to Timor so it appears to me a ten year stint in Timor before being eligible for a change — for all military police anyway. Whether or not the same applied to the Infantry I don't know. It appears that the complement of military police per sector is 120. Bobonaro is in the Cailaco Sector. How many sectors they have I know not. I worked it out that there would be about 12 military police to each old Portuguese Posto, which would make anything from 700 to 1000 military police backed up by infantry and support troops. I didn't see any armoured vehicles but I believe they are there. I didn't see any military establishment in Timor, that's certain. I saw infantry in Remexio, Aileu, Maubisse, Ainaro, Hera, Vanessi, Manatuto, Baucau, Venilale, Ossu, Viqueque. The further east the more troops, my information, about 1000 in

Viqueque area, probably 5000 in the area bounded by Baucau South to Viqueque, Beco, then east from that line to Uto Lari, Anelicaí, Baguia, Ilomar, Los Palos, Lautem, Tutuala, 5000 could err on the conservative side, say 10,000 or 12,000 for East Timor overall, and that could err on the high side. High or low makes little difference. They can be very quickly reinforced from Bali, Java or Ambon, particularly the east areas, as the Baucau airfield is used exclusively by military command now.

The road from Dili goes from Laiana through Hatolia — the map I had showed nothing like that — then on to Ermera, Railaco, down to the coast road at Tíbar, then east to Dili. How it gets from Maliana to Hatalia in the west I don't know. After leaving Maliana we travelled up the river for about 4 kms, no good coming out to the bank, it was just a sea of mud along the flats. The Nunura plains are a huge expanse of low lying country, the rice output must be enormous, plus corn, fruit and tobacco. Back up to the mountains round Bobonaro. The truck driver who took me in, took me out on a fine clear morning, the mountain peaks standing out high and rugged in the clear mountain air, out on the main road. I looked across at Bobonaro and there, high up on the summit of the mountain behind the town, was a huge white cross, visible for miles. I looked up at it and then down the valley, thousands of feet below, ridged and ringed by towering mountain peaks, and above them all, the white cross, standing like a sentinel on the highest peak. It was symbolical for, in truth, the only protection the people of East Timor have today is represented by that cross, this cause kept alive by a few hundred resolute men facing enormous handicaps and odds. I felt a little more optimistic about Timor's ultimate fate, that cross renewed much of my faith. The day seemed better, the scenery more beautiful. The truck was filling up with students for the primary and secondary school.

We are heading away from Maliana in the direction the school lies, a buxom young student enters the front cabin on the driver's side, he pinches her bottom and she nearly goes through the roof, she jumps to the ground, laughs and tells him to get out before she gets in, he obliges, my slouch hat on his head and wicked grin on his face. What happens in Timor in the future will depend on these youngsters. If Indonesia fails in its bid to capture the minds of the young, the men in the mountains will not have suffered, and in many cases died in vain. The young will inherit the legends they create.

On up the valley towards the mountains facing us in the east, another police post, and five Timorese are questioned for half an hour

before we proceed. I just produced the passport and answered the usual questions, where from? where to? and why? We head for Hatolia. The winding climbing road gives us a magnificent view of the valley below, stretching all the way back to Maliana. Hatalia, peopled mostly by Indonesians. I look around and think of Gerry Maley when he was wounded here, back in 1942. I'd say there is far more undergrowth and timber on the surrounding hills today. The road varying from a reasonable gravel road to a washed out rough track — many washaways. Log bridges across gullies with much of the metal washed away, boggy quagmires in the flat sections. Just as well the ridges are heavily timbered, otherwise this road would be completely washed away in many places. That's what is happening to the Bobonaro road, where the mountains are bare of timber. Some really magnificent stands of timber on these mountain slopes, then miles of coffee plantations. The road does not pass through Villa Maria, which I had hoped, it is on the reverse side of the mountain. Ermera a much bigger place than when we were there, many of the coffee plantation areas cleared and occupied by buildings. The road had improved immensely a few miles west of the town. The new single lane bridge across the Glano, steel with timber decking, does not look nearly as impressive as the concrete bridge the sappers demolished in 1942. Ermerce, The Glano, Three Spurs, Railaco and the mountains around hold vivid memories for Sections comprising the 2/2nd Independent Company, particularly 'C' Platoon. At times we tend to forget that when 'A' and 'B' Platoons were recuperating in Ainaro, Atsabe and Hata Hudu, 'C' Platoon was holding The Glano and adjacent mountains. Railaco much bigger these days. On the way, passed Nasuta at the road junction to Aileu. 'C' Platoon, 5 Section and Campbell Rodd all had a go at Nasuta. The Nips must have thought they were the only Japs in Timor. I didn't know Railaco. From a few shops at the side of the road, it has grown to a fair sized township, mostly on the opposite side of the road. The Flat plateau which was the bazaar area, the site of a Portuguese house, and the big open sided thatched building now boasts a big Besser block building equally as large. It was here that Major Spence ordered Pte 'Cisco' Coles to have no conversation with a personable young Portuguese on the grounds that he could be a spy. The gentleman in question was Jose Da Silva, Commandante of Hata Hudu, nephew of the Governor of Portuguese East Timor. Spoke four languages, fluently, one of which was English. When the momentous meeting attended by each Platoon Commander, the 2 I/C and the C.O. was convened, it was held at Hata Hudu. Jose

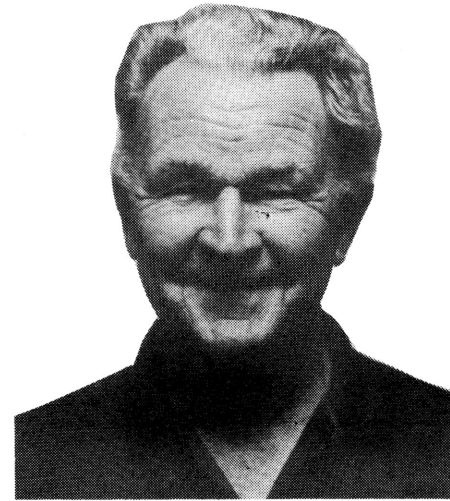
BOB SMYTH'S ROGUES GALLERY — SEQUENCE 13



Bill Tomasetti



Ross Smith



Ron Trengove



John Roberts



Mick Holland



Jack Wicks



Doc Wheatley



Vince Swann

acted as host and withdrew, saying "I will leave you gentlemen to your discussions, I have no desire to spy on your confidential business" or words to that effect. I'd say he was a man for all occasions. We came to like him greatly while we were at Hata Hudu. Goodbye Railaco.

Tibar, the coast and Dili coming up, in the past the area of the Three Lakes and the huge flat area where the Pope said the Papal Mass on his visit to Timor. The Altar, Dais and balcony were a quick built, hurried job. Looks impressive but will soon fall apart. The mountain background, the Three Lakes and the blue ocean to the north make an impressive scene, a fit place for the people of Timor to demonstrate their faith in the spiritual, and their negation of the laws of their new masters. The Pope was hardly clear of the Island of Timor when the Indonesians moved in to vent their spleen on the Timorese people.

Dili, its dark now and I am down by the markets with all the odours associated with fish, stale food and rotting vegetables. There are people still here, cooking over kerosene burners, small fires, illuminated by slush lamps or the more affluent torces. Oh well, I've slept in worse places, in the army and out of the army. I reckoned without my friend the truck driver. "We find you a place to stay." He did. The New Rendes Inn in Arenida Bispo Medeiros St, Dili. I took one look and wanted to head for Daralau or Cookera. Looked far too ostentatious for a broken down old labourer. I was kidnapped by the desk attendant shown an air conditioned en-suite motel unit and thought I haven't had a hot shower for a few days (plenty of cold ones). The bed looked good, the room cool and I didn't give a damn about the television set. Two bottles of Birtong and a plate of nasi goering and I was ready for a shower and bed.

Up early next morning, a stroll along the waterfront. It had to happen sometime — a prostitute offered her wares at 5.45 a.m. with the sun getting stronger in the east. Paddy said 'No thanks, too old,' thinking she was not a bad looking piece of temptation wasting her time for a few rupiahs. A push in the back, a laugh from the girl and off she went in a taxi. I continued the walk and finished up going to Mass at Leicedere, close by the residence of Bishop Bello. Went for a walk up through Bidan, little knowing I was right in the area Rufino Correia (Tom Nisbet's Credo) and the widow of Nicolau Concaluez lived. Headed back to the hotel for breakfast, some character let out a roar, I took no notice, so the roar got louder and more imperative. I still took no notice, when the voice literally shook Dili, I looked around and here's this dapper goggle wearing bugger almost having a fit. I realised I was the reason. 'Identity, identity'

and much arm waving. I wasn't happy either, 'How did I know you wanted me? Here, take a look,' showed him the passport. He wasn't happy, so the same old rigmarole was gone through once more. He didn't ruin my breakfast. Attended to other matters, sent to wrong departments, around in circles and back again, cleared up everything and headed for Aileu. Road block near Remexio, same story, on to Aileu. three interviews, and some interesting news from the Priest, plenty of soldiers here, and military police, also plenty of Javanese. One of them, a girl, wouldn't even touch the money I paid for the meal, she made it quite plain that I was persona non grata. Whether this was for me alone, or all white men in general I haven't worked out.

Aileu bigger, but looking much the worse for wear. I caught a truck for Maubisse next morning, the road no different, in fact worse than in 1942. Past the rice paddies stretching up and down the valley, then in amongst the mountains once more. It didn't take long to get to Maubisse. I jump off the truck, I can walk to Turuscai, stay in Maubisse or continue to Ainaro. I looked around first, at the end of the street, the high ground where the old school house had been. We stopped there for about three hours in 1942. Tom Nisbet decided to head for flea hill near Aileu at about 5.30 p.m. Turned us into cavalry, Tom, Ray Aitken, Don Lacey, Norman Thornton, Geordie Smith and myself. A ride along the road, dark, bleak and a howling wind, co-operative horses and unco-operative. Norman had the doyen of the latter, it stumbled, staggered and weaved its way along that road. The Japs could have heard Norm in Dili. We got there. I decided on Ainaro. From Maubisse down to the river, then the long climb up to the Same Saddle, with its high featured sentinels on each side. A shrine to Our Lady on the right about a kilometre from the top. Up into the Saddle, a lot of habitation there now, Besser block houses, corrugated iron roofs, not Timorese, Indonesians, also an army detachment. A shrine to the crucified Christ, adjacent a statue to our Lady of Sorrows. Those shrines, to me, were a symbol of Timor today. Those people are going through their own personal Gethsemene. As far as I'm concerned it's the second time in less than half a century. We in Australia can take a bow, we've been instrumental in both their agonies. We brought them nothing but death, misery and hardship in 1942, came home, me too, and left them to face the wrath of the Japanese alone. In 1975, when we could at least have made some reparation, we abandoned them, from Prime Minister down to the most humble Australian. We did nothing, we continue to do nothing. The argument we of the 2/2nd use is that we are a non political organisation. This is the most puerile argument for doing nothing

I've ever come up against. Waste of time writing to editors who have no intention of publishing anything. We can write to members of Parliament, hand written, every week, to the Prime Minister week in week out, to his Foreign Minister Evans on the same score. We have friends, imbue them with the same sentiments, keep on their backs and stay there. If enough do it, it's going to have more effect than sitting on our geriatric back sides and saying 'what can we do?' We can forget that hypocrisy that we are non political. If we call the survival of the people of East Timor politics, we want to remember they were a neutral country in 1942. That didn't stop them helping us. I don't care if we were the finest troops in the World, we would not have lasted three months without their aid. Had they gone against us we'd have lasted less. We either help them as individuals and as an Association. If not, it is far better we cease to talk about Timor 1942. It could well become our shame in place of Our pride.

The Same Saddle has many memories for our Unit, particularly A, C and D Platoons. We in B Platoon only travelled up the track from Same to Maubisse and Aileu on our way to Remexio. A, C and D fought there, starved there, and gave Nippon a pretty good hiding to boot.

In October 1942 I was with 6 Section, 2/4th Company when they put on what they called an ambush, high upon the mountain, 800 to 1000 yards off the track. The Japs didn't even stop walking. I sat on my derriere and looked on, no good wasting ammunition. 'C' Platoon of the 2/4th had come down from the saddle, the whole 60 of them, and kept on going. I well remember the message he sent to Bob Fleming, in reply to a message Fleming had sent him (Fleming was O.C. 6 Section, 2/4th). "Tally ho tally ho old chap, good hunting." A pity he didn't do a bit of hunting from the high rocky mountain west of the track instead of going on his merry way towards the south coast. All these thoughts and memories as I enjoyed a first class view of the whole valley. The road divides but for many kilometres I can see the road to Same across the valley as we twist our way round hairpin bends in the road to Ainaro. Another mountain range thrusts its way into the valley, splitting it in two, villages and coffee plantations flanking the road.

We come into Ainaro. I forgot to mention Hatu Builico. That is an extensive native village now. All I can assume, the Timorese are herded into closer communities so as they can more easily be controlled. Everywhere I went were these extensive areas of villages. Timor 1942 villages were located all over the mountains, just small communities. These days, not so, they are a rarity. Just like Tetum. People to whom I spoke denied knowing it, but going on their age, they must have been

into their teens in 1975, and would most certainly have had some knowledge of Tetum.

Ainaro — more dwelling places now, more people, many Javanese. Ainaro well served on the spiritual side, at the northern end of the town, where it always was, up on the hill by the Atsabe track, is the Catholic Church, on the left on a flat expanse, the Mission School, on the right the Presbytery, below that the Convent. I was out of luck, the Priest was in Dili visiting a sick brother so I had to look elsewhere for information. I found it in the guise of three young Timorese who were interested spectators as I was being questioned for the second time by the military police. We won't worry about names. They gave me a further insight and further proof of the Timorese desire to be independent. These were well educated young men, educated to professional standard — we won't mention the profession either. They were highly critical of Australian policy as regards Timor, particularly the so called Timor Gap Treaty. To quote them "This country and its resources belong to the people of East Timor, not for added wealth to nations already exceedingly wealthy." I could not disagree. Their argument irrefutable.

The bottom end of Ainaro a Muslim Prayer House, below that again the market place. The Muslim Prayer House says it all about the new Ainaro, Indonesian settlers and running all the business, most buildings shabby in appearance, no maintenance. In the old days they would have been sparkling white, nowadays begrimed, except for the Muslim Prayer House, the Church, School and Mission property. The military well represented, at least an infantry company plus military police.

Next morning a dilemma, where to go? I've got to be back in Dili by Saturday to meet an Australian coming in from Bali. A rash promise on my part. It knocked my plans apart. I'm practically to the south coast and have to go back north. I thought back to Remexio, that will put me within striking distance of Dili. Remexio, troubles galore. Its practically 100% Javanese, school teachers, doctor, chemist, an ambulance. The three latter alone told me this is no ordinary Posto. In my travels up to date I had not seen a doctor, a chemist and an ambulance in East Timor. In Balibo the Mission attended to any cuts, bruises, broken limbs etc. In Bobonaro a Spanish Nun attended to all medical duties, but here within 20 kms or so from Dili they had the lot. They also had a military detachment, plus military police who wanted to take my passport, hospitable school teachers who insisted on providing accommodation and feeding me.

I'd been almost to Liltoi but had to turn back. The appointment in Dili was beginning to

squeeze. Lilitoi is called Lacado these days and there were no 3000 Japs there in 1942. Billy Holly, Alfredo De Santos and I went back to look for Bob Ewan August 1942 and before the Jap withdrawals between Fatumoquerec and Lilitoi, we met five Timorese, conscripted them for service (we hoped Bob may have only been wounded). They came, most unwillingly. We found Bob, he must have died instantly, shot practically straight through the heart. Strangely, most of the hair cut from his head, and what looked like a bash from a rifle butt to the face. As we buried him it was the loneliest I ever felt anywhere, the only sound was of our bayonets as we scratched a hole out of the dry hard earth. The whole land was eerily silent. The usual noises such as shouting children, cock crowing, pigs grunting as they foraged for food, all missing, a land without sound.

We gathered the hidden stores, tea, sugar and the Bull's saddle, which he had somehow acquired. I never saw him ride a horse all the time I knew him in Timor. We slept on the mountain side across the river on the track to Turuscai. The five Timorese were happier. Bill saw the green very light, I didn't. Next day the Japs withdrew, we had nothing to do with it. The 228th Regiment left for Souabaya the first and third Bns. From Kupang on the 7th September, the second Bn from Dili on the 6th September. I doubt that they went to Rabaul, New Guinea or the Solomons. Why sail west if you are headed east for the above destinations. That was the end of the August push. The rest is a puzzle to me. 228 had apparently stormed Hong Kong, captured Ambon and Timor, or part thereof, seasoned, battle hardened troops. Who replaced them, what strength, obviously they could not have been as seasoned as the men they replaced, or they would have been sent to wherever 228 went. Yet, those buggers reached the south coast, when we had twice as many men at our disposal, one unit of them completely fresh and fit, only just out of Australia. Why? Why? I reckon I saw half the answer going down the same track. The bloody message I saw could have been the other half.

I had to return to Remexio. I just followed the road which follows the old track, past Ray Aitken's ambush site by the waterfall. Ray picked one of the best positions available to him along that track. Other positions further down probably more suitable, however. He would have been cut off by any Jap force moving along another track higher up, which later joined the Remexio track. As it was, we just beat the Japs to the junction, thanks to the native who risked his life to let us know a second force was moving along that track. I always think that ambush took place on a Sunday. Even as I sat on the hill looking down

the track I thought 'If you had any brains Paddy, you'd be back in North Sydney reading the Sunday papers.' I was never noted for my brain power. Anyway, we knocked off a bundle of Japs and the Singapore tiger prowled no more. He would not have been pleased, were he to see the scraggy crew that sent him to his ancestors.

Another Police Post. The closest I came to a search of pack and person. Half an hour later I'm on my way again. Hit the Aileu road, and opt for the Daralau track. I'm feeling good, the pack isn't heavy and I can see Daralau, appearing to be far closer than it is, a few umas, not in bad condition, what appeared to be a school or hall, Indonesian flag flying, no school, it's a Muslim holiday so teacher, if there is one, obviously Javanese. We couldn't O.P. Dili as well from there these days. The undergrowth obscures much of the area now. I decided to cut the journey a bit short by taking to the native tracks straight down. I wished I'd gone the long way round via the Hera Saddle. When I got to the river, I dropped the pack, took off the hat and just lay face down in the water for about half an hour. Half an hour after that and I'd dried out again. Continued down to the Hera road, and caught a bus into Dili.

Whilst in Ainaro I met an old bloke who had seen the battle of Bazartete when he was a youngster and he vividly described Paddy Knight 'tuan bort liu' (very big man) 'rua Australie soldado martee' (two Australian soldiers killed) 'tolu moras bort' (three badly injured). He described the Jap machine gunner lying behind the light machine gun, the bipeds on which it rested, the whole battle, and he did it in Tetum.

I was not happy being in Dili. I had got Andre Lemos's address from my friends in Ainaro so I looked him up. A Javanese tout had fastened on to me, I shook him off after he had served his purpose. Andre, the son of a man I've known since 1975 was a Godsend, he owned a vehicle, Nicolau Goncalvezs widow was his aunt, so I was on my way to finding someone. All that was attended to on the Saturday. I met the Australian at Dili Airport, we booked him into the New Rendes Inn, but my independence was gone, furthermore, I had to wait for the banks to open on Monday to get some money. I had given most of mine away, thinking the banks would open on Saturday as usual. That Muslim holiday went from Thursday to Monday morning. I took off for Baucau, the road pretty good as far as Manututo, excellent as far or close to Hera which is a far more important place these days. A fine college there, run by the Salesians. Manututo, its past glory still evident in some fine buildings sadly in need of some paint. It is also a very important military base

for the Indonesians. A reasonably good road runs from there to Cubas and then you are into the hinterland Lac Lubar, go south west to Fatumoquerec, south east to Lac Luta, a very important area, from which to cover all inland areas from Ossu to Turuscai. The Manututo and Laçlo River areas still huge areas of rice paddies. Who owns them, I know not, but I saw Indonesian soldiers guarding workers there. Whether the workers were Timorese prisoners or Javanese being protected I cannot tell.

The road gets worse. Incidentally, why the hell we didn't bring the hill sides down over that road between Hera and Manututo beats me. Of course, we had nothing to drill in a hurry. In 1938-39 I was working in a quarry and we did it with jump bars and drills driven by a man wielding a ten pound hammer. I was a hammer wielder. On up through Vanesu to Baucau. I don't know who is Javanese, who is Timorese. The Timorese still tend to dress in a leipa in the mountains.

Baucau, teeming with troops, marching students from primary to high school level, smart and well turned out. Baucau, a lovely position rising in levels from the plain. Same old story, no maintenance. Once fine buildings looking dilapidated and dirty. The flamboyant hotel, used these days for interrogation and torture of prisoners. I'd say most prisoners in Timor are political, and God help them. The atmosphere round Baucau not to my liking. I set out for Viqueque, the old Porto road no better than '42 out through Venilale, Ossu. Plenty of military presence all through this area. Viqueque, army galore, huge vegetable gardens, cleared and used by the Indonesian army. The red and white flag flying from many buildings, Indonesian official buildings mostly army. Father Antonia Freitas looked after us. He is a busy man, a huge area, and a troubled one. An interesting place to be, and a dangerous one. I'd say spies everywhere, and informers. The usual thing where an army is holding down a populace by might alone. I thought I could have gone along the south coast and on up to Los Palos. Father Freitas said yes, but a four wheel drive vehicle would be needed. Next day he took us back to Baucau, giving us many interesting sidelights on life in the eastern end these days. He showed us the caves and tunnels hewn out of solid rock by Timorese slave labour for their Japanese masters. At Baucau I opted for Los Palos, my visitor wished to return to Dili. So that was it. For the only time I broke a golden rule. That was the promise to meet up with someone. Then again, I could hardly allow someone who knew no one or anything about the place on his own. East Timor isn't like visiting a holiday resort with thousands of visitors about.

Back to Dili I went, and I knew I'd lost my

chance to go to the eastern extremity. I had to leave Dili the next day to make the south coast. Fortunately I met Rufino late that afternoon. Rufino, from what I can make out, the last of 4 Section's Creados. Surrounded by his children and grand children. The years roll back — there they are laughing, joking, Nicolau, Rufino, Maubare, Dili, Patricia, Berryman, Africano, and others whom I can't recall, sharing the life of the Australia Soldado, the good times the bad, the wet, the cold, the hunger and, I suppose, sometimes the fear. Rufino left, I wonder does he ever think how this country and people abandoned them in 1975, probably not. Nicolau would have. Nicolau died out in those mountains and I'll bet he well realised the Australies had abandoned them. I was sad seeing Rufino, he brought back so many memories and reminders of the men we lost in Timor, and Mother of God, what for? They wouldn't recognise our people today. We have become completely materialistic. I expect that's the price we pay for affluence. There's a lot of 'bugger you, I'm alright Jack' in our character today, and that includes my own generation, and me too.

I'm off to Suai and the south coast tomorrow. I'll make it with a day to spare to Kupang. Suai, I don't even report to the police. It's very late. A despondent trip from Ainaro on to the south coast Plain. Very rough, just as well it was the dry, crossed some wide rivers strewn with huge boulders. There in the bed was a battered overturned van. I hope it was unoccupied when the river claimed, battered and destroyed it. Looking away to the east the Plain stretched for miles, actually considering the area of Timor and its mountains, it is a comparatively vast plain, cattle, buffalo and I should imagine deer, still roam its forests. I thought of Geordie Smith and Joe da Silva, they would often go deer hunting when we were at Hata Hudu. Now here I am, grey headed, and complaining about a road, not actually, just pointing out the false claims the Indonesians make about road work. Actually, all the roads I've travelled were constructed by the Japs, using Timorese labour, apart from the ones we knew of. I'd say that, with proper maintenance, these roads would be serviceable all weather roads. The Indonesians claim they have spent huge sums on road work. I can't see it, they inherited the roads and have let them to go to ruin in most areas. I reckon the money is spent maintaining their armed forces and hidden under the guise of road work.

This South Coast Plain is a fertile area, rice, corn, tobacco, fruit, cattle, buffalo, goats. How much the Timorese own I don't know. Habitations run for miles, like a huge suburb. Timor style umas but not up on stilts as they

should be on this flat terrain. I cannot see them as being other than flooded in the wet. The pat from road to front door about four inches high, just river gravel, but adequate.

Suai a place of two parts, one down in the flat and not prepossessing. The other up on a low plateau and pretty good. Balinese and Javanese run businesses. A fairly large place and about the best kept place I've seen. The Priest is Timorese, as is the school teacher who came from Bazartete. Although it was night, the Priest took me on a trip along the coast down past where the Aussies were drilling for oil. They found it, and the well is spudded. The drillers were drilling up around Soe by then. So, we in Australia at some future date can wax a bit fatter on Timor oil. At least a company of infantry camped almost on the beach. One thing I can vouch for, soldiers in every place I went from Atapopo in the west to Baucau and Viqueque in the east, from Dili in the north to Suai in the south west. Father tells me he has 42,000 parishioners, hence my conclusion that these huge areas of Timor houses hold Timorese, all nicely confined for easier control.

I leave early for Atamboia. The road so bad at one stage it took neraly two hours to do five or six miles. I could have walked faster. I reckon we hit the border about a place, Butine I think, a bitumen road from there to Atamboia. I'm back in West Timor, no more reporting to police, no more being apprehensive about who I'm speaking to, no more soldiers, military police, or fear of bloody informers. Although in Kupang I was politely asked by a couple of gents why I went to Dili. I wondered how they knew I went to Dili — I'd only been

here a few hours. I told them I'd been there in 1942 when the Japs were there. I gave a long explanation of Jap paratroops landing east of Kupang and Jap troops landing by sea. I told them all about Japs and bugger all about Paddy. It may have been just an idle question, I don't know.

Timor, well, for what it's worth, you have a population of second class citizens, picking up the crumbs the Indonesians throw their way. They are held in subjection by armed might alone. No love for their masters, no hope for themselves the way things are at present. No good jobs, no chance to run a business, any protest arrest, beatings and torture. They are informed against, they can be hauled up at any time, questioned, beaten and abused. They are a frightened people but there's a great big but. They have hope for the future, even if it is obscured. They haven't surrendered in their minds and hearts. The men still fighting in the mountains are the legends their future resistance will be based on, the Bishop and Priests of the Catholic Church their only voice to the outside world, in fact the only voice of authority raised on their behalf.

The Indonesian claim that their losses are negligible is a farce. Why all the white markers in the cemeteries they call the resting place of the heroes, and the Indonesian flag fluttering proudly in the breeze high on the flag pole. With all their strength they still have not conquered these people. They are a subdued and frightened people but not a conquered people.

PADDY KENNEALLY

TIMOR REVISITED 23 AUG - 5 SEPT, 1990

As requested, and as it may be of interest to some Association members, the following sets out my observations and impression during my recent visit to East Timor.

At the outset I want to make it quite clear that I do not approve or accept the action of Indonesia invading and occupying East Timor. I make this point because some of my comments may give the impression that life for the East Timorese people in some respects has improved compared to what it was when we served there in 1942 or as I saw it, still under the Portos when I visited in 1974. Perhaps conditions are better but must be measured against having a government by occupation.

Some general observations made during my short visit — apart from my ex Creado Rupino I did not meet any Timorese who had personal

experience of the Australian/Japanese conflict. Nevertheless, the 'Australie Soldado' is still held in high regard and the story of our service has been woven into the folk lore of the Timorese and has obviously been passed down from our generation to the next.

Because they see few Europeans, everywhere I went the local populace were curious about my presence, and when informed by Rupino of my previous association with Timor and locally, were very impressed, particularly when I loosed off a few Diacks, Hatenis, Bosocks and Labarilks etc in Tetum. Whilst it may have been my imagination, I sensed their good will and regard for the Australies.

The limited number of Timorese I met or observed are still as we knew them, a friendly smiling people, well mannered and considerate.

I saw no evidence of malnutrition, at the same time I didn't see any that were overweight. Physically, I would say they were about as they were in 1942 and when I visited in 1974.

Purposely I never canvassed for their opinion or experience of the Indonesian occupation or treatment. I thought it would be better for them that, if after my departure they were interrogated, they had nothing to deny or admit as a result of their meeting or association with me. While I was there I personally saw no instances or evidence of mistreatment of the Timorese. They appeared to be able to move freely and go where they wished. I took Rupino and some of his relations wherever I went, which included trips to Bazaarate, Liquica, Aileu, Eremera and Manatutu. We were never stopped, questioned or restricted in any way and when we got to those locations had the 'run of the town' if I can put it that way. Nor did I see any military personnel just happen along to see what we were about.

That's not to say the Timorese were not apprehensive about Indonesian authority, perhaps this was from past experiences but while I was there I saw no instances of direct or physical oppression. Other sources have told me that about June or July 1990 many of the restrictions and control of the civilians were lifted. I can only relate my own experience.

However, Rupino did ask me to give him a Surat (letter) explaining the reasons for my visit so that he could produce it if he was questioned after my departure.

My personal impression, gained from observation of the conditions prevailing in the places I visited, is that the situation appears to have stabilised.

The Thatchers and Pires, the latter Timorese nationals, who were in Section No. 4 circa 1990 visited Los Palos which is east of Baucau. From Dili they had an uninterrupted journey there and back but did voluntarily report to the military authority in Viqueque, but it was their decision to do so. However, they did report the military presence was greater than they saw in the places they visited with me, i.e. Aileu, Liquica and Eremera.

On the subject of the Indonesian occupation I make the following comments — it is difficult to make a qualified statement on what happened during the invasion and what has happened in the 15 years of occupation. I haven't tried to in this report. Much has been reported in the media and one cannot ignore and personal experiences of Timorese now living in Australia, nor the subsequent events following the visit of the Pope and the American Ambassador. However, I do have reservations about some of the facts

contained in reports about 200,000 - 250,000 Timorese being massacred and the atrocities on the scale reported.

The situation as I saw it during my brief visit is as follows. The Indonesian military presence is certainly there in East Timor but I question the numbers reported by Timorese living in Australia and the media. There were certainly soldiers in the places I went to and their presence was visible. In Manatutu, Aileu and Eremera I would estimate about Company strength (70 - 80) in our terms. In Bazaarate there were two!

The Indonesian soldiers I saw and Military Police were well turned out, neat uniforms, appeared well disciplined and were polite, affable and friendly — to me anyway. They certainly weren't rabble. While there I did not see any military trucks with troops aboard either singly or in convoy or any military activity one would associate with a military operation being mounted or supported.

The old Dili drome, as C.F.G. and 2 Section would recall is now a helicopter base. While I was there it had three light units parked on the tarmac with a further two or three bigger units I would estimate capable of carrying 10 - 15 troops each. There didn't appear to be much helicopter activity in or out of Dili.

On the main roads leading out of Dili and on the main roads leading to Mon Baca, Aileu, Eremera and Manatutu there were military check points. They were manned by a single soldier who was not stopping or checking traffic. No doubt these check points could be converted to road blocks if necessary, but all we received when passing was a friendly wave which I returned.

As stated earlier, at no time was I stopped or asked for my permit or passport or in any way restricted. However, I was required to produce it when booking into the hotel and at the bank when changing travellers cheques.

Dili today is a lot more cosmopolitan and has a greater population compared to my visit in 1974 and it is certainly busier. I had difficulty in identifying who were Indonesians and who were Timorese, except in the public utilities like the Australian equivalent of Telecom, Aust Post, Government offices, banks etc, where the staff were mainly Indonesians with a small percentage of East Timorese filling the minor roles in these establishments.

At the Turismo Hotel where I stayed, the manager/owner lessee was Indo-Chinese, with the general management Indonesian. Timorese were in the bar, waiting, cleaning and general duties roles.

It may well be there, but there were no obvious indications to me of the Timorese being regarded or treated as inferior or second class

citizens in the work places I have mentioned — which is different to the days of Porto Government.

From observation I believe Indonesia has a big problem getting qualified people with ability and experience right throughout its country. For instance, the Timorese who serviced the No. 1 accommodation in the Turismo Hotel was a retired ex Portuguese Army corporal with a slight knowledge of English. He, Jaochim as he was known, was certainly in command of his section and look out anyone who questioned his authority. I might add that he had the responsibility for the accommodation occasionally used by visiting Indonesian Generals, Senior Army Officers and VIPs.

Indonesian and Timorese Chinese appear to run the commercial and retail sections of business in Dili. The bigger retail stores were well stocked and, although on a much smaller scale, were similar in layout to our Safeway, Target supermarkets. By comparison with 1974 standards, the retail stores in Dili are much better and there are more of them. Whether this improvement is attributable to the Indonesian occupation I don't know — perhaps it may have happened anyway in the normal course of development over 16 years.

There are three or four banks in Dili and the one I patronised was always busy and it appeared efficient and well run. Its Australian connections were with Wespac.

Petrol in Dili was \$A.30c per litre. Dili is well serviced with taxis and during the day the maximum you would wait to be picked up would be 2 - 3 minutes. Mechanically, the cabs are in reasonable shape except that most are minus window winders or door handles.

To go anywhere in Dili costs \$A.30 to 40c. Drivers are not aggressive although they toot the horn a lot, but this is done to let other road users know where they are and not as we in Australia do, as an indication we think the other driver is a 'dumb B-----' and shouldn't be on the road.

From observation there appears to be quite a good transport service throughout the country by small buses carrying about 20-30 passengers. The Timorese use them extensively and it was rare to see anyone walking along the roads. Buses were always filled to capacity with the odd passenger hanging on outside the bus.

The road system has greatly improved, mostly unsealed and in the mountains many tight and blind curves. On the trips I did there was evidence of road maintenance, resurfacing and drainage being carried out. The road gangs and equipment were not large but there was certainly work being done. On two occasions we passed road survey teams using theodolites, markers etc.

There were a few trucks and Army vehicles on the roads, mainly carrying Timorese and perhaps augmenting the bus service but I can't recall seeing any vehicles loaded with produce etc.

I am not qualified to make judgement on the claims by Indonesia that they have considerably improved the education system. However, in Dili I saw many students of about secondary or high school level and they were in school uniforms, neat, clean and tidy and wearing shoes and socks. I visited the grounds of a primary school close to Dare. The kids were about 7 - 12 years old, reasonably dressed in shorts and shirts or dresses. To me they appeared typical school kids and happy.

During my stay the Indonesians ran an exhibition in Dili, located in the big sheds where previously the weekend market or Bazaar was held. The stalls and stands were devoted to trade exhibits, education, agriculture, coffee growing etc, and there were exhibits on the Army, Navy and Airforce. It was popular and visited by many, both day and night. Perhaps the promotion was not quite as polished as we would see in similar exhibitions in our capital cities, nevertheless I believe it served its purpose in promoting Indonesia and imparting knowledge.

On the 4th September, the day before I left, there was a religious service held in Dili in a small park close to the shore line and the Turismo Hotel to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dili. In preparation, about a week before, work started with the erection of archways over the roads leading to the park, a big sign of the number '50,' a large platform/stage was put together and the general area in and around the park was decorated with palms and other plants. Inside the park a seating area for about 300 to 400 was set up. Most of this work was carried out by Indonesian and Timorese soldiers. The ceremony commenced at about 3pm and when I joined the audience outside the park there would have been about 20,000 in attendance and I would say all Timorese. On the platform there would have been approximately 100 clerics in support of the Catholic Nuncio Apostolic for Indonesia and the local Bishop of Dili, Bishop Belo. The service was conducted in Tetum and, from my point of view, a bit drawn out. However, the Timorese Choir of boys and girls was tremendous and their singing alone would have made my trip worth while.

Towards the end of the service in the Roman Catholic faith you are asked to turn to your immediate neighbours, those on your left and right, front and back and shake their hand and utter the wish 'Peace be with you.' I had been

standing alone in this great crowd and when this part of the service was invoked I was tuned to by all the people in my immediate vicinity and in a very polite and well mannered way confronted with many outstretched hands which, in due course, I shook. At this stage the clergy left the platform and moved amongst the huge crowd, conducting the communion service. It was all very moving and made it obvious that the Timorese, regardless of their present situation, are very devoted to their faith and church.

Shortly after my handshaking experience I moved back to the Hotel and did not see the demonstration by a group of pro Independence and anti Indonesia who are alleged to have produced banners and moved on to the dais chanting their slogans. It is also reported that Bishop Belo talked with the demonstrators and the protest was diffused and all left peacefully.

There were a very small number of police present and the ones I saw (3) were directing traffic away from the park. Perhaps the Indonesians are learning how to handle demonstrations.

Next morning of course, in true Timor style

the many and varied accounts of what happened and subsequently, were being recounted. As usual the facts were not allowed to spoil a good story.

I left Dili the next day after a fairly emotional farewell with Rupino, wife and relatives.

On the surface anyway, the situation in East Timor right now is a lot better than I had been led to believe and one can only hope it will continue to improve.

Now that the restrictions of visiting East Timor have been lifted, I hope that some of those who served there will return and see it again. By general tourist standards I think it must be admitted there are a lot more attractive places to go, however, I suppose the same could be said of Gallipoli!

Finally, I would like to suggest to our Association that we consider doing something in the way of education assistance, scholarship etc. for East Timorese. Most of our Credos have gone but their relatives are still about. We may not be able to do much by our standards but to the Timorese it could mean a lot.

T. G. NISBET

REPORT ON CONDITION OF ASSOCIATION'S MEMORIAL TO THE TIMORESE AT DARE, EAST TIMOR

SUMMARY

On 26th August, accompanied by Max and Patsy Thatcher, I visited the memorial and from personal observation report the memorial is in good condition.

There are no outstanding maintenance problems and structurally the memorial is sound with granolithic work and existing paintwork in good order.

The Thatchers who accompanied me, are practical people, and asked for their views, confirmed my opinion of the memorial's condition.

Following are details on various sections of the Memorial with photos per Dili developing and printing.

(1) Memorial Plaque

This is under glass and for the camera difficult to photograph the detail. I think it is the original wording, but I could not see if it was the replacement bronze plaque organised some years ago. However, it is adequate and tells the story and quite easily read by the naked eye.

(2) Entrance Steps

Sound and in good order. Paved steps, step

edgings and staircase wall sections — no chips or indications of deterioration. Steps down into the area are attractive with good paintwork. Some paving and wall slabs have been painted in light pastel colours.

(3) Open Roofed Area

This area is sound and in good condition. Walls are sound with no signs of any cracks — Mortar and wall slabs/bricks show no signs of deterioration. Here again, some painted slabs and mortar.

Floor of this area flat and even with no sign of loose paving or break up.

Concrete pillars supporting the roof are solid and in good condition and with good paintwork.

Roof appears solid with no signs of leaking.

(4) Water Point-Roofed Area

The basin is a giant clam shell serviced by a tap water point. A bit of green moss below clam shell but water point and clam basin in sound condition.

(5) Main Water Reticulation System

Water is introduced into the ablution and pool area through a concrete box which discharges water onto the sloping runway

area, then runs into the tank or pool section. Water flow was adequate (although it was the dry season) and I would estimate it was running through into the pool at about 30 to 50 gals per hour.

The main retaining wall below the water entry point is probably the largest constructed area of the whole memorial and from a layman's point of view I would think subject to the most pressure and potential deterioration. The wall looks to be in good condition. The mortar/cement between bricks/slabs is sound and there is no indication of cracks bulging or any sign that the wall is deteriorating. A few small ferns grow out of crannies in the wall but I don't consider they pose any threat to its condition.

(6) Runway and Tank Area

The runway appears to be sound. It was covered by about ½" of water gravitating through to the pool. With the water and leaves on the surface, I could not examine in detail, however it looked to be OK and certainly no significant cracks. The walls at the edge of the runway were in good shape and appeared sound.

The tank/pool at the end of the runway roughly about 10'x20'x5' deep was filled with water coming through the system and with an outfall to let the overflow pass out. The tank is sound and to my surprise no sign of cracks or any leakage.

There is a minor seepage around the outlet or cleaning hatch but in the main the pool is in good condition.

GENERAL

The standard of cleanliness and tidiness was good, there were no papers, cans, bottles etc. anywhere. The runway area had a few leaves on it and the bottom of the tank, while the water was clear, it looked a bit murky. Subject to cleaning out the tank, ten minutes with a broom would see the memorial in inspection order.

From observation and questioning the locals, I gathered the memorial is used little if at all for its original purpose — as a resting place overnight prior to going into the Dili Bazaar.

These days Timorese seem to travel by public buses and whilst there, we saw very few Timorese walking and carrying their market produce on the roads or tracks.

However, the Memorial is well located, just outside Dili and I believe does still fulfil the Association's objective in expressing gratitude for the great assistance we received from the Timorese in 1942.

Not far from the Memorial is quite a large school by Timor standards — in the hills anyway. When I passed the Memorial some days later, some young boys were enjoying themselves in the pool, so it still has some practical use.

During my visit I met Senor Arsenio Horta and can confirm Mr Spillet's version of how the Memorial came to be repaired and refurbished.

Perhaps we should follow up that lead and make contact with the Regency of Dili and ask for their support in maintaining the Memorial — even if it costs us.

Custodian of the Memorial

This is a picture of Self, Ernesto Semine Martines and Rupino. His address is Fata Naba Dili RT8, Timor Timur, Indonesia.

I was unable to establish how or why Senior Martines had undertaken the job of looking after the memorial or under what authority. However, I made a personal donation to Senor Martines of Rupia 60,000 (which in our currency is approx. \$43,000) and thanked him for his interest. I am not sure I got through to him as he was very reserved, shy and a bit overawed by it all. However I am sure that later on when he reconsiders the 'presenta,' he would accept my intentions were good and that our Association appreciates his efforts.

I hope I haven't rambled on, but I did want to provide the Association with a member's personal observations on the condition of the Memorial.

I will be writing later about other aspects of Timor Revised and you'll get it in due course.

TOM NISBET