

CHAPTER 11

BALIKPAPAN

(1st July to 12th September 1945)

THE ASSAULT

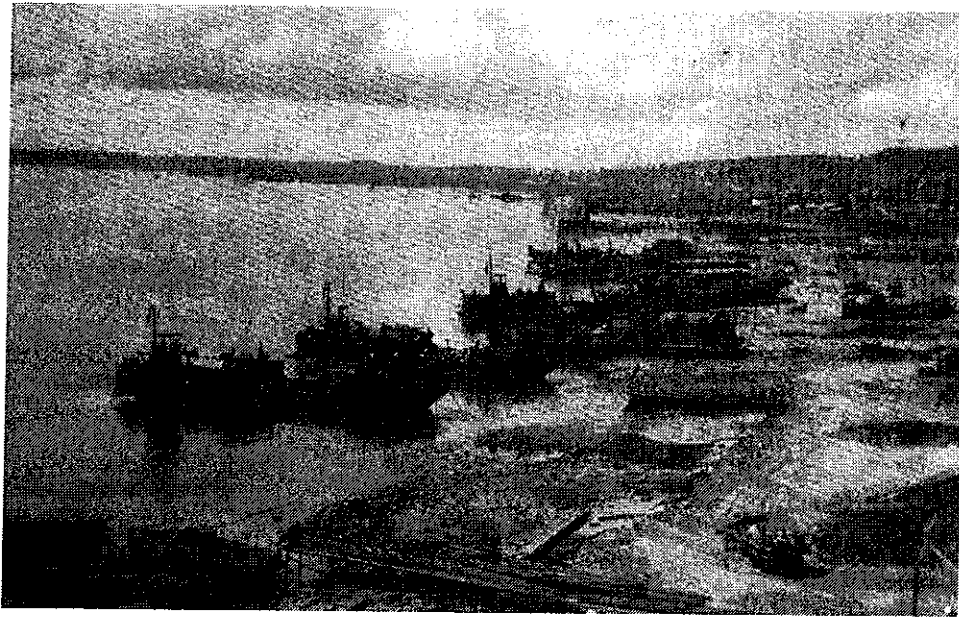
The battle plan for the taking of Balikpapan was for the landings to take place on the 1st of July, 1945. The sea lanes would be cleared of mines and heavy air bombardment would be carried out beforehand. The assault task force amounted to over 33,000 men. There were to be landings on three beaches by the 18th, the 21st and the 25th Brigades of the 7th Division. There were two Commando units also included in the landing force, the 2/5th and the 2/6th Cavalry (Commando) squadrons. The three landing beaches were code-named *Green*, *Yellow* and *Red* beaches. The medical units involved were the 2nd A.A.M.C. Beach Group, the 2/4th, 2/5th, 2/6th and 10th Field Ambulances, the 2/2nd and the 2/3rd C.C.S.'s and a Malaria Control unit. The code name given to the operation was "O.B.O.E.2". Major H.B. Gatenby who was attached to the unit at Buna was one of the surgeons allotted to the 2nd Beach Group.

One Company of the 10th Field Ambulance was to come under the control of the Beach Group and to assist with forming a beach dressing station. "B" Company was given this task. The other Company, "A" Company, was to come under the 25th Brigade, the reserve Brigade for the operation. Headquarters was to remain under Divisional control and to be ready to form an M.D.S. if required.



Coming Ashore at Balikpapan. Apart from full packs each man carried an item of medical equipment.

The landings took place simultaneously on all three beaches and were mainly only lightly opposed. By the end of the first day most of the high ground overlooking the beaches was under our control but the 18th Brigade was experiencing tough opposition north of Klandasan.



Australian troops landing at Balikpapan

Reveille on board was 0430 hours and the first troops went ashore at Red Beach at 0900 hours. The first ashore from our unit were Lieut. Merv Featonby with Ptes. Clive Matthews and Jack Standerwick. They established a site near Red Beach for a Dressing Station and notified the R.M.O of the 2/10th Battalion of its location. By 0930 hours Major Cliff Barrett with Sgt. Clem Winchester and 15 O/R's landed. In addition to full packs and haversacks each person had to carry a specified piece of equipment so that immediately the section had landed it had enough equipment to last for twenty four hours until transport could arrive and other stores be unloaded.

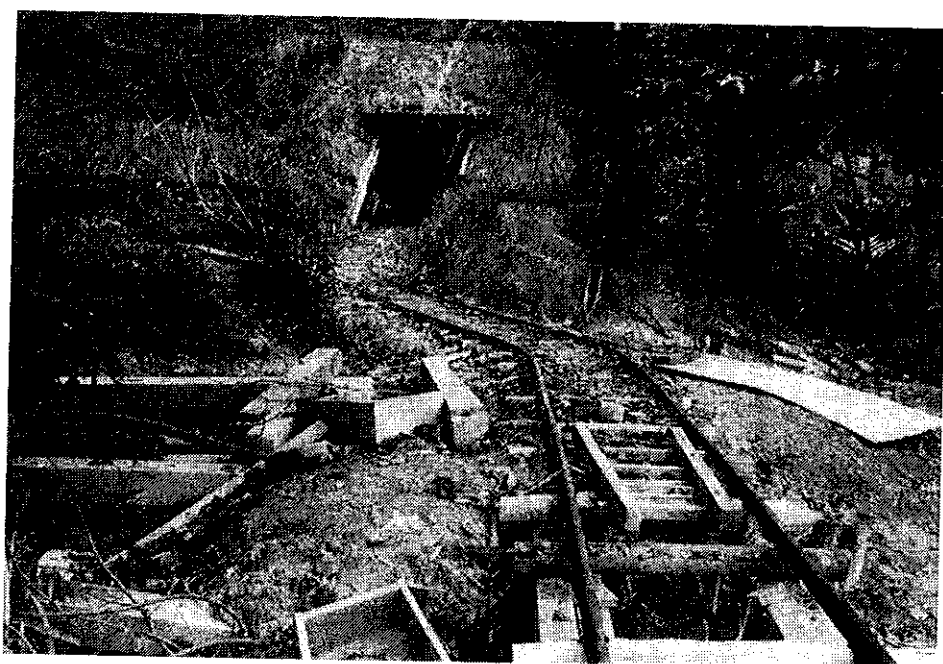
Major Barrett's party did have a jeep and water trailer and driver with them. The beach was muddy and the jeep became stuck and required the services of an "Alligator" and some manpower from our section to get it up on firm ground to be driven to the Dressing Station. While the vehicle was being pulled out, stray enemy bullets were passing overhead.

Major Barrett sent a stretcher bearing party to the 2/10th Battalion R.A.P. Once again, as at Buna and Sanananda, we found ourselves collecting, treating and evacuating casualties from the battalions of the 18th Brigade.

The M.B.D.S. was established at Yellow Beach and all evacuations to base by sea took place from there. A section of "B" Company of the 10th Field Ambulance under Capt. John Sands landed at Green beach and proceeded to Yellow Beach where they assisted the beach group to set up their dressing station and when it was running they supplied nursing staff, cooks and stretcher bearers for internal movement or for sea evacuation of patients. This continued until the 12th of July when the beach station ceased to operate. Captain Sands was in charge of resuscitation and also the pre-operative and post operative wards at the M.B.D.S. and our orderlies staffed these areas.

Fortunately casualties were light and the medical services and equipment were adequate to handle them efficiently. Another section of "B" Company established an A.D.S. near Petersham's Junction. This post handled thirty six patients on the first day and twenty five the next day. The casualties were well spaced out and could all be treated and passed on to the M.B.D.S. with a minimum of delay.

One of the problems was that the whole area had been mined by the Japanese. One mine was found near the kitchen and was deloused by the Engineers. Two more were found within a 15 yard radius of the R.A.P. One of our members had a narrow escape at Red Beach when he struck the toe of his boot against a partly covered land mine planted in the centre of a well used track to the R.A.P. Armed pickets guarded the Dressing Stations at night.



Japanese gun tunnel, Balikpapan.

When the 2/9th Battalion made a landing at Penadjim on the 6th of July Cpl. Forrest and five O/R's were sent to set up a beach post for the sea evacuation of casualties. Another group, of four stretcher bearers under Sergeant Clem Winchester were sent to the Sepingang air strip once that had been captured, to set up an air evacuation post for casualties from the 21st Brigade. The 2nd U.S. Air Evacuation Unit to whom our men were attached were also stationed at the airstrip but our men did the stretcher bearing. Clem Winchester maintained liaison with the 2/3rd C.C.S., the hospital to which the patients were being evacuated.

"A" Company, attached to the 25th Brigade landed at Balikpapan at Green Beach on the 2nd of July and had to wade through three feet of water to reach the shore. The fact that the 25th Brigade was the reserve Brigade and their role

in the campaign was unknown meant that no detailed preplanning could be made. However, in order to be prepared for any role the Company was divided into three sections, the first under Major Gratton, the second under Captain Brand and the third under Lieut. Foord. The 25th Brigade however, were soon given a very definite role to play and as a result "A" Company of our unit handled most of the forward action in this campaign. A squad of four stretcher bearers was attached to each of the three battalions of the 25th Brigade and two squads were attached to the 2/6th Cavalry (Commando) Squadron. Captain Bill Brand and 19 O/R's established a medical staging post about half a mile along Hobson's Road and evacuated casualties to the beach Dressing Station. There was only one casualty through the staging post on the first day.

Ron Handley gives a graphic illustration of the conditions during the early stage of the capture of Balikpapan. He writes, "*On a hill top outside Balikpapan, with an Infantry Battalion, after an all night star shell barrage by the Australian Navy. It was stand to around 5 a.m. when an explosion shattered the stillness of the morning. Being front line soldiers, Jeff McGill and self ascertained it was a booby trap covering a path to our left. The trench to our right was occupied by Neville Stephens and mate unknown. Somebody or thing burst through the bushes and into Neville's trench. There was a wrestle going on and the discharge of a rifle - stillness. I said to Jeff, "It looks like he has finished Nev, I'll shoot the b.... before he jumps us." Jeff being an ex infantry man suggested we wait a few more moments. Then to our surprise we heard another shuffle and a voice in the dark came across loud and clear, "just a pig"!*

Next time we meet Nev, you owe me a beer!"

Sadly, Neville passed away in 1997 and Jeff McGill in 1986.

SPREADING INLAND

The 25th Brigade took over the central sector from the 18th Brigade allowing the 18th to advance northwards. Two ambulance jeeps and two stretcher bearer squads were sent from Headquarters to reinforce "A" Company personnel. Both ambulance jeeps together with orderlies were moved forward, one to the 2/33rd Battalion R.A.P and the other to a car post at Blyth's Junction. The axis for the Brigade's advance was the Valley Highway and it also became the evacuation route. Captain Brand's Medical Staging Post was moved to join the car post at Blyth's Junction. The area cleared of mines was too small so two sections moved elsewhere to bivouac for the night.

It was one such mine which caused the tragic death of Sgt. Jack Pigram at Blyth's Junction on the 3rd of July. Jack was digging a trench and struck a land mine and was killed. Pte. A.J. (Bluey) Spokes was wounded by the blast and evacuated. Sgt. Pigram was buried at Blyth's Junction on the 4th of July, 1945.

Padre Vickery conducted the service. Tragically, a few weeks later at Orr's Junction the war claimed another member of our unit, Pte. Ted Dunnel.

On the 4th of July the Brigade advanced and an A.D.S. was set up at a former Japanese Anti-Aircraft site west of Orr's Junction. Two stretcher squads and a jeep were attached to the 2/6th Cavalry (Commando) Squadron who were given the task of clearing the enemy from the Baroe Peninsula. This task was successfully achieved without any casualties.

On the 5th of July two sections of "A" Company set up a Medical Staging Post in a six roomed school building about half a mile behind Orr's Junction while Captain Brand's section remained at Blyth's Junction.

The roads were very poor and in some sections patients had to be carried by hand over the bad sections and in others the jeep drivers had to proceed slowly with stretcher bearers walking alongside securing the stretcher to the jeep and the patient to the stretcher.

The A.D.M.S. of the 7th Division inspected the evacuation posts and gave instructions for the Medical Staging Post at Orr's Junction to be converted into an A.D.S. with the ability to hold up to fifty minor sick cases who could be returned to their units within ten to fourteen days. Further reinforcements had to be brought up from



Sgt. Jack Pigram's grave, Balikpapan.



Camp Hospital at Orr's Junction

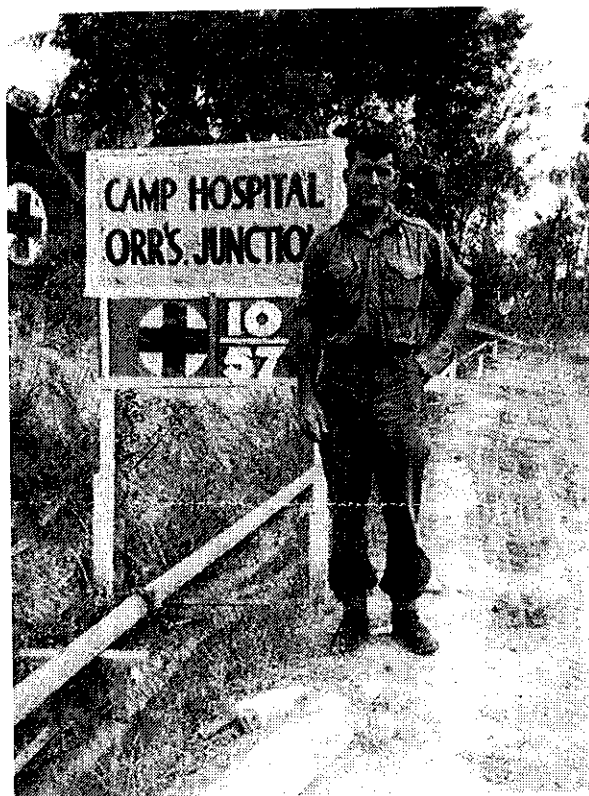


Staff at hospital, Orr's Junction

Headquarters Company to effect this change as there were insufficient men left from "A" Company after supplying thirty stretcher bearers who were stationed at the Battalion and Commando R.A.P.'s.

The Australian advance was fairly swift and medical units had difficulty keeping up with the forward troops. Pockets of strong resistance were encountered particularly near Kapak. The Japanese seemed to specialise in trying to infiltrate Australian positions at night trying to do as much damage as possible with grenades and bombs. They were successful on some occasions.

The twelve stretcher bearers with the 2/6th Commando Squadron remained with that unit after capturing the Baroe Peninsula. They swung to the left flank of the 25th Brigade as they advanced northward. Some difficult country was encountered and stretcher bearers had a difficult carry to evacuate the wounded. The Medical Officer of the Commando Squadron requested six canvasses from folding cots to be supplied so that they could be used as improvised stretchers similar to the blanket stretchers the natives had used in New Guinea.



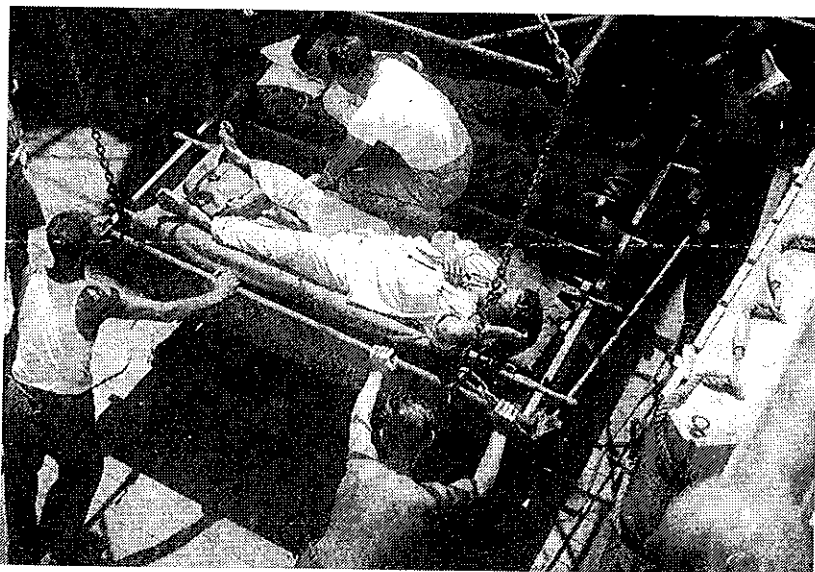
Roy Rasmussen outside entrance to Camp Hospital, Orr's Junction.

A bridge on the Milford Highway which had been demolished by the Japanese meant a hand carry for the stretcher bearers of 1,000 yards to the jeep head. At other times bomb craters on the road necessitated hand carrying of patients around the affected area. By the 8th of July the 2/2nd C.C.S. was operating and evacuations from posts at Blyth's Junction and Orr's Junction were taken there. Also the converted Landing Ships, *Kanimbla*, *Westralia* and *Manoora* plus L.S.T. 777, surgically equipped, arrived at Balikpapan to clear casualties needing evacuation to a General Hospital. Captain Brand and his party moved to the A.D.S. at Orr's Junction and were relieved at Blyth's Junction by a Sergeant and ten orderlies from Headquarters Company.

Our medical officers kept regular contact with the R.M.O.'s of the three battalions thus ensuring smooth evacuation of casualties as the action moved forward. Enemy detonated mines were taking a toll of our troops during their patrols. Ruptured ear drums as well as shrapnel wounds were a feature of those who survived. An abandoned Japanese medical dump was discovered after they had retreated and we were instructed to collect all medical equipment and stores and keep them at unit headquarters.

By this time the Japanese were becoming rather desperate and "C" Company of the 2/25th Battalion was attacked at night by a party of Japanese armed with grenades, spears and swords ! Immediately an area was cleared of the enemy and before being occupied by our troops the A.M.C.U. arranged aerial spraying of the area with D.D.T. This drastically reduced the number of casualties from malaria and dengue.

The 25th Brigade aided by the 2/6th Commando Squadron continued to advance along the Milford Highway but encountered strong opposition near Batochampar. As the line of evacuation was very long a forward Staging Post



Evacuating patients at wharf, Balikpapan.

was established by Cpl. Bill Jones and three stretcher bearers. The time taken for a patient from the front line to reach the C.C.S. was considered unacceptably long and the three battalion medical officers together with those of "A" Company 10th Field Ambulance were of the opinion that a surgical team forward of Orr's Junction was needed.



Loading patients on to Hospital Ship.

R.A.P. to service the surrounding units. The line of evacuation would be through Orr's Junction to Pandansari and thence by a good road by motor ambulance to the 2/2nd C.C.S.

On the 17th of July the 2/4th Field Ambulance stretcher bearers took over from the 10th Field Ambulance the task of clearing the battalion and Commando Squadron's R.A.P.'s. By the 19th of July the Camp Hospital at Orr's Junction was operating and twenty seven patients were held. Daily sick parades were also held for all units between Blyth's and Orr's Junctions who did not have an R.M.O. All of "A" Company 10th Field Ambulance personnel returned to Company headquarters and concentrated on operating the Camp Hospital at Orr's Junction. The Headquarters Company personnel who had been assisting at Orr's Junction returned to their Company at Stalkoedo.



Transport drivers, Orr's Junction.

HEADQUARTERS ROLE

The Headquarters Company of the 10th Field Ambulance had been embarked on two separate ships each with an equal amount of equipment and stores so that each could function separately if required. As it transpired they were not required to set up an M.D.S. but their personnel were used in reinforcing "B" Company on the beach and the A.D.S. and Camp Hospital at Orr's Junction and also supplying help for the 2/5th Field Ambulance M.D.S. and the 2/2nd C.C.S.

The Pathology Sergeant with his equipment was sent to the Camp Hospital where he was able to take blood samples and diagnose malaria, dengue and other diseases. Assistance was also given to the Dutch native hospital on the Baroe Peninsula taking blood slides to check for parasites and spleen test. Medical supplies from a captured Japanese medical dump were sorted and checked. Captain Reith was detached temporarily to the 2/2nd C.C.S. Padre S. Vickery returned to H.Q. 7 Aust. Division and was replaced by Padre S.H. Farmer.

VICTORY

By the 25th of July the Japanese resistance was effectively over with just small parties left to be rounded up. From the cessation of hostilities until the middle of August the daily admission rate at the Camp Hospital was between twenty and thirty. Malaria incidence was light with only three cases being reported in one week. The incidence of dengue was similarly light. Twenty natives were employed clearing scrub in which large numbers of mosquitoes were harbouring. The bed occupancy dropped to eleven patients and on the 29th of August, instructions were received to close the Camp Hospital but to continue with the R.A.P. service for surrounding units. Packing of stores commenced in readiness for an order to shift.

A letter of appreciation was received from Captain Epps, R.M.O. of the 2/6th Aust. Commando Squadron for the work done by members of "A" Company attached to their Squadron. The letter reads :-

2/6th Aust Commando Sqn
7th Aug 1945

O/C "A" Company 10 Fd Am

Sir

I have received your message regarding camp cot covers, used for improvisation of stretchers. As I shall most certainly use them again for future operations in the very near future, I would prefer to retain them, and send you the receipt enclosed.

I had intended to write much earlier to thank you for the excellent work which you and your company did for us during the first two weeks of the operation. The stretcher bearers worked very well and willingly and I could have wished for nothing better in the supply of medical equipment.

I would be glad if you would inform the C.O. of my thanks and appreciation.

Thanking you,
R.G. Epps Capt. R.M.O.

Care, Courage & Camaraderie

Major General Milford, G.O.C. 7th Aust. Division, sent the following message to all troops under his command:-

*HQ 7 Aust Div
25 Jul 45*

TO ALL RANKS OF 7 AUST DIV TASK FORCE.

The first major task in the BALIKPAPAN campaign has now been achieved and the enemy has been routed with great loss. Your fame in assaulting a position of such great natural strength and so heavily defended will remain an outstanding achievement of this war.

To the infantry assisted by the cavalry and armour has fallen the burden of the battle; they have fought magnificently and at no time was the issue in doubt. The artillery and other arms, by their effective and overwhelming support have contributed in no small measure to the victory.

The engineers employed from the most forward positions to the beaches, by their very hard work, their technical ability, and courage have been outstanding. To the signals and the services and those who had the less spectacular, but no less important roles, such as labour and base development, success is equally due. All have played their part in the team and given of their best; by this means only has the task been so successfully completed.

To the Navy and the Air Force who paved the way so well, and answered every demand in such full measure 7 Aust Div owes deep gratitude and shares with them the honour.

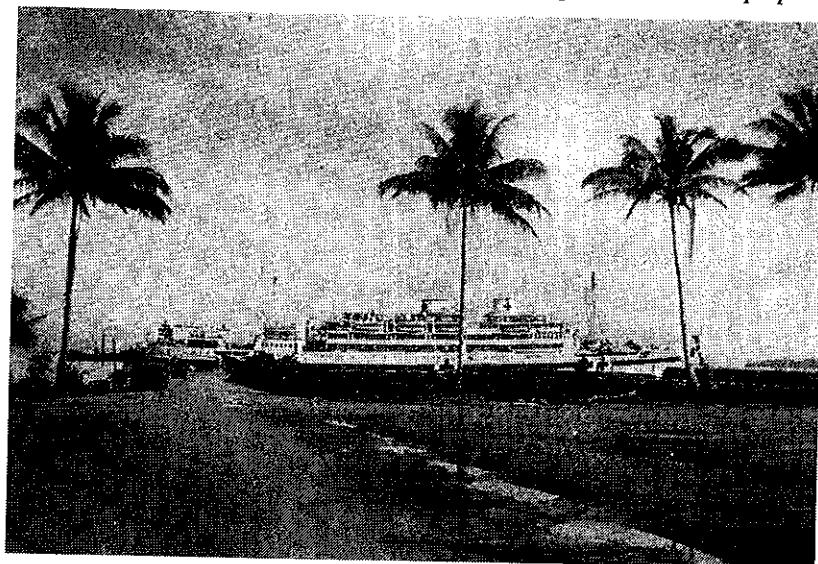
The task has been well done, and the utter defeat of the enemy draws nearer.

E J Milford

*Maj-Gen.
Comd 7 Aust Div.*

More medical units began to arrive at Balikpapan with the 2/3rd C.C.S. setting up on the 14th of July and the 2/12th A.G.H. arrived but did not unpack. Nurses arrived for the 2/2nd C.C.S. and the 2/12th A.G.H. on the 27th of July but by this time most of the action was over. As Allan Walker in his book "The Island Campaigns" notes, "Medical units were provided on a generous scale for the Balikpapan landing. Most of the work was done by the Field Ambulances, including the medical company of the Beach Group. The larger units, comprising the 2/2nd and 2/3rd C.C.S. and the 2/12th A.G.H. did comparatively little and the co-operation of the landing ships saved the field units from the necessity to hold an increasing number of sick as had occurred in other actions of more intense and prolonged type."

With the impending close of the campaign the unit was asked to look for a site to operate a convalescent camp. A suitable site was found at Stalkoedo and on the 21st of July Major Mick Dunn, W.O. Len Martin, and an advance party went to the site and commenced preparing for the erection of tents.



Hospital Ship, Balikpapan.

The camp site was right on the beach and personnel and patient tents were erected just above high water level. The area was divided by a small creek and across the creek was a flat area suitable for parade ground and sports ground. The Administration buildings, the Q.M. store, the Dispensary and R.A.P. were planned for this flat area with the kitchen and mess hut on the beach side. By the end of July all of "B" Company and Headquarters Company were located at Stalkoedo and were working on construction of the Convalescent Camp.

END OF THE WAR

On the international scene the the writing was on the wall for the Japanese. Okinawa was captured on the 22nd of June. General MacArthur had returned to the Philippines and all organised resistance there ended on the 28th of June. In early July the Japanese mainland was being subjected to intense naval and aerial bombardment preparatory to an invasion. This was not necessary however as the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on the 6th of August with the second on Nagasaki on the 9th followed by the unconditional surrender of the Japanese on the 14th of August, 1945.

The news of the Japanese surrender was received over the wireless on the 15th of August and a full unit parade was held at 0900 hours and no further work was done that day. On the following day a Thanksgiving Service was held in the Camp Hospital mess hut by Chaplain Farmer.

The end of the war saw Australian troops overseas in a number of areas. In the Wewak- Aitape area the 6th Division was on the brink of completing a pincer movement against the Japanese and were within 16 miles of joining up which would have cleared the enemy from that area, when peace was declared. The Australians comprising the 5th and 11th Divisions were closing in on Rabaul

GUINEA GOLD VP

Second Edition

IT'S OVER

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

WASHINGTON, Wed.: Japan has accepted the Allied demand for unconditional surrender.

This was announced simultaneously from their capitals by the four Allied leaders at 0900 hrs. (NGT) today.

In a statement from the White House, President Truman announced that General Douglas MacArthur had been appointed Supreme Allied Commander to receive the Japanese surrender.

On behalf of the Allies, President Truman, through US State Secretary Byrnes, has asked the Japanese to cease fighting and to notify General MacArthur of the effective hour and date of the end of hostilities.

Official declaration of peace throughout the world must wait upon the formal signing of the surrender instrument by Japan before General MacArthur and high-ranking officers representing Britain, Russia and China.

CULTURE FOR JAPS

While the Japanese people awaited the Emperor's unprecedented message of grave importance to Japan, news agencies were adding last-minute touches to softening the blow.

Chief of the Jap Board of Technology, Lieut.-Gen. Tada, urged the Japanese people to give up revengeful thoughts and liquidate militarism for their own benefit.

He told the Japanese not to dream of some weapon superior to the atomic bomb, but to turn to culture instead.

Minutes later, the Japanese Domei News agency, which transmitted Tada's statement to overseas bureaux, ordered it killed, without giving any reason.

Japanese broadcasts early this morning pictured Japanese people, with tear-stained cheeks, and bowed heads gathered outside the Imperial Palace offering their apologies to Hirohito. Many cried out: "O forgive us, our Emperor, our efforts were not enough."

In Canberra, Prime Minister Chifley, announced: "The war is over," and simultaneously, Mr. Attlee broadcast: "Japan has surrendered."

From his HQ on Borneo, the C-in-C, AMF, General Sir Thomas Blamey, said that Australian forces would be needed for garrison duties in the north for "some considerable time."

Surrender Proclamation

The Japanese reply said:

"With reference to the announcement of August 10 regarding acceptance of the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration, and the reply of the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China, and by Secretary of State Byrnes, on August 11, the Japanese Government has the honor to communicate to the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and China, as follows:

"1. His Majesty the Emperor has issued an Imperial Rescript regarding Japan's acceptance of the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration.

"2. His Majesty the Emperor is prepared to authorize and ensure the signature by his Government and the Imperial General HQ of the necessary terms for carrying out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration.

"3. His Majesty is also prepared to issue his commands to all the military, naval and air authorities of Japan and all the forces under their control, wherever located, to cease operations, to surrender their arms, and to issue such orders as may be required by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces for the execution of the above terms.

(Signed) Togo."

The news of Japan's surrender was broadcast to the world at short intervals in all languages from all Allied stations immediately after the official announcements.

LAST AIR STRIKES

Just before the announcement a record 829 strikes were launched on Honshu, in which 800 B29's and 290 fighters took part. Six thousand tons of demolition and fire bombs were dropped during this air onslaught.

Railway yards near Hiroshima, which received the world's first atomic bomb, oil refineries and industrial areas in Tokio, were hit.

Even as the dramatic news of Japan's capitulation was being flashed simultaneously from Allied capitals, hundreds of Allied carrier-borne planes were over Tokio.

They were only a few seconds from their targets when word of Japan's unconditional surrender came in over the aircraft's radios.

It was the volte of the commander of the US 3rd Fleet, Admiral William ("Bull") Halsey, saying:

"It looks like the war is over in the Far East, but if you see any enemy planes in the air, shoot them down in a friendly fashion."

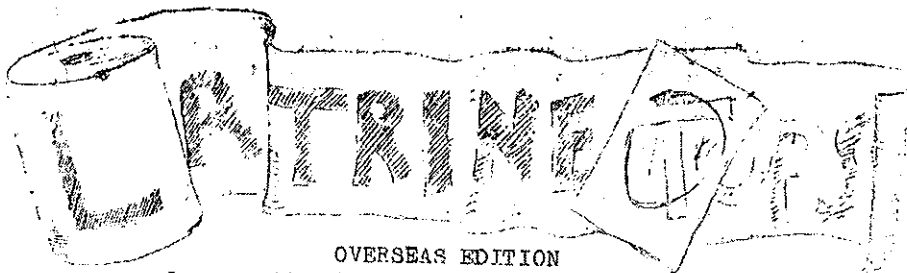
So the Anglo-American pilots held their fire and dropped their bombs in the sea on their way back to the carriers.

Until the Japanese order to cease fire has been definitely issued and is being obeyed all Allied forces in the Far East are remaining on the alert.

Victory Edition of "Guinea Gold".

but the Japanese were still there when the end came. On Bougainville the troops of the 3rd Division were engaged against the Japanese in the south, central and northern sectors. On all fronts they were being strongly resisted but slowly and surely they were being pushed into an area on the Buin Peninsula where they could be encircled. In July 1945 the advance was slowed by heavy rain and the consequent flooding of roads making movement difficult.

The three landings on Borneo had all been successful and the troops of the 7th and 9th Divisions were still at their respective sectors caring for sick and any released prisoners and also the native population.



OVERSEAS EDITION

Incorporating WATER CART WHISPERS and JUNGLE JIVE

Editor: Bushytail

Printer: Col Johnson

Star Reporter: J Whacka (Radar) Thomson

Sporting Reporter: Limeslight Lovett

Bringing you each SATURDAY the hot news of whats cooking, from our various lonely outposts where something is cooking all day every day

No 2 Issued weekly by 10 Aust Fd Amb (AIF)

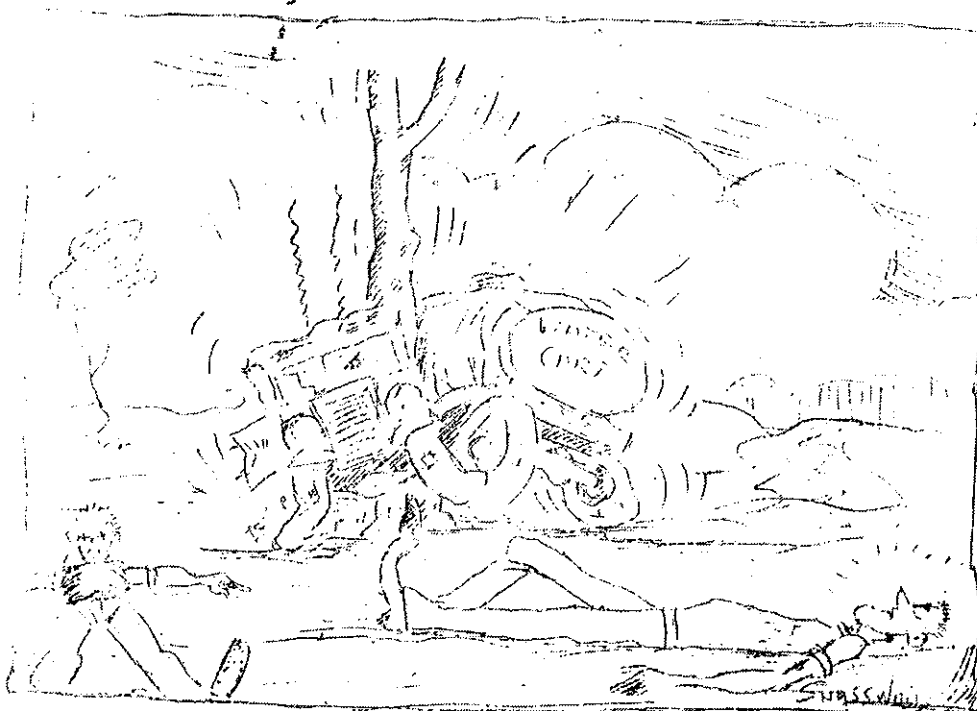
SAT 1 SEP 1945

LATRINE TOPS RECEIVES ITS FIRST LETTER

Shortly after last week's issue we received a letter in the most flowery and elaborate language. That it is from "A" Coy is obvious but the authors hide behind the nom de plume of "The A Coy Isolationists".

The letter is a mixture of praise and sarcasm. We accept the praise but the other, if intended, we treat with ignore.

CARTOON OF THE WEEK by SNASSWOID



In the red corner, at 140 pounds, our star reporter and newshound, J Whacka (Radar) Thomson in natural position. In the white corner, at 160 pounds the crack driver and ladies man K Birchall, also in natural position. In the centre of the ring one Truck, 3 Ton, Water Cart F S in most unnatural position.

THIS WEEK'S SMOKE SIGNALS

A new bookies clerk has arisen from the ranks, Fang Mollison having at last realised he is wasting Army time in the Q Store, is now typing out Mick Holland's betting lists.

That grand old man beach cumber Bob Staples had such a great collection of shells buried in various places around the area that, to avoid confusion, he

drew a map. It looks like an old treasure map and it must appear that second kindergarten days are near Bob.

That swarthy precision Carpenter No 1 Priority Hunt is doing all he can to hasten his release. Was heard the other day, cooing to Mr Featuby about repairs to Merv's chair.

Unit Newspaper, "Latrine Tops". Ambonese boys with Digger hats.

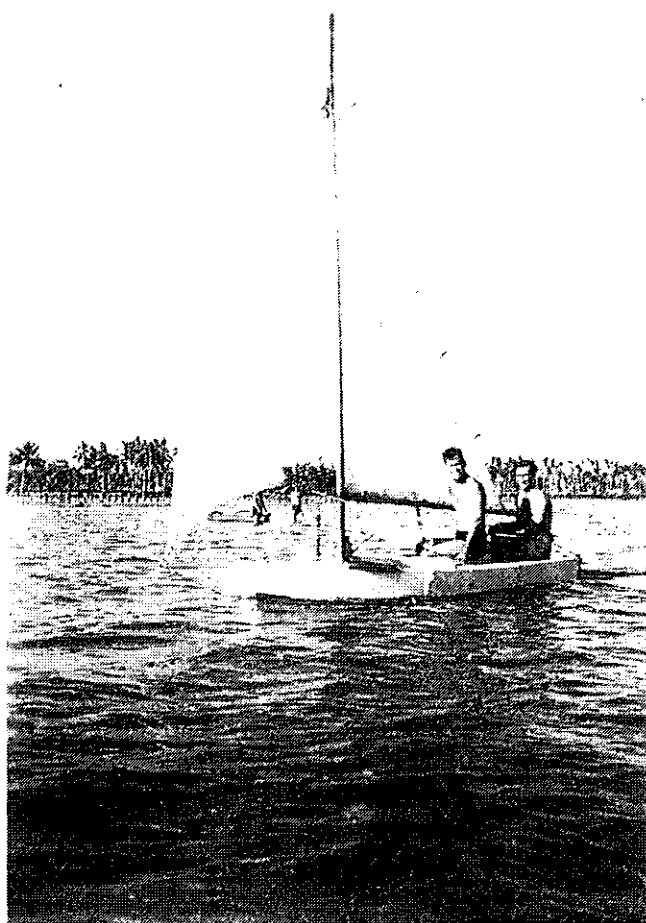
The problem now was to arrange the orderly movement of all of these troops back to Australia. There were seven Divisions altogether with their support troops amounting in all to some 100,000 men. This included the survivors of the 8th Division who were prisoners in the Singapore, Malaysia, Burma areas. Prisoners of war were given urgent priority and volunteers were called for from the various medical units for relief teams to give medical assistance in the P.O.W. camps and on the voyage back to Australia. There were a number of prisoners of war and civilians released, including nuns, when Rabaul surrendered.

A points system was devised whereby each serviceman was allotted points according to age and months of service and whether married or not. This meant that older married men with a long period of service were the first to be released.

WAITING FOR FUTURE ROLE

A unit News Sheet called "LATRINE TOPS" to incorporate "WATER CART WHISPERS" and "JUNGLE JIVE". complete with a cartoon of the week was produced by an unknown editor. Issue No. 2 which has come into my possession may not reproduce very well but it contains many interesting snippets about various members. Our Commanding Officer Lieut. Col. E.C. Palmer was affectionately known among the troops as "Jungle Ted" and the C.O.'s inspections were known as "Jungle Patrols". The newsletter tells of an unannounced "Jungle Patrol" one morning thus - *"There was great scrambling and mass creaking of beds last week when one morning the Jungle Patrol appeared unexpectedly. Unfortunately for the boys most of them were, at the time, in that well known Australian Army position."*

Major Peach from the 2/33rd Infantry Battalion had been seconded to our unit to supervise training and sports and amenities programs. Sports materials were requisitioned from the G.O.C.'s Fund. The Y.M.C.A.had already equipped a



The Yacht built by Alan Patrick and Eddie Mott.

recreation hut with tables, seats etc. and two table tennis tables. This program was short lived as there was a further role for the unit to play before being returned to Australia.

Alan Patrick and Eddie Mott built a yacht whilst at Balikpapan using hospital sheets for the sails. However, their enjoyment of it was also short lived as they had to make a forced sale (at a loss) when the unit was ordered to Ambon.

The Convalescent Camp was ready to open by the 13th of August but because of the uncertainty of the future the receipt of patients was temporarily deferred. With the end of the war the regulations regarding release on occupational grounds were relaxed and from our unit seventeen applications for release were received and approved. On the 26th of August, 1945 a warning order was issued for the unit to move complete to Morotai to join a Brigade force which was to be used as an occupation force on the island of Ambon.

The Commanding Officer's Report on the Balikpapan operations is given in Appendix Two.