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15 Infantry Brigade  
April 1945, Report on Operation



15TH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE

REPORT      ON      OPERATIONS

SOUTH                      BOUGAINVILLE

FROM

PURIATA                      RIVER

TO

MIVO                              RIVER

13 APR 45      TO      15 AUG 45



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MIVO RIVER

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1:63360                      SERIES

PURIATA RIVER  
AITARA  
KARA

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All references in this report are  
given on 1:25000 series unless other-  
wise stated.

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15 AUST INF BDE

REPORT ON OPERATIONS

PART I

SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE OPERATIONS

PURIATA RIVER to MIVO RIVER

13 APR 45 to 15 AUG 45

INTRODUCTION ON OPERATIONS

by

BRIG H H HAMMER

1 SCOPE OF THE REPORT

- (a) This report covers the operations of 15 Aust Inf Bde Group against the Japanese in SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE from the PURIATA RIVER exclusive to the MIVO RIVER over the period 13 Apr to 30 Jun 45.
- (b) From 1 Jul 45 to the declaration of the Japanese surrender on 2 Sep 45 the brigade carried out a reserve role to 29 Aust Inf Bde. However, for a period of six weeks the role was a very active one as the Japanese operated in large numbers along the L of C in rear of 29 Aust Inf Bde.

2 OBJECT OF THE OPERATION

- (a) The broad object of the operations in SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE was the defeat of the Japanese in that sector.
- (b) The brigade role was simply to continue the advance on relief of 7 Aust Inf Bde on 13 Apr 45, to seize the HONGORAI and HARI RIVER lines. Later this was extended to include the MIVO RIVER.

3 TOPOGRAPHY

- (a) The theatre of the operations of the brigade was in SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE from the PURIATA RIVER EAST to MIVO RIVER, a distance of 36750 yards.
- (b) A government track known as the BUIN ROAD and improved by the Japanese ran generally WEST to EAST parallel to the coast and about 5000/6000 yards inland. 5000 yards NORTH of the BUIN ROAD was the COMMANDO ROAD which ran parallel to the BUIN ROAD. The BUIN ROAD was jeepable for light traffic only and needed corduroying for the normal supply traffic while the COMMANDO ROAD, except in isolated sections, was not suitable for jeeps.
- (c) The terrain was generally flat, covered with thick heavy timber and heavy secondary growth. Between the BUIN ROAD and the coast, large swamp areas were prevalent while to the NORTH of BUIN ROAD there were only minor swamp areas.



(d) The country was featureless except for the main and minor river lines which flowed from NORTH to SOUTH intersecting the BUIN and COMMANDO ROADS. In flood these various main rivers, ie PURIATA, HONGORAI, POROREI, HARI, OGORATA, MOBIAI and MIVO RIVERS, were not fordable but otherwise were fordable to jeeps if fords were prepared by bulldozers.

High escarpments formed the banks of most of the rivers, main and minor, and were strong tactical obstacles, particularly to mechanical and armoured movement.

(e) Several lateral tracks which were jeepable with engineer improvement and corduroy linked the BUIN ROAD with the COMMANDO ROAD axis. These were the HATAI, OSO-USO (known as HAMMER TRACK), TAITAI, BARRETT'S and KILLIENS TRACKS and provided valuable lateral communication with the battalion moving along the COMMANDO ROAD axis.

#### 4 ENEMY SITUATION ON COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS

(a) The Japanese had suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of 7 Aust Inf Bde at SLATERS KNOLL just EAST of the PURIATA RIVER and were finally driven off on 3 Apr 45.

(b) In the following ten days to 13 Apr 45 when 15 Aust Inf Bde took over operations, contact with the Japanese had been completely lost and at the time of relief, the enemy situation was most obscure.

(c) The estimate of Japanese strength in SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE was 11500 (since the cessation of hostilities information has been received that the actual strength in SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE was 18594) and as at least 800/1000 had been employed in the SLATERS KNOLL attack, it was reasonable to assume that considerable numbers were WEST of the HONGORAI RIVER and after the respite given them for ten days would be reorganised and ready for further operations. They had an intimate knowledge of the terrain, track systems and river lines.

(d) The Japanese had several 150 mm guns and 75 mm guns well forward and seemed well supplied with ammunition. As well artillery survey and preregistration was likely and in fact was employed by the Japanese to obtain very accurate fire.

(e) There was no information of tanks nor were there any Japanese aircraft.

(f) Later on the Japanese used booby traps and mines in prolific numbers.



5 DEDUCTIONS MADE FROM APPRECIATIONS

(NOTE: these were not all deduced prior to the brigade operations but became very clear after a short period of fighting and manoeuvre)

(a) Terrain

- (i) The country was suitable for "diagrammatic" warfare - something like fighting the battle on a piece of paper. This was due to the consistent flat nature of the ground over practically all the battle area.
- (ii) The main BUIN ROAD and the parallel COMMANDO ROAD; lateral tracks such as the KATAI, HAMMER and TAITAI TRACKS; and the main river lines of the HONGORAI, POROREI, HARI, MOBIAI, RIVO RIVERS dictated the main moves in the battle.
- (iii) In the movement astride the BUIN ROAD, company and battalion layouts could be on a fairly stereotyped basis, varied only by their relation to the intersecting tracks and streams. This permitted a simple and speedy drill in the occupation of localities.
- (iv) There were no observation posts either on features or trees. There were not any features and the trees were so thick and even in height that observation from them was impossible. The main means of observation was by Auster and Boomerang Tac R aircraft and these could really see little in the thick growth. The only other observation means was on the ground by the employment of patrols and this was easily the most effective method.

(b) Strengths

- (i) The Japanese force capable of being employed was numerically far superior to the rifle companies of three infantry battalions. As the advance continued our force would decrease while greater concentrations of enemy would be met.
- (ii) To meet the Japanese on the man for man basis each with an equal proportion of small arms weapons would be disastrous to our force and not economical in manpower. Undoubtedly we would kill more but we could not afford to lose as many as the Japanese.
- (iii) The only superiority we had was heavy firepower in the shape of bombers, artillery (two regiments) mortars and one squadron of tanks. Therefore, the obvious deduction was to employ the heavy firepower to limit our casualties and increase the enemy casualties consistent with economical employment which required definite location of enemy targets. This would and did save many casualties to our troops at the same time inflicting heavy casualties on enemy life and morale.

(c) Time and space

- (i) Time was not a dominating factor and, therefore, the operations could be conducted at will. **Naturally in local operations time was usually a vital factor.**



(ii) The frontage allotted to the brigade was from the coast to "infinity" -- somewhere several thousands of yards NORTH of the BUIN ROAD - making a frontage of at least 30000 yards. The main axis of movement was along the 12 feet wide BUIN ROAD. With one battalion operating along the axis of COMMANDO ROAD, the intervening areas were covered by patrols.

(iii) It was expected that at least three months operations would be obtained from the brigade unless heavy casualties necessitated relief and therefore, it was necessary to keep the troops in the best physical condition possible.

(d) Morale

(i) Our troops were in the highest state of morale and commenced operations with a fine esprit de corps. Their battle discipline was first class and even after four months of operations they never lost their discipline, cheerfulness or determination. All this was in spite of the great discussions in Australia by politicians and others regarding the merits of the operations in BOUGAINVILLE and whether mopping up was necessary. It could have been a difficult period particularly for commanders.

(ii) Despite reports that the Japanese were half-starved and clothed, there was nothing to show this except in isolated cases. In the isolated cases it was usually due to their supply system. Many patrols reported that the Japanese were laughing and joking and seemed quite happy. However, their morale received a severe blow with the introduction of heavy concentrations of bombs, shells and mortars and they had a special aversion to tanks although with their limited means they fought gamely against them.

(e) Tactics

(i) The BUIN ROAD was used as the axis for the advance of the main force. For the 8000 yards of road to the HONGORAI RIVER, corduroy was essential and this was built by the infantry as they advanced.

(ii) It was necessary to open and corduroy lateral tracks already in existence to link the COMMANDO ROAD axis with the BUIN ROAD.

(iii) By the establishment of air dropping zones well forward and reliable corduroy tracks, supply by jeeps with assistance by a limited number of natives was possible. This would ensure that the good fresh food (the first in the history of the brigade) was made available to the troops daily. Artillery support on a large scale could be used if a good track was kept open. 25 pounder ammunition could not be air dropped but had to be carried by vehicle.

(iv) It was decided to keep the force as concentrated as possible for ease of supply and for employment of the force in the advance. From this firm base patrols would operate widely to the flanks and front



thus widening the frontage without dispersing the force and at the same time steadily continuing the advance along the main and secondary axes.

- (v) As contact with the Japanese had been lost for several days prior to the brigade taking over, it would be necessary to patrol on a large scale to obtain enemy strengths, locations and intentions. Initially there were intense patrol clashes but slowly by this means we had our will on the enemy and forced him to conform to our moves. The winning of the patrol battle which cost us many casualties in the first three weeks, saved us many casualties later and educated the Japanese to conform to our patrolling intentions.
- (vi) As observation posts were not available, except air observation posts and these were not very effective owing to the natural concealment afforded by the vegetation, it was necessary to send many artillery patrols out. The job of the infantry was to find the Japanese, to pin him and then for the artillery to register. After that we could shell or bomb at will. It was an interesting thing that a patrol of one officer and fourteen other ranks with an artillery party could hit with 24 guns if they had a worthwhile target. These tactics paid handsomely and Japanese PW were most complimentary on the methods employed even if their compliments were ruefully given.
- (vii) Every endeavour was to be made to drive the Japanese into concentrated areas to defend against our advance along the main axis; the patrols herding them in from the flanks. In any case the Japanese would be forced to establish defensive positions to prevent our advance along the BUIN ROAD. This would give us the opportunity to strike with our superior fire power. The more concentrated were the Japanese the more casualties and damage we could inflict. This in fact became the pattern of events and the Japanese was completely educated in the part he had to play to conform to our desires.
- (viii) The effective employment of tanks in the advance and attack was initially a problem owing to the lack of visibility due to the thick growth. The employment of blast bombing to clear growth helped a great deal to improve the support of the tank. The advent, prior to the first main river crossing, of considerable mechanical equipment in the form of bulldozers and tractors gave us the opportunity to manoeuvre the tanks wide to the flanks and cut in well behind the Japanese defence lines. The Japanese did not like this.
- (ix) Deception was frequently employed by vigorously operating on the undesired flank with fighting and noisy patrols, bombings and shelling and at the same time silently patrolling on the desired flank to gain the necessary information of enemy dispositions and routes to objectives etc. The Japanese is extraordinarily gullible and fell for every move. The tactics employed in the crossing of the HONGORAI, HARI and MOBIAI RIVER



lines all indicated this and on each occasion the Japanese were completely outwitted.

- (x) The rate of advance was always subject to the road being able to carry the traffic and it was due to the good organisation of the units as well as the hard work of the infantry in corduroying as they fought and advanced that the advance was not delayed at any time. The artillery therefore was always in support and were never held up in the movement of batteries or ammunition. All arms played their part in maintenance of the track - artillery, tanks and other personnel doing their share.
- (xi) Engineer and tank reconnaissance and not tank reconnaissance only was the method used to decide whether routes were practicable for tanks when operating to the flanks and cutting off the Japanese in a wide sweep. These moves through the jungle over many watercourse obstacles sometimes involved distances of over 5000 yards. After all it is the sapper with his mechanical equipment that gets the tank on to the objective and not the tank man.
- (xii) It was found necessary early on to educate personnel inexperienced in battle what was a "possible" task. The tanks at first thought it was impossible to cross the HONGORAI RIVER in accordance with the plan. They were surprised when they achieved it. Nevertheless, despite their misgivings they cooperated to the full. But it does show the value of battle experience and a refusal to accept the seeming "impossible" and take the easy way which probably means heavy casualties.

## 6. CONDUCT OF THE BATTLE

### (a) Command

- (i) The command of the brigade in operations was always kept on the brigade level and throughout the operations the whole brigade was employed on several occasions in the attack. This was the case when seizing all the main river lines.
- (ii) Much has been said in the last few years that in tropical warfare that the battle is a "section, platoon or company commander's war" but seldom described as a battalion or brigade commander's war. The subordinate commander in any type of war must bear his share of the responsibility of the fight. It would be foolish for a brigade commander to place the tactical command of his formation in the hands of 108 section commanders.
- (iii) The series of brigade attacks to cross the HONGORAI, POROREI, HARI and MOBILAI RIVERS against forces of at least 1000 enemy on each occasion showed the value of the tactics employed and the principle of concentration of force. The highest casualties for the whole brigade in these brigade attacks were 43 for the crossing of the HONGORAI, 28 for the HARI and much less than the latter figure for the crossing of the MOBILAI. At the same time large areas of enemy territory were gained by the brigade manoeuvre



The main control of the supporting fire plan was in the hands of the brigade; artillery batteries and regiments being placed in support of units on completion of a softening up programme. Bombers were controlled by brigade and frequently mortar batteries of up to 16 mortars were fired in accordance with a brigade plan. The patrolling plan in general was also issued from brigade.

- (iv) The nature of the terrain and tracks and the excellent communications were such that verbal control between Brigade Commander and commanding officers was always possible. Frequent conferences were held at one of the forward battalion HQ, Commanding Officers seldom being brought back to brigade. Commanding officers also never allowed the control of the battle to get out of their hands and this was responsible for well-coordinated and well-conducted operations.

(b) Patrolling

- (i) The patrolling plan in general was in accordance with a brigade policy. Commanding officers were given boundaries and special tasks.
- (ii) The main principle adopted was to keep the force as concentrated as possible astride the axis of advance with a wide screen of patrols operating to provide protection and security and gain the required information. In eleven weeks over 1000 patrols operated; this did not include any local security patrols.
- (iii) The result of such extensive patrolling was that the main forces were never in jeopardy; the Japanese were forced away from the flanks and made to conform to our moves; and such vital information as ~~was required~~ from time to time was invariably gathered until a complete picture was built up. The actual brigade operation which followed was a simple culmination to the hard work of the preparatory phases of each battle.
- (iv) The experience of patrolling gained by the brigade at SALAMUA and in the HIRIKUM and RIMU VALLEYS was of inestimable value in these operations and a very clever enemy was forced to give up the patrol battle and go into defence where he was then hit very hard with heavy firepower.

(c) Defence

- (i) It has been mentioned early that company defensive localities could be stereotyped owing to the consistent flat nature of the ground and even vegetation. The varying factors were the water-courses and tracks that intersected the axis of advance. Each unit therefore produced an efficient drill for occupation; a pacing method to ensure a good layout with plenty of elbow room in the thick jungle; machete parties to clear fields of fire and open up the ground between sections and platoons to give mutual support; digging and wiring parties and all the other things that go with establishing a defence area, be it one only for the night. With this drill, sub-units and Battalion HQ could establish themselves speedily and most efficiently



(ii) On only one occasion was a company locality heavily attacked and that was in the early morning after completing the previous day's advance in close contact with the enemy. The efficiency of the temporary defence was shown in the 58 enemy killed with very few casualties to ourselves. The fact that this was the only serious enemy attack in three months clearly indicates the effectiveness of the patrolling.

(iii) Every endeavour was made to induce the Japanese to attack with the exception that our patrol policy was never relaxed. It would seem that you can't have it both ways - dominate no mans land with patrols and expect the Japanese to attack you. On the other hand, if you fail to patrol efficiently the enemy penetrates through the gaps and launches a surprise attack. The Japanese could never penetrate in any strength through the network of <sup>our</sup> patrols but it was a bit galling knowing that he is such an easy kill when he attacks.

(d) Advance and attack

(i) The general policy was to maintain a forward impetus along the main axis with a thick screen of patrols operating to the front and flanks. The strongest opposition naturally was on the main river lines where the Japanese, according to his orders, was to fight to the last. He never did this as he found it most difficult to stand up to the terrific battering he got in the softening up process and was invariably surprised by the brigade flanking moves which always included tanks.

(ii) As soon as the personality of the enemy was known a series of techniques and drills for the advance and attack were evolved and became the battle drill for the various situations.

(iii) Patrols would locate the enemy, the artillery forward observation officer would register, the bombers would blast the area, then the infantry would advance with tanks and bulldozer teams well up; the artillery being at call by the forward company commander to bring down a concentration (usually worked out prior to the advance) to neutralise any pockets.

(iv) As the advance progressed from day to day the patrol sweep would force the enemy on the flanks to fall back to conform to our forward advance. Peculiarly enough the Japanese became educated to this and after the usual patrol fighting they did as we required them to do.

(v) From the HONGORAI RIVER on, the Japanese sewed mines and booby traps very thickly causing many casualties in the early stages, the mines and booby traps being most difficult to locate in the jungle. However a technique to deal with them was quickly discovered. First the advance was made using a series of flanking or



encircling moves to bring our troops behind the booby trap field -- a search from rear to front would disclose the traps which were deloused by sappers and bomb disposal teams as well as infantry and the road opened for the main body to continue the advance.

After a series of rapid moves of this nature our forces got a run on against the Japanese and gave him little time to lay more than an odd trap.

- (vi) The large scale brigade attacks to cross the HONGORAI and POROREI RIVERS (in one action) the HARI RIVER and the MOBIAI RIVER to reach the MIVO RIVER were all of a similar pattern. Each of the streams had high escarpments to form an excellent natural defence; the Japanese holding strongly astride the axis of advance as well as disposing a series of localities to the flanks to prevent crossings and holding, as at the HARI, in a depth of three defence lines.
- (vii) The policy in general was to clear the enemy from the near bank, then patrol to find the weak spots and the general dispositions of the Japanese. In the meantime a softening up by bombing would go on, striking at the escarpments astride the road on the far bank. As soon as the patrolling disclosed the weaker flank and one suitable for tanks, the emphasis of interest and noisy patrols would be centered on the opposite flank for deception and diversion from our preparation to cross elsewhere.
- (viii) The friendliness of the jungle is shown when on each occasion bulldozers and tractors were used to within 1000 yards of the enemy to bulldoze ramps in escarpments to cross the tanks and the bulldozers preceded the tanks to cut a track through the jungle. The thick jungle acted as a blanket to smother the noise of the bulldozers and tanks and the limited visibility allowed us to concentrate large forces of up to two battalions close to his positions and ready to launch a surprise attack.
- (ix) Not one of these attacks failed, surprise was always achieved, the employment of tanks over the escarpments through the thick jungle and swamps (several swamps were corduroyed behind the enemy lines to get the tanks across) was a source of wonder to the Japanese who never seem to quite understand how we did it. Throughout the whole preparatory phases and the attacks the superiority of our fire power was employed to the fullest extent. PW and our patrol information gave us accurate locations and the Japanese dreaded the accuracy and weight of firepower.
- (x) In the three main river crossings in which the three battalions were all employed against a minimum strength of 1000 Japanese, and a known 1250 in the case of the HARI RIVER, our total casualties were well under 100 and two tanks were knocked out. The main casualties came from the patrol clashes which were always of a



vicious nature - the Japanese being extremely good fighters - and the minor advances along the axis. Japanese artillery also inflicted casualties, on a few occasions up to twenty casualties in one concentration. This was due to their pre-registration and accurate survey; observation posts left behind as the Japanese withdrew; fighting their guns over open sights to the last few yards (we always got the guns and the crews but it could be expensive); and in general our halting places were necessarily near prominent points like watercourses, track junctions.

The casualties were reduced by the spacious layout of company localities, quick digging in and erecting overhead cover. The most damage was always done by the first two or three shells that landed without warning usually exploding in the tree tops and spraying shrapnel everywhere; after that all would be under cover. The brigade was always active working on tracks etc and the first couple of shells usually found them all above ground. However, as we fired 68000 artillery shells, 38000 mortars and 768 tons of bombs into the Japanese positions, the credit balance of casualties would be on our side.

(e) Reorganisation and consolidation

- (i) Units soon developed an excellent drill for reorganising and consolidating quickly. They had always given this much attention on the basis of Field Marshal MONTGOMERY'S lesson "Reorganisation must be quick and good".
- (ii) The local situation brought out several points which became standard drill. The reorganisation and consolidation should be planned prior to the conduct of the operation the only thing not known being the exact final location for consolidation. Stores in jeep or tractor trains and native loads should all be ready either to follow in the advance or attack or to come forward at call.
- (iii) The drill laid down in the manuals is sound. All that is necessary is good organising prior to, during and on success. Every man should know his battle drill and individual task before commencing the operation. Who carries the pick and shovel; who cuts the fire lanes; wires; digs; distributes ammunition; etc etc are simple things but must be known by every individual.
- (iv) Every unit and subunit could establish itself with amazing speed and efficiency. By this means the commander never lost the grip of his command and retained control throughout the battle.

(f) Mortars

- (i) The best value from mortars was obtained by forming batteries of up to 16 mortars and firing short bursts of 5 to 10 rounds per mortar at odd intervals on previously registered targets. 10 bombs from 16 mortars all in the



air at one time before any burst takes place have a devastating effect as they rain down. During the actual attack or in the advance there was little opportunity for mortar employment. The Japanese feared them greatly when employed against their defences on the river lines and several attempts were made by the Japanese to destroy them.

- (ii) On the near bank of the HARI RIVER a determined Japanese officer and about 40 men intended to stand to the bitter end (Japanese PW information) but 2000 accurately placed mortar bombs changed their minds for them. Had we tried to take the position with infantry we would have suffered heavy casualties. Firepower dominates the battlefield.

(g) Artillery

- (i) The general policy adopted was not to employ artillery **until** targets were located and registered. Registration of prominent points was done well in advance by aircraft and these previously registered points were most useful as the forces approached these areas.
- (ii) Due consideration was given to economy of ammunition but when the task was worthy we hit very hard and often. The real economy of fire power lies in not firing into the blue at "suspected" targets. When the target is known or artillery is being used for a specific purpose to support infantry on to an objective, then it is essential to strike hard and make a cinch of the job.
- (iii) During the advance the infantry was supported by a series of prearranged concentrations at call similar to a barrage but not on a time basis owing to the difficulty of maintaining an even rate of advance and the unnecessary expenditure of ammunition at the rate of 8 to 10 minutes to the 100 yards. The concentrations were set on lines of 100 or 200 yards and the forward observation officer called for support if and when required.
- (iv) Artillery registration to assist navigation of patrols and forces in wide flanking attacks was most useful. Shooting in the patrol location in the jungle gave a very accurate map reference and the commander could keep tab of the exact location of his forces. Usually two wireless sets were carried with a patrol of this nature to ensure there was no loss of communication.
- (v) Harassing fire was a regular routine and the Japanese were given no rest.
- (vi) The Japanese PW and captured documents testified frequently to the accuracy of the artillery fire. The comments of one PW are repeated -  
" The air strike on 11 Jun completely destroyed our positions at HARI 3 and we were forced to abandon them hurriedly. Artillery concentrations on our hastily occupied new positions were **extremely accurate** and we had no time to dig in **properly**. Casualties from the company of 50 were 2 killed and 3 wounded."



(h) Tanks

- (i) The squadron of tanks employed were MATILDAS and they stood up to an astonishing amount of hard work and direct hits by 75 and 150 mm shells at 50 yards range. A Japanese 37 mm gun, although scoring several direct hits at a few yards range, made no impression on the MATILDAS. One tank was knocked out by several direct hits from a 150 mm gun at 50 yards range. It was a new tank crew and they were a bit slow off the mark after the opening Japanese shot with the result that the Japanese got several hits in.
- (ii) The tanks were reported to be well on in their life when they came under command, having been used extensively in training in AUSTRALIA and MADANG. Nevertheless, by excellent maintenance and repair they operated extensively for three months and outside of two killed tanks the remainder were runners when relieved. Even the tank men were amazed at the places where they took their tanks and after a few months battle experience had a very different conception as to what was "possible" for a tank.
- (iii) Any lighter armoured tank than the MATILDA could not have done the job and would certainly have been knocked out by the cleverly concealed Japanese artillery weapons on a tank attack role. As it was the MATILDAS knocked out every gun.
- (iv) The tanks and crews certainly did a fine job and their employment with the infantry in every phase of the battle, even to the wide outflanking crossings of the river lines, gave the infantry the greatest confidence and rapidly melted that of the Japanese.
- (v) Tanks should be employed well forward with bulldozer teams and sappers in close support. The infantry must guarantee protection to the tanks and bulldozer teams. If the tanks are held too far back in the advance, the opportunity to employ their support is lost by the time they are brought forward and probably heavy casualties have been inflicted on our troops.
- Naturally the tank must bear its share of risk in the battle provided everything possible is done for its protection. The tank is in the battle to fight and should not be wrapped in cotton wool and placed so far away from the battle in the jungle that its valuable support is too late.

(j) Engineers and mechanical equipment

- (i) From the HONGORAI, the 15 Aust Fd Coy was always in close support and rendered invaluable service. On several occasions they turned a seemingly impossible task or route into a possible one.
- (ii) The availability of mechanical equipment in the shape of bulldozers and tractors made the brigade flanking moves with tanks a possible task. **It is the engineer reconnaissance with infantry patrol information and protection**



that gets the tanks to the right place. The tank is merely driven over the route prepared by the sapper. It is hard to describe the magnificent work of the bulldozer operator who sits high up on a dozer with the deafening roar of the engines blotting out any sense of hearing enemy action. He is the spearhead of the mechanical advance protected by infantry screens but a very vulnerable target to any unlocated enemy pockets or guns.

- (iii) The crossing of the MOBIAI to seize the western bank of the MIVO in a 6000 yards outflanking attack to the NORTH could not have been possible with tanks without the engineer reconnaissance and the employment of six bulldozers to get the four troops of tanks through.
- (iv) The sappers had an effective drill for mine sweeping, booby trap delousing, bulldozer operating; and the team of an infantry company, tanks and artillery forward observation officer with 52 guns at call, sappers and mechanised equipment working in perfect coordination is a formidable force. This team cracked the Japanese very hard every time he opposed the advance.

(k) Signals

- (i) Line communications worked perfectly throughout the three months operations and the long advance. There were plenty of problems but the signals officers and platoons kept the lines working under every condition. Long experience and training on the right lines produced almost faultless results. Commanders were always able to keep control through this means.
- (ii) The 208 wireless set was the surprise of the communication system. In general for its type it gave excellent results and while it was not a 100% result it was a most effective one. A minor adjustment by our own signallers permitted speech. This set was the means of much early information, contact with artillery by patrols and attacking forces where the use of line in long range patrols was not possible.
- (iii) The 108 set is cumbersome and not reliable and it was interesting to see the first No 22 sets arrive too late for this war.
- (iv) After six years of war we achieved little in the provision of a reliable wireless set for the infantry. The new and reliable set was always coming but never arrived. Its lack must have cost many lives.

7 ADMINISTRATION

(a) Supply

- (i) The maintenance of a reliable jeep track and the establishment of air dropping zones well forward made supply on the bigger scale fairly simple. The greater problems were from **battalion to companies** but the concentration of the force with patrols operating from the base



made supply easier. Had the force been widely spread, supply would have been most difficult. In any case there were not sufficient natives to maintain it. The other answer was jeep tracks.

- (ii) Fresh rations were the order of the day and the force lived very well, better than at any time throughout the war. The benefits were reflected in the cheerful and physically fit soldiers after several months of hard fighting and the extremely low sickness figures. Let us hope that the old opinion that a man is not a soldier unless he lives on bully beef and biscuits while he is fighting has been completely forgotten and that this experience of first class food supply in SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE is the basis of feeding the fighting man in the war of the future, if any.
- (iii) With the force based on a good jeep track the artillery were always able to be well forward. During the operations over 68000 rounds of 25 pounder ammunition were carried forward on the jeep track. This enabled fire support to be always available and the force was never short of ammunition.

(b) Medical

- (i) The concentrated nature of the brigade operations made medical evacuation very simple. Every wounded man was found and evacuated and there were few occasions when the evacuation period was prolonged beyond the ideal aim of a maximum six hours.
- (ii) Advanced dressing stations and surgical teams were kept well forward all the time - at times immediately behind the forward battalion with medical staging posts further forward again.
- (iii) Jeep ambulance and native carriers operated along the tracks and corduroy to three ton roadhead where motor ambulances took over. The main bulk of the surgical operations was performed at the main dressing station and only most urgent cases were operated on at the advanced dressing station where it was necessary to have sufficient accommodation to hold such cases.

8 THE ENEMY

- (a) Much had been said of the starved condition of the Japanese and lack of ammunition and fighting stores. There was little to indicate this. In most cases the fighting man seemed well fed and well armed. Isolated parties however were often short of food and ammunition.
- (b) The garden areas of TAITAI gave ample evidence of the adequate self-sufficiency programme of the Japanese.
- (c) His main difficulty seemed to be communications and because of the lack of communication the Japanese commanders found it difficult to control and employ his force to react to our moves. Our forward



moves left isolated parties behind and these, although short of food and ammunition, continued to fight on as guerrillas. Only constant patrolling forced them back.

- (d) The Japanese morale was extremely high and it would seem from the history of the whole of this war that no other armies in the world were prepared to fight on as the Japanese did in BOUGAINVILLE. Completely cut off from their main forces, with a high rate of sickness and forced to supply themselves from the country, they fought on and were prepared to fight to the end. Such tenacity and fortitude should be well remembered in considering the Japanese as a future enemy. We should not be duped into believing that the exterior docility of the Japanese prisoners is indicative of the morale or fighting quality of the soldier.
- (e) The Japanese 6 Division with its artillery, engineers and medical personnel converted into infantry were doughty fighters; their discipline and officer control of a high standard. It would seem that the lack of co-ordination and planning in the actual attack and assault, preferring the massed "BANZAI" charge to a clear cut plan of objectives, fire and manoeuvre, is the outstanding weakness of the Japanese infantry tactics.
- (f) To have met the Japanese on his own ground with his superior numbers without our forces employing a great superiority of firepower would have been to carry out a policy of self destruction. The old saying of "Man for man we are better" or "One Australian soldier is worth 10 Japanese" is a dangerous thing - it is the wishful thinking brought about by a lack of equipment and firepower. Fire power dominates the battlefield and it is far better to say "1000 25 pounder shells are worth 10 Japanese"! It is far better to have this policy at the beginning of a war and not at the end.

## 9 CONCLUSION

- (a) The jungle experience of the brigade at SALAMAUA, MARKHAM VALLEY, BOANA, RAMU VALLEY to BOGADJIM and MADANG in 1943 and 1944 enabled the units to take the field full of confidence. The black magic of the jungle was a thing long in the past. The normal principles of war were applied and in conjunction with jungle fighting experience the brigade was completely at home throughout the operations, seizing the initiative and never relaxing it.
- (b) A close study of the brigade operations with its supporting arms of bombers, artillery (in plenty), mortars, tanks, engineers and mechanical equipment will show that the conduct of operations from April to July 1945 reeks with FSR Vols I and II with the modern application of dominating fire power.







15 AUST INF BDE

REPORT ON OPERATIONS

PART I

SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE OPERATIONS

PURIATA RIVER to MIVO RIVER

13 APR 45 to 15 AUG 45

DETAILED NARRATIVE BY PHASES

PHASE I

MOVEMENT FROM TOROKINA AND RELIEF OF 7 AUST INF BDE

1 MOVEMENT OF BRIGADE TO TOKO AREA

On completion of ten weeks intensive and concentrated training period in the TOROKINA area, advice was received vide 3 Aust Div OO 12 of 22 Mar 45 regarding regrouping of 3 Aust Div forces in the areas PURIATA - HONGORAI rivers and of the movement of one battalion of 15 Aust Inf Bde to TOKO area to protect base installations and take over L of C responsibilities during the advance of 7 Aust Inf Bde to the HONGORAI river.

By 30 Mar 45 24 Aust Inf Bn had completed move to TOKO area and had concentrated in the vicinity of MCKINNAS BRIDGE under direct command 3 Aust Div.

Movement of the remainder of the brigade was then ordered vide 3 Aust Div OO 13 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bn departed from TOROKINA, staging three days at MOTUPENA POINT, then moved via TOKO to the areas DARARA - JARARA - BARNES CROSSING - GALVINS CROSSING. The role of the unit was to relieve 9 Aust Inf Bn of its responsibilities and clear enemy from the area WEST of the PURIATA RIVER. By 10 Mar 45, 57/60 Aust Inf Bn were concentrated in MAWARAKA area with the following roles:

- (a) Protection of installations in that area;
- (b) Patrolling EAST to MOSIGETTA - PIKEI area;
- (c) Prepare to deal with any enemy threat from the northern flank.

On 9 Apr 45 HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde opened in the TOKO area.

2 PATROLLING WEST OF THE PURIATA RIVER

Extensive patrolling commenced to thoroughly search and check the area WEST of the PURIATA RIVER and eliminate the threat of isolated enemy parties infiltrating to TOKO base area which was at this time in the process of construction.

Details of patrolling by all units during this stage are shown in attached trace and by 12 Apr 45 the area WEST of the PURIATA RIVER was considered clear of enemy.



3 RELIEF OF 7 AUST INF BDE

3 Aust Div OO 14 of 13 Apr 45 advised of the relief of 7 Aust Inf Bde less one battalion by 15 Aust Inf Bde, relief to commence forthwith.

The role given to the brigade was to continue the advance towards BUIH with the immediate objective the line of the HONGORAI RIVER and with a second objective the line of the HARI RIVER.

After completion of a detailed reconnaissance by the Brigade Commander and unit commanding officers on 12 Apr 45, the relief commenced on 13 Apr 45 by 24 Aust Inf Bn passing through 25 Aust Inf Bn who were located on SLATERS KNOLL and occupying an area astride BUIH ROAD extending from inclusive KERO CREEK to inclusive SHINRU RIVER. 58/59 Aust Inf Bn less one company moved from DARARA area and relieved 25 Aust Inf Bn in the SLATERS KNOLL area and extended SE to exclusive KERO CREEK. 57/60 Aust Inf Bn remained in the M.W. RAKA area.

As no definite information was available of the enemy's dispositions and the reorganisation of his units following his unsuccessful operation against SLATERS KNOLL, patrolling commenced immediately by both units to regain contact and obtain information of enemy locations and intentions.

4 THE ENEMY SITUATION

A most important feature at the commencement of the operation was the complete dearth of information regarding enemy dispositions, strengths or intentions. It was assumed that the enemy had withdrawn EAST in the direction of the HONGORAI RIVER to carry out a complete reorganisation of his force. Remnants of his attacking force and other small specially organised parties sent forward from reserve units are still in the area WEST of the HONGORAI with the role of gaining information and delaying our advance as long as possible.

It is considered that at this stage the enemy had at his disposal an effective fighting force of approximately 2300 troops which could be mustered to oppose the operation of the brigade. However, the bulk of this force was then located in the garden areas of TAITAI, WEST of the HARI RIVER and there was no indication of the enemy attempting to reorganise another large force for aggressive action similar to his SLATERS KNOLL attack. It was expected that the enemy would make a determined attempt to prevent our crossing of the HONGORAI RIVER and so enter the essential TAITAI garden area - the enemy DID.

5 MARSHALLING OF THE BRIGADE GROUP

Immediately on completion of the relief, supporting units came into the brigade group from 7 Aust Inf Bde and were moved forward and concentrated in the area G.LVIES CROSSING - SLATERS KNOLL from which area they could operate with a minimum of delay.

The brigade group then consisted of:

HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde  
24 Aust Inf Bn  
57/60 Aust Inf Bn



58/59 Aust Inf Bn  
15 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec  
14 pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt  
15 Aust Inf Bde Flamethrower Pl  
7, 8 and 9 tps B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt  
Sec 15 Aust Fd Coy RAE  
A Coy 1 NGIB less one pl  
266 Aust LAD  
Det 3 Aust Div Pro Coy  
Det 3 Aust Div Postal Unit  
E Sec 63 Aust Dental Unit  
Det ANGAU.

In support:

6 and 10 Tps B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt  
2 Aust Fd Regt  
U Aust Hy Bty  
15 Aust Fd Coy RAE less one sec  
11 Aust Fd Amb

6 ESTABLISHMENT OF L OF C

The common jungle warfare L of C difficulty appeared immediately obvious and a prompt decision was made that the brigade would construct, corduroy and maintain the BUIN ROAD as its own jeep track in rear of the brigade advance and remain totally independent of the 3-ton road which was being constructed under engineer supervision parallel to the BUIN ROAD.

It was considered the speed of the brigade advance would be governed by jeep track construction, progress and stability, so accordingly standard engineer specifications were drawn up and promulgated to units to ensure uniformity. Engineer supervision was allotted to units and all available men were immediately employed on road construction. This was rendered necessary owing to the acute shortage of native labour and the urgent necessity for the construction of the road to allow operations to proceed without delay.

7 PATROL POLICY

Maximum use was made of the period of temporary delay brought about by the necessity for L of C organisation by carrying out an intensive patrol programme by all units. Aggressive patrols operating forward and to both flanks maintained contact with the enemy and obtained information vitally necessary to enable a sound plan to be made for the opening phase of the operation.



PHASE II

ADVANCE TO THE HONGORAI RIVER AND THE PATROL  
BATTLE OF THE TRIANGLE

8 ATTACK ON DAWE CREEK

Acting on information gained by contact patrols, preceded by artillery concentrations on known enemy positions and protected by flank patrols from 58/59 Aust Inf Bn; on 17 Apr 45, 24 Aust Inf Bn made a full scale battalion attack on the enemy defences at DAWE CREEK. The attack was launched by two companies with tank support moving one on each side of BUIN ROAD and with a third company making a northern outflanking move to cut the HATAI track between ANDERSONS JUNCTION and KINDARA.

Fierce enemy resistance was encountered in the area of ANDERSONS JUNCTION and from positions on the WEST bank of DAWE CREEK. Tanks were immediately employed to blast the enemy from their pillboxes in the vicinity of BUIN ROAD but were hampered in their activities by extremely dense vegetation which limited their visibility beyond those enemy strongpoints sited right on the road. The task of the infantry was made more difficult by the complete absence of fire lanes or fields of view from enemy positions which were cunningly concealed in the undergrowth. On many occasions our troops approached within three or four feet of an enemy position before contact was made.

As the attack progressed, the infantry employed the automatic weapons of the tanks to cut fields of view through the jungle and enable them to locate the enemy. By 1030 hours the enemy had been driven from their pillboxes on the western side of DAWE CREEK and all company objectives secured. DAWE CREEK constituted a tank obstacle and work commenced immediately on the construction of an improvised crossing. By this means one tank was able to cross the creek and engage the enemy pillboxes on the eastern bank. After destroying several of these, the tank was forced to return across the creek owing to the crossing being in danger of being washed away.

Two platoons of infantry exploited the initial success of the tanks and cleared the enemy from the first line of positions on the eastern bank of the creek. The company then consolidated in its positions on the western bank and provided cover for an engineer party who commenced construction of a class 24 bridge across the creek. On the morning of 19 Apr, C Company crossed the creek with tanks and continued their assault on the enemy positions.

Again extremely dense undergrowth was encountered but the experience of the previous day's action enabled the infantry to drive the enemy from his positions in spite of his fierce and tenacious resistance. At the conclusion of the attack C Company were established in a strong defensive locality astride BUIN ROAD 400 yards forward of DAWE CREEK.

In the meantime the other two companies had consolidated on their objectives with little resistance from the enemy and the battalion was then firmly established astride the axis of BUIN ROAD with a protective force in position NORTH along the HATAI TRACK.



9 OPENING OF THE HATAI TRACK

At this stage it was considered necessary to open and develop the lateral HATAI TRACK as a jeepable L of C to 9 Aust Inf Bn operating on the northern axis. To achieve this 24 Aust Inf Bn flowed steadily forward along the BUIN ROAD to occupy the line of SINDOU CREEK while 58/59 Aust Inf Bn occupied their vacated positions in the DAWE CREEK area and moved two companies to the northern flank to secure the HATAI TRACK and broaden the brigade front. While protective patrols operated continuously, work was commenced immediately on corduroying the HATAI TRACK.

As soon as patrols had contacted 9 Aust Inf Bn and a reconnaissance of the track had been made by tank and engineer officers, an armoured patrol with bulldozer team moved along the HATAI TRACK to 9 Aust Inf Bn. As a result of this move it was then possible to employ tanks in the RUMIKI area as well as on the main BUIN ROAD axis.

10 PATROL BATTLE OF THE TRIANGLE

On 25 Apr 45, 15 Aust Inf Bde Op Instr 8 directed that pending the arrival of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn from the MAWARAKA area to relieve 9 Aust Inf Bn, 24 Aust Inf Bn and 58/59 Aust Inf Bn would systematically patrol the triangle formed by HATAI TRACK to SINANAI, the HONGORAI RIVER to the crossing at 940417 and a line 1000 yards SOUTH of and parallel to the BUIN ROAD, with the following objects:

- (a) To map the entire area;
- (b) To permit easy navigation for future patrolling;
- (c) To obtain complete coverage of the area by patrolling;
- (d) To pinpoint by accurate map reference known enemy localities for the employment of artillery or air strikes.

Owing to the inaccuracy of existing maps, it was considered necessary at this stage to send with all patrols special personnel whose sole duty it would be to navigate and compile accurate traverses of the route of the patrol and by this means build up an accurate map of the area of future operations as well as allowing the patrol leader to concentrate on the employment of the patrol against the enemy.

The task allotted to A Coy 1 NGIB in the patrol plan was to maintain a forward screen of patrols ahead of the unit patrols and, in particular, to locate the Japanese L of C known as the HATAI SECRET TRACK which extended WEST from the HONGORAI and parallel to BUIN ROAD on the northern side, and was used extensively by the enemy during the SLATERS KNOLL operation.

As a matter of policy, personnel from the infantry battalions were sent with the NGIB patrols so that when **the operations advanced and the NGIB patrols moved deeper into enemy territory, these personnel would be able to guide**



their unit patrols through the country previously traversed by them. Any slowing up occasioned to native patrols due to the attachment of European personnel was considered fully justified as it ensured that the information supplied by native patrols was accurate.

The tactics adopted by the enemy to enable him to gain time for the preparation of defences on the HONGORAI and to counter our patrol policy were the employment of independent mobile forces 20 to 30 strong with up to 15 days rations having the specific task of moving about within the triangle area and maintaining contact with our patrols and, where possible, carrying out small harassing attacks on our localities. These enemy forces constituted quite a problem as they were never contacted in the same place twice, always had well prepared positions and alternative positions and by their mobility evaded the effect of our artillery fire.

To counter these tactics maximum use was made of artillery forward observation officers who moved with the infantry patrols complete with signals party with either line telegraphy, wireless telegraphy or both. The effect of this policy was to create a mobile artillery observation post operating with the patrols which could bring down fire on an enemy concentration immediately it was located and before the enemy had time to move to another position.

Forward observation officers also accompanied the long range reconnaissance patrols towards the HONGORAI RIVER and, with these patrols, in addition to their normal function of engaging enemy localities, proved invaluable as aids to navigation. The ability to determine their position by shooting in at any time allowed the patrols to operate with greater accuracy, speed and confidence.

The intensity of this battle of patrols is reflected in the comparison of own and enemy casualties, but later events show the value of this phase of the operation and how it lessened the casualties sustained in subsequent actions.

To counter the enemy policy of moving from place to place with his small fighting forces it was directed that patrols would concentrate more on setting ambushes on known enemy tracks rather than follow up signs of enemy movement which frequently led to ambush of our own patrols. This policy proved successful as it reduced the casualties suffered by our own patrols and restricted the activities of the enemy's harassing forces.

At this stage there was a considerable increase in the activity of hostile artillery against our positions on the BUIN ROAD and special patrols were organised with the task of locating and destroying the enemy guns. Patrols moved out for periods of three or four days with artillery forward observation officers and wireless communications and established patrol bases near suspected gun areas. The patrols then listened throughout the night for the guns to open fire and at first light sent small patrols to pinpoint the guns which were then registered by the artillery forward observation officer with the patrol and then neutralised or destroyed by fire.



11 THE ATTACK - SINDOU CREEK TO BIAGU FORKS

On 26 Apr 45, Corsairs bombed and strafed continuously for two hours along BUIN ROAD from within 300 yards of our forward localities on SINDOU CREEK to the BIAGU FORKS. This was the first time that Corsairs had been employed in a close support role during this operation.

Immediately following the air strike and preceded by a series of timed artillery concentrations, C Company 24 Aust Inf Bn, supported by one troop tanks, commenced an advance along BUIN ROAD. Forward observation officers moving with the forward troops controlled the lift of artillery concentrations to coincide exactly with the rate of advance of the infantry so the maximum protection was gained from the supporting fire throughout the advance.

At only one stage during the advance was any opposition encountered, and that was when a small enemy party with a light machine gun remained in a concealed position on the side of the road. This opposition was very speedily dealt with by the tanks and the advance proceeded.

The speed of the advance was considerably increased by the effect of the bombing both sides of the road. The undergrowth had been cleared by depth charges and visibility, which would normally have been almost nil, was increased to an average of 20 yards by the effect of the bombing.

A feature of the air strike was the precision with which the bombs were dropped on each side of the road without at any stage cratering the road itself or causing any obstacles to the advance of infantry and tanks. The employment of the supporting fire enabled the company to complete an advance of over 1500 yards and consolidate on their objective with only one casualty sustained during the actual advance.

12 RELIEF OF 9 AUST INF BN BY 57/60 AUST INF BN

As a result of a 2 Aust Corps direction it was necessary for 57/60 Aust Inf Bn to remain in the MAWARAKA area until a battalion from 29 Aust Inf Bde could be made available for its relief. On 23 Apr 45, relief of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn by 15 Aust Inf Bn was effected and the battalion commenced to move through TOKO to the HATAI TRACK area. By 27 Apr 45 the battalion was complete in the HATAI TRACK area and had relieved 58/59 Aust Inf Bn of its patrol responsibilities in that area.

The battalion then carried out extensive patrolling in the TRIANGLE until 2 May 45 when 47 Aust Inf Bn moved in to relieve 57/60 Aust Inf Bn who were then free to relieve 9 Aust Inf Bn in the RUMIKI area. By 3 May 45 the relief was completed and 57/60 Aust Inf Bn proceeded to re-organise in defensive localities on the WEST bank of the HONGORAI RIVER.

Although the construction of the HATAI TRACK was not yet completed, tanks were moved forward immediately to join 57/60 Aust Inf Bn which involved considerable work by the engineers to overcome the many tank obstacles along the track. Patrolling EAST of the HONGORAI commenced immediately consolidation of the battalion was completed.



13 ADVANCE TO KEKRO CREEK

Following consolidation of 24 Aust Inf Bn in the BIAGU area, 58/59 Aust Inf Bn moved from their positions on the HATAI TRACK and took up positions immediately in rear of 24 Aust Inf Bn astride BUIN ROAD. From there they were immediately available to support the operations of 24 Aust Inf Bn if required, and carried out continuous protective patrolling on both flanks.

24 Aust Inf Bn then commenced a series of leapfrogging moves from firm bases along the BUIN ROAD while extensive patrolling from both 57/60 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns kept the enemy occupied and confused him as to our intentions. As a result of these patrolling activities the enemy was not able to establish a firm line of resistance at any stage during this advance.

Effective employment of artillery and tanks speedily overcame the isolated enemy parties who attempted to delay the advance and on 2 May 45 the leading company of 24 Aust Inf Bn reached and consolidated on KEKRO CREEK. During this stage of operations a marked increase was observed in small harassing attacks on our localities by the enemy and of attempts to ambush vehicles or small parties moving along the L of C.

Long range patrols from 24 Aust Inf Bn had reached the HONGORAI and already the reconnaissance of potential company localities on the river had commenced. NGIB patrols had located the HATAI SECRET TRACK and had discovered the enemy still in the process of moving stores and supplies EAST across the HONGORAI from storage areas that had been used for the SLATERS KNOLL operation.

During this operation a change was noticed in enemy tactics in the construction of defensive positions. Our employment of tanks forced the enemy to site his positions well clear of the road and almost all defensive localities found in this area were sited primarily to deal with attack from the flank or rear.

14 THE DRIVE TO THE HONGORAI

On 4 May 45 one company of 24 Aust Inf Bn with tank support and bulldozer team commenced a further advance along the BUIN ROAD towards the HONGORAI RIVER and made contact with a large enemy force in prepared defences including pillboxes.

As the tanks and infantry moved forward to engage the position, a cunningly concealed 75 mm gun sited for tank attack purposes opened fire at point blank range at the leading tank. After firing only one round the gun was destroyed by 3 inch howitzer fire from the tank and besa fire killed the gun crew. Mortar and artillery fire was then brought down on the main position and, following in with the tanks, the infantry quickly overran the position and continued their advance.

Increased use of booby traps and anti-tank mines by the enemy has now become evident. It is obvious that he was striving desperately to combat our tanks with every weapon at his disposal. Preceded by protective patrols 24 Aust Inf Bn continued their advance without further



organised opposition and consolidated with their leading company only 1000 yards from the HONGORAI RIVER.

During the final stages of the advance another enemy 75 mm gun, sited in a suicide tank attack role, was encountered. This gun registered a direct hit on the tank with its first round putting the besa gun out of action. Acting with incredible speed the tank gunner engaged the gun with his 3 inch howitzer and put it out of action before another round could be fired. The enemy has now lost two of his 75 mm guns by employing them in this role.

On 6 May 45 as D Company 24 Aust Inf Bn were preparing to make a further advance along BUIN ROAD, a small enemy party attacked the company locality from the NORTH for a short period until driven off by our fire power. This was followed by extremely accurate shelling of the company locality which caused some damage to stores which were stacked ready for the pending move.

When the company had reorganised after the shelling and was again almost ready to move, a large and determined enemy force estimated at 100 attacked the company from the NORTH. The attack was launched with typical Japanese fanaticism and immediately the enemy attempted to encircle the company. As they moved in towards BUIN ROAD, A Company 24 Aust Inf Bn, who were moving forward to occupy the position to have been vacated by D Company, contacted the enemy and immediately engaged them from hurriedly improvised positions along the road. The enemy then carried out a series of furious assaults against both companies which extended over a period of two and a half hours. During that period A Company managed to fight its way forward to link with D Company and the two companies formed a solid defensive locality which finally broke up the enemy attacks.

When the enemy finally withdrew, 58 bodies were found and buried and there were signs of many more, either dead or seriously wounded, having been dragged away. Some bodies were within seven feet of the D Company weapon pits. This decisive action marked the end of organised enemy resistance to our advance this side of the HONGORAI RIVER and 24 Aust Inf Bn continued to move forward and on 7 May 45 the leading company established a defensive locality on high ground overlooking the HONGORAI ford.

Simultaneously with the drive along the main axis, 57/60 Aust Inf Bn, on COMMANDO ROAD, crossed the HONGORAI with one company and secured the eastern bank. The consolidation and reorganisation of units of the brigade group on the WEST bank of the HONGORAI marked the conclusion of the first phase of the operations.

Known casualties inflicted on the enemy up to this stage were 202 killed, 21 wounded and 5 PW which is attributed to the successful employment of all supporting arms and the determination and drive of the infantry against a stubborn and fanatical enemy. No estimate of enemy casualties from our heavy bombing and artillery concentrations has been made.



15 SOFTENING UP EAST OF THE HONGORAI

During the final stages of the drive to the HONGORAI, a softening up programme EAST of the river was commenced and continued each day as the advancing troops approached their objectives. Extensive patrolling EAST of the HONGORAI was being carried out by 58/59 Aust Inf Bn and, acting on information supplied by the patrols, artillery and air programmes were carried out. As the advance to the HONGORAI reached its final stages, the softening up increased in intensity.

Patrols brought evidence of the enemy concentrating forces in strong defensive positions EAST of the river and these positions became the targets for all the available support from air and artillery. Ambushes were set on tracks and patrols continued to harass the enemy in the rear areas and disorganise his efforts to build up a strong defence on the HONGORAI. At this stage an additional squadron of Corsairs became available for support and the maximum use was made of the aircraft to devastate the known enemy localities.

This was in accordance with the policy pursued throughout the operation of hitting the enemy hard with all available fire power rather than assault by infantry thus avoiding heavy casualties. By this means, our superiority of fire power was used to the best advantage at all times and neutralised the enemy's numerical superiority.

16 ENEMY ACTION

Throughout this phase of operations, the tactics adopted by the enemy were to delay our advance by occupying a series of defensive positions along the BUIN ROAD and at the same time to carry out diversionary tactics in the HATAI TRIANGLE. When his prepared positions were overrun the enemy commenced a period of aggressive small scale counter attacks culminating in the fanatical assault of 6 May, which may be interpreted as a last desperate effort on the part of the enemy 6 Fd Arty Regt to redeem themselves after their series of reverses during this phase.

An important factor was that the enemy troops encountered during our advance were not elements of the defeated SLATERS KNOLL force but were fresh and specially organised forces who were in reserve positions for that operation. When our drive reached the HONGORAI, the enemy still maintained efforts to disrupt our operation by diversionary actions in the MARTINS CROSSING area and by a succession of small ambush parties along the L of C who either laid mines on the road or attempted to ambush unescorted vehicles. On the COMMANDO ROAD a holding force only was maintained and there was no aggressive action by the enemy on this axis.

17 MAINTENANCE OF L OF C

A major achievement during this phase of the operation was the construction and maintenance of a jeep L of C from the 3-ton roadhead on the PURIATA RIVER through to the HONGORAI RIVER and along the HATAI TRACK. The original condition of BUIN ROAD was such that the entire road had to be corduroyed to allow even jeep traffic to proceed and, even when corduroyed, frequently became very difficult to negotiate after heavy rain. From SLATERS KNOLL to the



HONGORAI RIVER 9313 yards of corduroy was laid along  
BUIN ROAD and on the HATAI TRACK 8070 yards were laid.  
Most of the work was done by the infantry.



PHASE III

THE CROSSING OF THE HONGORAI - POROREI RIVERS

18 PREPARATIONS AND DIVERSIONARY ACTIONS

The task allotted to the brigade was in the terms of 3 Aust Div OO 17 of 13 May 45 to secure the line of the HARI RIVER to KAPANA 0242. Following this order 15 Aust Inf Bde OO 6 of 18 May 45 summarised the proposed operation as follows:

- (a) The advance of 15 Aust Inf Bde across the HONGORAI RIVER preceded by a two-day aerial bombardment to be made on a two battalion front on the following axes -

RIGHT - BUIN ROAD - 24 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns;  
LEFT - COMMANDO ROAD - 57/60 Aust Inf Bn.

- (b) A diversion created by advances of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn and bombing of MARTINS CROSSING area will draw enemy forces NORTH to enable 24 Aust Inf Bn and 58/59 Aust Inf Bn to become firmly established on their respective objectives without excessive enemy opposition.

A most important part of the preparations was the personal reconnaissance by company commanders of objectives selected between enemy held positions. The object of these reconnaissances was to ensure that the objectives were captured without casualties and with the intention of operating from the objectives against enemy localities to squeeze them out.

During the preparatory stage, one company of 24 Aust Inf Bn crossed the HONGORAI RIVER without opposition and established a company locality on the eastern side of the main crossing. Patrols from this company probing forward contacted very strong enemy positions on EGANS RIDGE. All attempts to penetrate these positions were unsuccessful and patrols reported the enemy to be very well dug in and the total strength in the area at least 100. Some strong-points were tunnelled into the 30 ft escarpment which formed the ridge and it was obvious that to attack such a position with infantry would entail very heavy casualties.

Flanking patrols from both units continued to locate enemy strongpoints further EAST and particularly in the vicinity of the POROREI ford. Forward observation officers operating with the patrols registered these positions with artillery and mortars and continuous harassing fire was brought down during the preliminary moves by the units. The maximum availability of aircraft was employed particularly against the EGANS RIDGE positions.

During the softening up for the crossing of the HONGORAI, Corsairs flew 381 sorties and dropped 132 tons of bombs. In the same period 2 Aust Fd Regt fired approximately 8000 rounds on enemy positions and mortar platoons firing in batteries of eight guns fired approximately 3700 rounds.

Ground patrols and tactical reconnaissance aircraft were repeatedly reporting enemy activity in the area of



MARTINS CROSSING. It is at this point that the main Japanese L of C to the areas WEST of the HONGORAI crosses the river. This L of C is known as the HATAI SECRET TRACK WEST of the HONGORAI and as TIGER ROAD EAST of the HONGORAI and was used by the enemy for the SLATERS KNOLL operation and throughout the battle of the TRIANGLE.

Continuous patrols were carried out in this area to maintain contact with the enemy and a series of air strikes was employed to indicate our interest in this area. The principal diversion was the sending of an armoured patrol with bulldozer team from 24 Aust Inf Bn to stage a diversionary action at MARTINS CROSSING and so delude the enemy into thinking that an outflanking move was developing in that area.

The diversionary action was carried out with thorough realism with bulldozer team cutting a track through the jungle for the tanks and constructing a tank crossing over the HONGORAI. Although no enemy were encountered the tanks and infantry pushed forward and staged a mock battle in which infantry and tanks fired their automatic weapons and created the maximum of noise to simulate a major action being carried out. Subsequent patrols in the area reported a marked increase in enemy movement along TIGER ROAD indicating that the diversion had at least caused the enemy to investigate the area and definitely confused him as to our actual intentions.

Throughout these operations engineers and unit pioneer platoons were busily preparing tank and jeep tracks through virgin jungle to assembly areas which were being prepared for both 24 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns SOUTH of the HONGORAI - POROREI RIVER fork. Patrols were particularly active during this period to distract the enemy's attention while this work proceeded.

Simultaneously with the preparation of the roads, company commanders of each unit were making personal and detailed reconnaissances of routes to be taken from their assembly areas to the forming up points from which the final assaults on BUIN ROAD would be launched.

Acting on PW information, patrols from 58/59 Aust Inf Bn cleared the AITARA area and attacked and destroyed an enemy reporting station established on the AITARA TRACK for the purpose of reporting on our patrol activities SOUTH of the BUIN ROAD.

19 ADVANCE ALONG COMMANDO ROAD TO TOROPIRU RIVER

Following a two day period of bombing and shelling of known enemy positions which were on high ground EAST of the HONGORAI and HUDA RIVERS respectively, 57/60 Aust Inf Bn was allotted the task of capturing the area of COMMANDO ROAD to the line of the TOROPIRU RIVER and exploit to the line of the TOROBIRU RIVER. This action, in addition to constituting a major advance along the northern axis and a threat to the enemy garden area at TAITAI, was part of the general plan to create a diversion NORTH of BUIN ROAD and to detract the attention of the enemy from our preparations for the main assault along BUIN ROAD.

As an additional diversionary action, 57/60 Aust Inf Bn despatched a strong fighting patrol SOUTH along LITTLES TRACK to carry out harassing operations against the enemy in the area of TIGER ROAD and to follow up the air strikes



system

In view of the slowness of the Japanese communication/ these diversionary moves were commenced in sufficient time to allow the information to filter through to Japanese headquarters and to give time for the required reaction to the moves to commence.

For this action 2/11 Aust Fd Regt came in support of the brigade and was allotted in direct support of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn for this operation.

On 17 May 45 in pursuance of a plan built up from information supplied by patrols and from interrogation of prisoners of war as to enemy strengths and locations, 57/60 Aust Inf Bn began their drive SE along COMMANDO ROAD when A Company crossed the HONGORAI, attacked and captured the first enemy strong point on the high ground overlooking the main crossing.

C Company, with in support one troop of tanks, commenced to move through A Company but it was found that tanks were unable to cross the HONGORAI. After several attempts to make the crossing, the company proceeded without tanks, moved through A Company and proceeded along COMMANDO ROAD to establish a company locality on the banks of the KOYA RIVER. B Company then made an outflanking move to the NORTH and reached an assembly area NORTH of the second main enemy position. Simultaneously D Company made a wider outflanking move and cut COMMANDO ROAD in the vicinity of the TOROPIRU RIVER.

With D Company in position, B Company then made their attack against the enemy position on the high ground on the bank of the HUDA RIVER. Considerable enemy resistance was encountered and an artillery concentration was brought down on the position. A determined infantry attack was launched immediately following the artillery concentration and the enemy were driven out of the position. Contact patrols then cleared COMMANDO ROAD between the company localities and one platoon of D Company moved forward to exploit to the line of the TOROBIRU RIVER to complete the task. At the conclusion of the day all companies had consolidated in their positions and an advance of 3700 yards along COMMANDO ROAD had been made and the enemy driven from two large defensive positions.

The following day the enemy lodged a series of determined counter attacks against two company localities but all were repulsed. By 20 May 45 the battalion was reorganised and concentrated in the area of the TOROBIRU RIVER and within striking distance of the OSO - USO TRACK JUNCTION and the extensive garden areas of TAITAI, KAPANA and MONOITU.

20 ORGANISATION IN ASSEMBLY AREAS SOUTH OF BUIN ROAD

During the period from 18 May 45 to 20 May 45, 24 Aust Inf Bn moved their entire battalion less one company and unessential stores along the newly constructed L of C over a crossing of the HONGORAI RIVER, specially constructed by an engineer team assisted by the unit pioneer platoon, to the assembly areas allotted between the HONGORAI and POROREI RIVERS. Heavy rain failed to delay progress of the move even though the newly constructed HEZLERS TRACK became very boggy owing to the passage of tanks and tractor trains.



By the night of 19 May 45, the battalion was complete in the assembly areas with tanks, all weapons, reserve rations, ammunition and all other essential stores. During the same period 58/59 Aust Inf Bn moved SOUTH along BALZER ROAD, also newly constructed, and concentrated the battalion and stores in a bivouac area WEST of the HONGORAI where the force awaited the completion of a crossing for tanks and vehicles which was then under construction.

On 20 May 45 all companies, tanks and stores were moved across the HONGORAI RIVER into assembly areas and by the night of 20 May 45 the battalion was poised for the assault on BUIN ROAD. The moves of both units proceeded without a single hitch and obviously without the knowledge of the enemy which proved the value of the previous careful reconnaissance, planning and diversionary actions. The construction of these two tracks to the assembly areas was a major engineering achievement and even after heavy rain for several days, tanks were able to get through although jeeps had to be dragged through in tractor trains. The country through which the tracks had to be constructed was particularly boggy and it was only by the determination and sheer hard work on the part of all troops that the move was completed according to plan.

21 ATTACK BY 24 AUST INF BN

On 20 May 45, the enemy strongpoints in the EGANS RIDGE and POROREI FORD areas were given a final pounding by aircraft and artillery preparatory to the large scale assault on the BUIN ROAD by 24 Aust Inf Bn. With one company containing the enemy from its position astride BUIN ROAD on the EAST bank of the HONGORAI RIVER, the remainder of the battalion with its tanks, artillery and mortars in support and with medium machine gun covering fire, moved NORTH from their assembly areas and seized their objectives on the BUIN ROAD between EGANS RIDGE and the POROREI RIVER before the enemy could re-occupy the defensive positions from which they had been driven by the artillery and mortar fire which preceded the attack.

With B and D Companies consolidated on high ground astride BUIN ROAD with D Company overlooking the POROREI FORD from the WEST bank, A Company crossed the POROREI RIVER from the assembly area and commenced to move NORTH along the EAST bank of the river with as its objective the high ground on the eastern bank of the POROREI commanding the main ford. During its advance the company encountered a 70 ft escarpment which was negotiated with considerable difficulty and, on reaching high ground overlooking BUIN ROAD, was fired on by an enemy force from the northern side of BUIN ROAD and on the EAST bank of the POROREI.

At the same time, enemy guns commenced to shell A Company and D Company with extreme accuracy. A Company then moved back to higher ground where they occupied a strong defensive locality for the night. During consolidation by both A and D Companies, enemy snipers were continually active and intermittent fire was directed at both companies from the enemy positions on the NORTH side of BUIN ROAD. During this action, patrols probed forward from C Company locality and found the enemy still in occupation of their positions on EGANS RIDGE.



22 ATTACK BY 58/59 AUST INF BN

Exploiting to a maximum the surprise effect gained by the successful operation of 24 Aust Inf Bn on 20 May 45 the enemy positions extending EAST along BUIN ROAD from the POROREI ford to RUMI were subjected to an intensive air and artillery bombardment, following which 58/59 Aust Inf Bn launched a full scale battalion attack to secure the BUIN ROAD from excluding the POROREI FORD to including the AITRA TRACK JUNCTION.

Immediately the move from assembly areas commenced, C Company, moving on the western flank, came under fire from a strong enemy position and their tanks were held up by a creek obstacle approximately 250 yards in rear of the company. C Company proceeding without tank support and outflanked the enemy position but was again held up by strong enemy resistance. The tanks were extricated by a bulldozer team and moved forward to join C Company.

With the tank support C Company made a determined assault on its objective and drove the enemy out of their positions. Following C Company's success, B Company moved through and secured their objective without opposition. On the eastern flank, A Company struck no opposition until the objective was reached when the company immediately came under heavy fire from the enemy positions NORTH of BUIN ROAD. The company proceeded to consolidate on its objective and while in the process of digging in was subjected to extremely accurate fire from enemy 75 mm guns obviously directed by forward observers.

It was obvious from enemy reactions that following the surprise achieved by the 24 Aust Inf Bn attack from the SOUTH, this second full scale attack by 58/59 Aust Inf Bn, also from the SOUTH, caused complete bewilderment.

Following the consolidation of all companies on their objectives, an armoured patrol with bulldozer team moved along BUIN ROAD from C Company to A Company, clearing the road of mines and booby traps and of any small enemy pockets that remained between the company objectives. When approaching A Company, the armoured patrol was held up by bomb craters on the road and an engineer reconnaissance party with the patrol was fired on by a strong enemy position consisting of pillboxes and trenches on the NORTH side of BUIN ROAD. The tanks moved forward to the edge of the crater and gave covering fire while a strong fighting patrol from A Company attacked the position from the WEST. The enemy were completely surprised and after a fierce fire fight were forced to abandon the position.

23 CONSOLIDATION, REORGANISATION AND CLEARING OF L OF C

The first step necessary in consolidating the gains of the past two days and in opening the L of C along BUIN ROAD was to clear the enemy from his positions on EGINS RIDGE.

In spite of an intensive bombardment of these positions by air, artillery and mortars over a period of ten days, on 22 May 45 C Company 24 Aust Inf Bn patrolled forward and found the enemy still in occupation of their positions. Patrols reported the positions to be completely devastated by bombing and that there was a strong stench of dead coming from the debris, but the enemy were still



occupying the positions which they had tunnelled into the side of the escarpment and had so far withstood the terrific pounding they had received.

On 22 May 45, a final air strike using 1000-lb stick bombs was directed onto the positions so that the greater penetration of these bombs would destroy the positions which were tunnelled deep into the ridge. Over a period of ten days a total of 230 bombs were dropped on the positions, the artillery fired 7800 rounds and the mortars 3700 rounds.

Following the final airstrike on 22 May 45, a further artillery concentration was brought down on the position and C Company 24 Aust Inf Bn moved forward to make an assault. On arrival at the ridge, the Company found that the enemy had at last abandoned the position. The scene was described as one of complete devastation. The positions once occupied by the enemy were completely buried under huge piles of debris and the whole area was barren and scarred with shrapnel.

The consistent accuracy of our bombing, shelling and mortaring was evidenced by the complete devastation of the whole area and the destruction of the enemy positions which were the strongest positions yet encountered during the operation. A strong odour of dead was noticeable throughout the area but the destruction of the positions was so complete that it was impossible to make any search of the original positions for bodies or for abandoned equipment or documents. With the occupation of EGANS RIDGE the last enemy stronghold in the area of the HONGORAI RIVER had been overcome.

Work then commenced on the opening of BUIN ROAD as a L of C through from the HONGORAI RIVER to RUMI. Engineers constructed fords over the HONGORAI and PORONEI RIVERS, bulldozer teams cleared tank obstacles from the road of which there were many, particularly in the EGANS RIDGE area, and repaired the road where it had been damaged by the extensive bombing.

Bomb disposal personnel thoroughly checked the road for mines and booby traps, many of which were found during consolidation by the infantry companies. In an area occupied by B Company 58/59 Aust Inf Bn heavy casualties were caused when a platoon advancing along the side of the road exploded a chain of booby traps.

Boggy patches on the road were quickly corduroyed by infantry personnel and by 23 May 45, jeep traffic was able to proceed along BUIN ROAD to the forward companies. All units then concentrated on reorganisation and movement forward of their B Echelons and of the stores from the assembly areas.

Reorganisation of the brigade group was now complete after a very successful operation. In the COMMANO ROAD area 57/60 Aust Inf Bn were firmly established in strong defended localities and patrols were operating into the OSO and TAITAI areas.

During this phase, casualties inflicted on the enemy were 177 known killed, 12 wounded and 3 PW. These figures make no allowance for the considerable casualties which must have been sustained by the enemy as a result of the continuous bombing, shelling and mortaring of their positions.



24 ENEMY ACTION

It is very evident from information gained from captured documents and from PW that the enemy had intended to make a very firm stand along the line of the HONGORAI RIVER but was prevented from doing so owing to the speed of the final stages of our advance towards the river. Many prepared positions had never been occupied as there was not time to organise the forces in the rear and bring them forward to occupy these positions.

It was known that the 6 Engr Regt had spent some weeks exclusively in constructing strong defensive positions such as EGANS RIDGE and that forces were being organised in the HARI RIVER area to move forward to occupy these defences. For this phase of the operations, the 4 Med Arty Regt, converted into infantry troops, formed the nucleus of the enemy's force with remnants of 6 Fd Arty Regt and 13 Inf Regt.

The Med Arty troops were fresh from rear areas and had not been previously committed in battle and, therefore, resisted our attack much more strongly than the previous enemy forces opposing us. When it became evident to the enemy that he had failed to gain the time required for the completion of the HONGORAI defences the reaction was a general withdrawal of the main forces to the HARI RIVER leaving behind specially organised delaying forces similar to those operating during Phase II of the operations.

At this stage there was a marked increase in the activities and in the accuracy of enemy artillery and it was obvious that the enemy was employing observers well forward who could direct the artillery fire right on to our positions and so cause the maximum amount of damage with the limited amount of ammunition available. Many artillery survey pegs were found indicating that the Japanese had made an accurate survey as well as actually registering positions prior to withdrawal.

During this phase much use was made of information supplied by PW which, in almost all cases, proved very reliable and enabled an accurate check to be kept on all enemy movements and intentions. During the advance of 58/59 Aust Inf Bn an enemy officer deserted and surrendered to our troops. From this PW and several others came reports of low morale, a defeatist spirit and a general breaking down of discipline in the units at present committed in the front line.

From information supplied by the officer of the location of enemy 150 mm guns our counter battery guns were able to deal with these guns and silence them whenever they commenced firing. The enemy were then forced to change their gun positions and, while doing this, were observed by our tactical reconnaissance aircraft who called up bombers and destroyed two of their guns.

The enemy 6 Div headquarters, at this stage located in the OSO area, was penetrated by a patrol from 57/60 Aust Inf Bn and an enemy reconnaissance party moving in the vicinity of the headquarters was ambushed and five of the party killed, including an apparently high ranking officer.



Very shortly after this incident 6 Div HQ withdrew from the OSO area and a patrol which entered the abandoned HQ area captured a considerable quantity of equipment and miscellaneous articles including perfumes and lipstick.



PHASE IV

THE ADVANCE TO THE PEPERU - THE OPENING OF HAMMER ROAD  
THE CAPTURE OF THE TAITAI GARDEN AREA

25 CAPTURE OF THE OSO - USO TRACK JUNCTION

After a series of enemy counter attacks against company localities in the TOROBIRU RIVER area had been repulsed and after a period of intensive and aggressive patrolling, 57/60 Aust Inf Bn carried out a series of small advances along COMMANDO ROAD, each advance strongly contested by a determined enemy delaying force and finally on 27 May 45, supported by an airstrike and artillery concentrations, one company occupied the road junction and another moved SOUTH of COMMANDO ROAD to cut the USO ROAD approximately 300 yards SOUTH of the junction.

This stage of operations was made particularly difficult owing to L of C problems. COMMANDO ROAD from the HONGORAI RIVER to the OSO JUNCTION was not suitable for either tank or jeep traffic and all supplies had to be brought forward by boy lines. Immediately the battalion occupied the track junction, enemy artillery became active and shelled the company localities with considerable accuracy. This was the first time enemy artillery had been directed at our forces operating on the COMMANDO ROAD axis.

26 OPENING OF HAMMER ROAD

At this stage it was considered most essential to open a lateral track which would link 57/60 Aust Inf Bn with the main axis and allow vehicles and tanks to proceed through to the battalion, thus solving the L of C problems previously experienced.

Following the seizure of the OSO - USO TRACK JUNCTION by 57/60 Aust Inf Bn and the consolidation by 58/59 Aust Inf Bn on the RUNAI end of the track, two companies from 24 Aust Inf Bn moved on the northern flank and took up positions along the USO - OSO TRACK which then became known as HAMMER ROAD.

Immediately contact patrols moved forward to link with 57/60 Aust Inf Bn and clear any small enemy parties from the area. Work then commenced on corduroying the track to enable tanks and jeeps to move through to 57/60 Aust Inf Bn. The first jeep train moving through exploded a land mine which had been laid on the road during the previous night. Only minor damage was done to the jeep and engineers located several additional mines similarly laid.

The opening of HAMMER ROAD constituted the first lateral track between the two main axes of advance since the HATAI TRACK, and for the first time since crossing the HONGORAI RIVER 57/60 Aust Inf Bn were able to operate with tanks and jeeps.



27 57/60 AUST INF BN ADVANCE TO TAITAI JUNCTION

At the conclusion of a short period of extensive patrolling, one company of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn, with in support one troop of tanks and preceded by an artillery concentration, commenced an advance SE along COMMANDO ROAD on 2 Jun 45. After an advance of 1000 yards without encountering enemy opposition the company reached the SUNIN RIVER. This river constituted a tank obstacle and the company consolidated on the river while the engineers proceeded to construct a tank crossing.

B Company then moved through A Company and advanced to the URURUR RIVER after negotiating very difficult terrain. C Company then made a wide outflanking move to the WEST and cut the COMMANDO ROAD in the PONNU area. Isolated enemy opposition was encountered throughout these moves but no decisive attempt was made by the enemy to halt our advance towards the TAITAI area.

After a succession of company advances during which the engineers constructed tank crossings over several difficult obstacles, one company established a defensive locality astride the AMIO ROAD JUNCTION which controls all roads leading to the garden areas of TAITAI and MONOTU.

Owing to the difficult terrain and the number of major engineering tasks to be completed before tanks could be brought forward, the actual attack on the AMIO area was made without tank support. A Company providing protection for the tanks moved slowly forward behind the remainder of the battalion and brought the tanks forward in time to assist in consolidation. Throughout these advances enemy artillery was again very active.

Patrols searching the AMIO area during consolidation located a large vehicle park and workshop containing four 3-ton trucks, one prime mover, one small car and many spare parts, wheels and tyres. All vehicles had been rendered unserviceable by bombing. Patrols thoroughly searched the TAITAI garden areas and found the enemy had hurriedly vacated their gardens some of which were in very good condition and capable of producing food for a considerable force.

28 58/59 AUST INF BN ADVANCE TO MAMAGOTA JUNCTION

Following consolidation by the battalion in the RUNAI area, reconnaissance patrols probed forward and made continuous contact with strong enemy positions. PW information confirmed the report of the patrols that there was a large, well prepared enemy defensive position NORTH of BUIN ROAD approximately 200 yards forward from B Company. On several occasions the enemy sent small harassing parties from this position by night to fire into the B Company locality and test the alertness of their sentries. All such sorties were quickly dispersed when the tank and infantry weapons opened fire.

Offensive patrolling continued and an air strike and a series of artillery concentrations were brought down on the enemy position. Following the air strike C and D Companies made an outflanking move to the NORTH **bypassing the enemy position** and advanced approximately 1500 yards SE along the axis of BUIN ROAD towards



MAMAGOTA JUNCTION. Patrols with engineer personnel probed forward from B Company locality and cleared BUIN ROAD and an area 30 yards on each side of the road of mines and booby traps.

Various types of booby traps were encountered, the principal one being several 150 mm shells linked to the one fuze, 75 mm shells, 81 mm shells and type 93 mines. Booby traps were constructed so that they could be fired either by trip wires, pull wires operated from pits approximately 30 yards in from the road or by pressure mechanism.

On 2 Jun 45, preceded by a further airstrike against known enemy positions, 58/59 Aust Inf Bn made a large scale advance SE along BUIN ROAD with tanks in support and cleared the enemy from the positions forward of B Company. The advance was continued against continuous opposition until the TOMOI RIVER was reached. This river constituted a tank obstacle and one company crossed the river to establish a defensive locality approximately 200 yards EAST of the river and another company established a company locality with the tanks on the WEST bank of the river.

Advancing troops found the strong enemy position on the NORTH side of BUIN ROAD EAST of the PINTAI RIVER completely devastated by extremely accurate bombing and shelling. Bombs had registered a series of direct hits along one line of positions completely burying the original pillboxes under a pile of debris. A strong smell of dead was evident around these positions but, like EGANS RIDGE, the devastation caused was such that the positions could not be searched for bodies or abandoned equipment.

On 3 Jun 45, after engineers with a bridging tank had quickly constructed a tank bridge over the TOMOI RIVER, A Company of 58/59 Aust Inf Bn crossed the river with tank support, moved through D Company to continue the advance along BUIN ROAD, and immediately came under fire from the enemy and encountered numerous tank obstacles in the form of fallen trees and hastily constructed ditches, the majority of which were improvised from bomb craters. With an engineer team clearing the obstacles, A Company pressed forward with the tanks and after fierce fighting forced the enemy to withdraw. Following up their initial success A Company continued to drive the enemy along BUIN ROAD and after overcoming many small enemy positions and repulsing several counter attacks reached MAMAGOTA JUNCTION at 1345 hours on 4 Jun 45.

During A Company's drive along BUIN ROAD, C Company made a parallel advance breaking bush NORTH of the BUIN ROAD and provided NORTH flank protection throughout the advance. The battalion then proceeded to consolidate along the line of the MAMAGOTA - TAITAI ROAD. Enemy harassing parties were active and hostile shelling continued throughout the consolidation period. While the advance to MAMAGOTA JUNCTION was proceeding a strong fighting patrol was despatched through AITARA to proceed along the coast to reach MAMAGOTA.



29 REORGANISATION AND REDISPOSITION OF 24 AUST INF BN

Simultaneously with the drive by 58/59 Aust Inf Bn along BUIN ROAD, 24 Aust Inf Bn flowed steadily forward occupying a series of company localities in rear of the advancing companies. To establish a company locality on the TAITAI - MAMAGOTA TRACK and to make a link between 57/60 Aust Inf Bn in the AMIO area with 58/59 Aust Inf Bn at MAMAGOTA JUNCTION, C Company 24 Aust Inf Bn on 4 Jun 45 commenced a cross country move from HAMMER ROAD working on compass bearings until they established their company locality in the vicinity of MONOITU MISSION.

With the 58/59 Aust Inf Bn established on the PEPERU RIVER, 24 Aust Inf Bn moved as far forward as possible and concentrated the battalion less C Company in the vicinity of MAMAGOTA JUNCTION at the same time despatching an armoured patrol to clear the MAMAGOTA ROAD to MAMAGOTA. During this reorganisation period patrols of 24 Aust Inf Bn thoroughly combed the garden areas of MONOITU MISSION and TAITAI and vacated enemy positions along MAMAGOTA ROAD.

Many signs of recent enemy activity and many newly cultivated gardens were found but, apart from small isolated parties, the enemy had abandoned this garden area which was one of the principal sources of food supply for his forces operating in the HARI RIVER area. Patrols to contact 57/60 Aust Inf Bn cleared the MAMAGOTA - TAITAI TRACK of enemy and this track will replace HAMMER ROAD as the link between the two forces.

30 ATTACK TO REACH THE HARI RIVER

On 6 Jun 45, supported by an airstrike and artillery concentrations on known enemy positions, 58/59 Aust Inf Bn commenced a two-pronged drive EAST and NE from MAMAGOTA JUNCTION. While one company pushed EAST and established a company locality on the banks of the PEPERU RIVER, a second company drove NE across the PEPERU RIVER against very determined enemy resistance drove along the TAITAI ROAD to secure the junction of the BUIN, MAMAGOTA and TAITAI ROADS.

A very strong enemy position on the northern bank of the PEPERU forced the company to make a flanking attack supported by fire from the tanks. One tank crossing the PEPERU broke the improvised bridge and had to be extricated by the bulldozer team while under fire from the enemy. A determined attack from the flank by two infantry platoons drove the enemy from the position and the remaining tanks effected the crossing of the river.

The final drive to the TAITAI JUNCTION was hampered considerably by numerous mines and booby traps laid both on and off the road by the enemy as they retreated. The company driving due EAST across the PEPERU sent two platoons to the eastern bank to cover the construction of a tank crossing by the bulldozer team. One tank became bogged while crossing and the bulldozer was bogged while extricating the tank. Enemy from dug in positions on a 30 ft escarpment EAST of the PEPERU continued to fire on the tanks and bulldozer during the crossing and it was with considerable difficulty that the bulldozer was finally dragged out by a tank.



After the crossing of the tanks was completed the company attacked and drove the enemy from their positions on the ridge and the advance continued towards the HARI. Several small streams were encountered as the advance progressed and tanks were frequently held up by very boggy ground following recent heavy rain. When the preliminary reconnaissances were made, this ground appeared to be solid and suitable for the movement of tanks.

In the face of continuous enemy opposition the company and tanks drove slowly forward and established a company locality in a garden area approximately half way between the PEPERU and HARI RIVERS. Simultaneously with the move of these two companies, D Company with PIB personnel and artillery forward observation officer commenced a northern outflanking move through the HARI 3 area with the task of proceeding through MUSUKKA to cut the BUIN ROAD vicinity RUSEI and harass the enemy L of C.

While moving across country in the UMIRI area towards HARI 3 the company encountered very strong opposition from enemy in well prepared positions in the garden area WEST of HARI 3. Artillery concentrations were brought down on the enemy positions but the company was unable to advance further and established a defensive locality so as to maintain contact with the enemy.

With A Company remaining in position to contain the enemy in the area SOUTH of BUIN ROAD and between the PEPERU and HARI RIVERS, B and D Companies continued to drive forward on their respective tasks. On 8 Jun 45, B Company reached a position approximately 300 yards WEST of the main HARI ford and were there held up by intense fire from a strong enemy position on high ground on the western bank of the HARI. During this final advance, every inch of ground was contested by the enemy and many mines and booby traps were left in the path of our advancing tanks and infantry.

One creek bed was exceptionally heavily mined with improvised mines of many types. One mine exploded under the tracks of a tank with such force that the tanks was lifted six feet from the ground. The only damage sustained was to the track which was repairable with little delay.

D Company then continued to drive forward with artillery support and after several fierce engagements established a company locality within 300 yards of the WEST bank of the HARI RIVER at HARI 3. The enemy were still in occupation of strongly constructed positions on the WEST bank of the river. By 10 Jun 45, after further fighting, D Company was established in a company locality commanding the crossing at HARI 3 and B Company was in position controlling the main crossing on BUIN ROAD. The battalion had reached the general line of the HARI RIVER and had consolidated in preparation for the assault to cross the river.

31. SOFTENING UP EAST OF THE HARI

During the consolidation period an extensive softening up programme was carried out against known enemy positions along the EAST bank of the HARI RIVER.



From PW statements it was found that the enemy had committed a strong force of approximately 1250 in well prepared positions in depth along the EAST bank of the river principally SOUTH of BUIN ROAD and were determined to delay our advance at all costs. Against these positions the maximum air and artillery support available was employed.

In the softening up of these positions, Corsairs flew 412 sorties and dropped 142 tons of bombs. Artillery fired 8500 rounds and mortars maintained a continuous harassing fire onto the positions involving 7134 bombs. During this softening up, patrols from 24 Aust Inf Bn were active in the area SOUTH of the BUIN ROAD and carried out diversionary tactics to mislead the enemy as to our intentions for the next action.

The effect of this patrolling is evident from the fact that the enemy concentrated the majority of his defensive positions SOUTH of the BUIN ROAD. 57/60 Aust Inf Bn patrols were searching the KAPANA area and by employing artillery forward observation officers with the patrols were engaging enemy positions with artillery concentrations.

As part of the softening up programme, the FELO Front Line Broadcasting Unit carried out continuous propaganda broadcasts from various company localities along the WEST bank of the HARI.

32 ENEMY ACTION

Throughout this phase the enemy made desperate attempts to halt our drive towards the HARI and the resistance experienced by our troops was the most stubborn so far experienced during the operations. The failure to stop our advance at the HONGORAI which had been the original plan made it necessary for the enemy to impose the maximum delay on our advance and so gain time to construct a much stronger defence line on the HARI.

For these defences the 23 Inf Regt which had been in the process of reorganising in the RUSEI area for approximately two months was brought forward with reinforcements and new equipment to form the nucleus of the HARI defensive line. As on the HONGORAI, the enemy followed the policy of bringing a fresh unit forward from the rear to contest the next stage of the action. Remnants of other 6 Div units placed in support of the 23 Inf Regt made up a total force of approximately 1250 whose task was to hold the HARI line at all costs.

During Phase IV of the operations known casualties inflicted on the enemy were 101 killed, 23 wounded and 12 PW. During the stages of preparation for the assault on the HARI, PW information proved of particular value in planning. From various prisoners captured during the final stages of the attack on the HARI complete and reliable information was obtained of enemy dispositions and strengths and so enabled the plan for this operation to be made with a complete knowledge of what lay ahead as far as the enemy was concerned. Many prisoners commented on how the speed of our advance from



the HONGORAI to the HARI had completely disorganised the enemy's plans and had caused him to commit the 23 Inf Regt very hurriedly and without all the reorganising and reinforcing that had been planned.

The occupation of the HARI defences was very hasty and feverish attempts were being made to strengthen the positions before the assault came. The demoralising effect of the continuous bombing, shelling and mortaring of the positions had undermined the fighting efficiency of the enemy troops and had created a defeatist spirit among the men.



PHASE V

CROSSING OF THE HARI AND CONSOLIDATION ON THE OGORITI RIVER

33 THE PLAN FOR THE HARI CROSSING

From the information obtained as to the enemy strengths and dispositions EAST of the HARI it was evident that a continuation of the drive along BUIN ROAD would have little hope of success without heavy casualties. Accordingly it was decided to carry out wide outflanking moves to the NORTH to cut the BUIN ROAD in rear of the enemy positions and so make them untenable and force a withdrawal.

To achieve this, 57/60 Aust Inf Bn was ordered to organise a special mobile fighting force consisting of three rifle companies, the necessary elements of HQ Company and a battalion HQ which would make a cross-country move to the KINGORI - RUSEI TRACK, and moving EAST of the OGORITI RIVER attack to the SOUTH and cut the BUIN ROAD in the RUSEI area 7000 yards in rear of the enemy. As NORTH flank protection for this operation an armoured patrol was sent through KAPANA to KINGORI and thence SOUTH along the KINGORI - RUSEI TRACK to join the main force at RUSEI.

The task allotted to 58/59 Aust Inf Bn was to force a crossing with infantry and tanks over the HARI RIVER NORTH of HARI 3 and then to make a two-pronged drive to secure the BUIN ROAD in the area of HARI 2 and WEST towards the HARI ford. 24 Aust Inf Bn was directed to support both operations by containing the enemy in their present locations and to carry out diversionary actions SOUTH of BUIN ROAD in the general area of the HARI - PEPERU RIVER junction and areas EAST of the HARI RIVER.

34 ATKINSON FORCE

In compliance with 3 Aust Div OO 18 of 4 Jun 45 that the brigade was to advance on two axes, a force consisting of a full strength platoon with artillery forward observation officer and party plus a platoon of D Company 1 PIB and native carriers commanded by Lt G H ATKINSON, D Company 57/60 Aust Inf Bn was despatched along the route KAPANA - MITILASI - KITSUWA - MUSARAKA with the task of establishing a patrol base on the MIVO RIVER near MUSARAKA and of carrying out extensive patrolling SOUTH from the base to BUIN ROAD along the general line of the MIVO RIVER.

As it was definitely possible that this route may have to be used as a main axis of advance, the force was directed to make a thorough topographical reconnaissance of their route and submit a report giving full details of tracks, track times, suitability for employment of tanks and any other topographical information likely to be of assistance in planning an advance along that route.

By 10 Jun 45 the force had reached KITSUWA gardens and from a bivouac area there reconnaissance was made



for a suitable base in the MUSARAKA area and contact made with 2/8 Aust Cdc Sqn. The following day the force crossed the MIVO RIVER at MUSARAKA and moved NORTH of the village for approximately 3000 yards where a patrol base was established. Patrolling SOUTH and EAST then commenced and numerous contacts with the enemy were made in the MIVO RIVER area.

On 12 Jun 45 an enemy force moving from the EAST occupied ASTILLS CROSSING over the MIVO at MUSARAKA and ATKINSON FORCE patrol base had to be moved WEST of the river to avoid being isolated. From this base the force carried out the patrolling tasks allotted until withdrawn on 23 Jun 45 to rejoin 57/60 Aust Inf Bn.

35 OUTFLANKING OPERATION BY 57/60 AUST INF BN TO RUSEI

On 10 Jun 45 reorganisation of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn into the special fighting force of three rifle companies, essential elements of HQ Company and a tactical Battalion HQ with essential stores was completed. All unessential personnel and stores were concentrated in a B Echelon area and remained in the AMIO area. D Company, less ATKINSON FORCE, was allotted the task of supplying a large fighting patrol to move with tanks through KAPANA and KINGORI and then SOUTH along the KINGORI - RUSEI TRACK to BUIB ROAD.

On 11 Jun 45 the main force of the battalion commenced to move across country towards the OGORATA RIVER and, after negotiating extremely difficult terrain and very dense vegetation which made navigation difficult, the battalion reached the MORI RIVER at the conclusion of the first day's advance. The force occupied a defensive position in this area and reconnaissance patrols moved forward to locate the KINGORI - RUSEI TRACK.

On 12 Jun 45 the advance continued and the leading elements reached the track at approximately 1100 hours. As the first section reached the track they came under fire from an enemy party of seven who were immediately engaged and dispersed. The main body continued for 400 yards EAST of the track and then turned SOUTH towards BUIB ROAD. At the conclusion of the second day the battalion was in a bivouac position approximately 3000 yards NORTH of BUIB ROAD.

On the third day the battalion remained in this base and sent out extensive reconnaissance patrols towards BUIB ROAD to locate enemy defences in the RUSEI area and to reconnoitre prospective company areas and approaches to them. These patrols made several contacts with the enemy during the day. At this stage, the line communications laid by the force as they advanced across country were cut by the enemy and a native carrier party returning to Rear Battalion HQ was ambushed en route. Wireless communications proved unsatisfactory and for some period the battalion was completely out of communication with Brigade HQ.



On the fourth day the battalion made a further advance SOUTH as a result of the previous day's reconnaissance and, after negotiating very difficult country and with minor contacts with the enemy, reached a bivouac area for the night approximately 1000 yards NORTH of the BUIN ROAD. On 15 Jun 45 the force made the final assault on the BUIN ROAD and, after further minor engagements with the enemy, consolidated for the night 15/16 Jun astride the BUIN ROAD in the RUSEI area having completed the task allotted to them. At this stage the battalion was still out of communication with Brigade Hq.

In the meantime, the D Company armoured patrol was making slow progress along the K.P.N.A - KINGORI ROAD owing to the many tank obstacles that had to be negotiated. In addition to many deep creek crossings requiring bulldozer work, the road in many places narrowed to approximately 6 feet with deep drains on both sides. This caused the tank tracks to break the sides of the road and the tanks bellied.

The move from AMIO to KINGORI TRACK JUNCTION took four days during which time the patrol encountered a strong enemy position well dug in astride the track and immediately EAST of two large tank obstacles. Under covering fire from tanks weapons and infantry patrol, with an artillery forward observation officer moved forward and registered the position. A heavy artillery concentration was brought down on the position and engineer teams worked on the construction of crossings over the tank obstacles.

On the morning of 14 Jun 45 after a further artillery concentration had been brought down on the position, the patrol moved forward and attacked and cleared the enemy from the position. From this point the condition of the track improved and the patrol was ordered to move as quickly as possible to join the main force with the tanks. On 15 Jun 45 the patrol reached the KINGORI TRACK JUNCTION and commenced to move SOUTH along the RUSEI TRACK. This track was very firm and good condition and rapid progress was made.

After proceeding 2000 yards SOUTH along this track an enemy 75 mm gun concealed on the side of the track fired on a reconnaissance party moving ahead of the patrol. The tanks immediately moved forward and quickly disposed of the gun. The advance of the patrol continued without further opposition and at 1200 hours on 16 Jun 45 the patrol reached the BUIN ROAD and linked with the main force of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn. The arrival of the tanks with the battalion enabled communications to be re-established by means of the tank wireless.

The complete 57/60 Aust Inf Bn force was now consolidated in the RUSEI area after an outflanking move during which very little opposition was encountered and which came as a complete surprise to the enemy. After a short period of consolidation and reorganisation the battalion was ready to push forward and exploit fully the confusion caused to the enemy by the cutting of BUIN ROAD well to the rear of his strong defensive positions on the HARI.



36 CROSSING OF THE HARI BY 58/59 AUST INF BN

By 13 Jun 45 very thorough preparations had been completed for a flanking assault against the very strongly held enemy positions EAST of the HARI RIVER and on 13 Jun 45 a final series of air strikes, artillery and mortar concentrations were brought down on the enemy positions.

The first stage of the operation was the move of A and C Companies of 58/59 Aust Inf Bn, each with a troop of tanks, to a point approximately 1000 yards NORTH of HARI 3 where a crossing over the HARI RIVER was constructed.

The two companies and their tanks both moved across the river and established company localities on the EAST bank of the river without the knowledge of the enemy in positions 1000 yards to the SOUTH. The two companies then amalgamated and became known as PIKE FORCE. Following immediately after the final airstrike and preceded by controlled artillery concentrations, the force commenced a drive SOUTH towards the BUIH ROAD with the intention of cutting the road in the vicinity of HARI 1. Moving along the EAST bank of the river the force cleared the enemy from the positions opposing D Company at HARI 3 and then moved SE to consolidate on their objective by 1445 hours.

Again this move was a complete surprise to the enemy as practically no opposition was encountered during the move and it was not until the force reached the BUIH ROAD that the enemy appeared to become aware of their activities.

Immediately following the clearing of the enemy from their positions at HARI 3, D Company constructed a tank crossing over the HARI, crossed the river with their tanks and commenced a drive SOUTH along the track leading through HARI 2. Considerable enemy opposition was encountered during this drive which was through very difficult country with many obstacles caused by the intensive bombing and shelling of the area. When one tank was temporarily held up, the advance proceeded still against scattered enemy opposition and reached the company objective astride BUIH ROAD for the night 13/14 Jun 45.

At the conclusion of this first day's action, PIKE FORCE had cut the BUIH ROAD at HARI 1 and D Company had moved through HARI 2 and established a company locality approximately 600 yards EAST of the main HARI ford where strong enemy positions were still preventing the advance of B Company across the river.

At this stage a PW was captured who gave detailed descriptions of the positions confronting B Company and throughout the night 13/14 Jun the battalion mortars, operating in a battery with the mortars of 24 Aust Inf Bn, ceaselessly pounded the positions. On 14 Jun 45 an armoured patrol probed forward from B Company but found the enemy still in occupation of a strong position on the WEST bank of the HARI covering the road with a 47 mm tank attack gun. This gun



registered several direct hits on tanks of the armoured patrol but caused no damage to the tanks.

D Company pushed forward and occupied the high ground on the EAST side of the HARI ford and from there brought fire to bear on the enemy position confronting B Company. At the end of the day the enemy were still in occupation of the position and during the night, mortars again pounded the position.

On 14 Jun 45 one platoon of A Company 24 Aust Inf Bn with one platoon from D Company 1 PIB moved SOUTH of the BUIN ROAD to establish ambushes on the lateral tracks along which the enemy may be withdrawing from the HARI RIVER positions. At the same time PIKE FORCE constructed a tank crossing over the river at HARI 1 and commenced to drive EAST along BUIN ROAD to junction with 57/60 Aust Inf Bn. After an advance of 150 yards a further tank obstacle was encountered and another crossing constructed. A bulldozer cleared six large trees from the road immediately beyond the creek and the tanks continued the advance.

After crossing this creek the leading tank exploded a mine but no damage was caused to the tank. Two further mines were located and destroyed in the same area. After a further short advance the leading platoon came under fire from a strong enemy position on the SOUTH side of BUIN ROAD. The position was engaged with artillery and, following the concentration, one platoon attacked the position from the SOUTH flank with covering fire from the tanks.

After a fierce engagement the enemy were driven out of the position and the advance continued. A further tank obstacle was encountered and a crossing constructed by the bulldozer team and after encountering further mines and booby traps the company completed an advance of 400 yards EAST from HARI 1 when a further strong enemy position was encountered. The enemy was engaged by a covering force and the company dug in for the night.

On 15 Jun 45, B Company with a troop of tanks and a section of the 15 Aust Inf Bde Flamethrower Platoon commenced to advance along BUIN ROAD EAST towards the HARI ford. A reconnaissance patrol moving ahead of the compa. was fired on by enemy from the position on the SOUTH of the road and the tanks moved forward to engage the position. After a fierce engagement the enemy were driven from the position and B Company moved forward to link with D Company across the HARI RIVER. Many booby traps were located around the enemy position and mines were located and destroyed on BUIN ROAD. B Company moved through D Company and advanced along BUIN ROAD to the vicinity of HARI 1 where a defensive locality was established for the night 15/16 Jun 45.

During consolidation the Company was attacked in strength from the SOUTH and WEST and after fierce fighting the enemy was driven off.



During the consolidation of PIKE FORCE on the night 14/15 Jun 45, an enemy 150 mm gun concealed on the SOUTH side of BUIN ROAD fired at point blank range on a tank scoring a direct hit. The tank immediately engaged the gun with besa and 3 inch howitzer fire. The howitzer fire exploded the ammunition in the gun position and destroyed the gun and its crew. The tank was temporarily out of action but the damage caused by the shell was slight.

On 15 Jun 45, PIKE FORCE was reorganised and then consisted of two platoons from A Company, one platoon from C Company and one troop of tanks. The remainder of A and C Companies were left in defensive positions astride BUIN ROAD EAST of HARI 1. Preceded by an artillery concentration operated in controlled lifts of 200 yards, PIKE FORCE continued the drive along BUIN ROAD and after overcoming one small enemy pocket of resistance reached the WEST bank of the OGORATA RIVER.

On 16 Jun 45, engineers commenced work at first light and constructed a tank crossing over the OGORATA following which PIKE FORCE crossed the river and established a company locality on the EAST bank. While this was proceeding D Company with a jeep train commenced to move through B Company where the troop of tanks from B Company joined the company and continued the advance to cross the OGORATA RIVER, move through PIKE FORCE and establish a company locality at the KINGORI TRACE JUNCTION.

Immediately the company was in position, work commenced on the construction of a jeep crossing over the OGORATA. A complete reorganisation of the battalion then took place. PIKE FORCE was disbanded and the elements of the force rejoined their former companies. Battalion HQ moved forward to a position approximately 500 yards WEST of the OGORATA and concentration of the battalion in this area was completed. On 16 Jun 45, following the reorganisation of the battalion, the jeep train of twelve jeeps and trailers loaded with reorganisation stores together with three troops of tanks moved forward from D Company locality and joined 57/60 Aust Inf Bn at RUSEI.

At this time the relief of B Sqn 2/4 Aust Arm Regt by A Squadron was in progress; the tanks from A Squadron moved through to 57/60 Aust Inf Bn to allow the tanks of B Squadron which had been operating with 58/59 Aust Inf Bn to be withdrawn. During the move of tanks from 58/59 Aust Inf Bn to 57/60 Aust Inf Bn the leading tank crossed a culvert which had previously been inspected by infantry and bomb disposal personnel who were unable to detect any mines. As the tank crossed the culvert there was a terrific explosion and the tank was lifted ten feet in the air. It is considered that the mine consisted of a 500 lb aerial bomb or some other specially prepared mine. It was considerably more powerful than any normal type of anti tank mine used by the enemy. The tank was totally destroyed.



37 DIVERSIONARY OPERATIONS BY 24 AUST INF BN

From 11 Jun 45, armoured patrols from 24 Aust Inf Bn at MAMAGOTA JUNCTION commenced a series of diversionary actions SOUTH of the PEPERU - HARI ROAD to distract enemy attention from the moves of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn and 58/59 Aust Inf Bn NORTH of the road. During one such diversionary attack, tanks and infantry proceeded to the WEST bank of the HARI RIVER immediately SOUTH of the river fork and commenced firing furiously across the river at suspected enemy positions.

At the same time a patrol of 58/59 Aust Inf Bn was returning SOUTH of BUIN ROAD from the HARI 1 area and heard the fire from the diversionary force and went to ground. From their position they observed large numbers of enemy rapidly dispersing from freshly prepared positions on the EAST bank of the river, indicating that the diversionary action was having the desired effect and causing the enemy to extend his defences to the SOUTH as well as making him most apprehensive.

Patrols from D Company 1 PIB assisted in the diversions by patrolling deep behind the enemy positions, setting ambushes on tracks used by the enemy and carrying out harassing attacks on enemy parties moving about in the area SOUTH of BUIN ROAD.

Following the success of the outflanking moves by the other two battalions, 24 Aust Inf Bn commenced to move forward in rear of 58/59 Aust Inf Bn and occupied a series of company localities vacated by that unit. 24 Aust Inf Bn maintained a continuous patrol screen on both flanks throughout the operation. By 16 Jun 45 the battalion had moved forward and to the NORTH flank of 58/59 Aust Inf Bn to occupy BARRETT'S TRACK NORTH of the BUIN ROAD and complete the concentration of the brigade force in the RUSEI area. One company was left in the HARI area for rear protections.

38 PROTECTION OF NORTH FLANK BY 24 AUST INF BN

Immediately following the reorganisation in the RUSEI area, two companies of 24 Aust Inf Bn were despatched to the COMMANDO ROAD axis for NORTH flank protection. One company proceeded direct to KINGORI with one troop of tanks and established a company locality astride the junction of BARRETT'S TRACK and COMMANDO ROAD. The second company, known as GRAHAM FORCE, moved across country to establish a company locality in the MUSARUKA area and relieve ATKINSON FORCE. Owing to a strong enemy position at ASTILL'S CROSSING the company established its base WEST of the MIVO RIVER and SOUTH of COMMANDO ROAD.

On 19 Jun 45, contact was made by patrols with ATKINSON FORCE and on 23 Jun 45 ATKINSON FORCE arrived at C Company locality. Before returning to 57/60 Aust Inf Bn ATKINSON FORCE handed over to GRAHAM FORCE the platoon of PIB that had been operating with them. Extensive patrolling by both companies was then carried out along COMMANDO ROAD and EAST of the MIVO RIVER.



After thorough reconnaissance of the KINGORI area by B Company it was considered that nothing could be achieved by leaving tanks in the area as the terrain was totally unsuitable for their use and the troop of tanks with B Company was withdrawn and retained as a reserve with 24 Aust Inf Bn.

39 ADVANCE TO THE MOBIAI BY 57/60 AUST INF BN

After a quick reorganisation on 17 Jun 45 the advance continued astride the BUIN ROAD towards the MOBIAI RIVER with the minimum of delay so as to prevent the enemy reorganising a strong force on the MOBIAI RIVER. After the leading company with tanks had proceeded 300 yards EAST along BUIN ROAD, the leading tank was fired on at point blank range by an enemy 150 mm gun sited on the NORTH of the road with a fire lane cut from the gun position to the road. The shell registered a direct hit on the tank exploding the ammunition inside the tank killing one of the crew and wounding the other three. With the tank out of action, the enemy fired two more rounds which hit the tank and shrapnel from them wounded some of the escorting infantry.

The company then took up a position astride the road and patrolled NORTH to locate and destroy the gun. Patrols found that the gun was sited within a strong wired in defensive position occupied by an enemy force of considerable strength. Attempts to penetrate the position by patrols were unsuccessful owing to superior enemy fire power. While these patrols were operating enemy artillery shelled the company locality on the road.

On the following day B Company attempted a northern outflanking movement around the enemy gun position and found that the position extended 400 yards NORTH from the BUIN ROAD and was occupied by a strong enemy force. The position was registered by artillery and the company returned to its original location while heavy artillery concentrations were brought down. A battery of mortars also bombed the position throughout the day.

Two companies were then ordered to make southern outflanking moves, A Company to make a wide encircling move with tanks to cut the BUIN ROAD approximately at the road bend 400 yards NORTH of the MOBIAI ford; and C Company to make a small outflanking move without tanks to cut the BUIN ROAD approximately 1000 yards EAST of the enemy gun position. Very difficult terrain was encountered by A Company during their southern outflanking move and numerous tank obstacles, some of which constituted major engineering tasks, delayed the advance. Once again the move was not suspected by the enemy and no opposition was encountered.

Patches of extremely boggy ground following recent rains made the tank progress even slower and at the conclusion of the first day the company had completed approximately half of the route to be covered. C Company made a short outflanking move through very dense country and as the company approached the BUIN ROAD they came under very heavy enemy fire from light machine guns, rifles and mortars. One platoon forced a crossing over the BUIN ROAD and established a platoon



locality and the company then consolidated in a defensive position with one platoon NORTH and two SOUTH of the BUIN ROAD. During the consolidation the enemy continued to fire into the position.

On 19 Jun 45 B Company was withdrawn from its locality to allow an airstrike to proceed on the enemy gun position and following the airstrike B Company made a short outflanking move to the SOUTH and reached the BUIN ROAD approximately 400 yards EAST of the position. During the move artillery and mortars continued to pound the enemy position.

A Company, continuing their advance towards the MOBIAI, struck even more difficult country than on the first day of their move and were forced to leave their tanks with a platoon for protection and to continue the move. C Company remained in their defensive locality and maintained contact with the enemy position confronting them.

B Company then moved back along BUIN ROAD and despatched a strong fighting patrol to clear the enemy gun position. The patrol found that the enemy had abandoned the position during the preceding night and had destroyed the gun before withdrawing. Engineer personnel cleared the BUIN ROAD of mines and booby traps and the road was clear for jeep traffic through to B Company's forward locality.

Following the clearing of the enemy gun position, the tanks from B Company were escorted forward to join C Company. C Company patrolled forward and found a strongly defended enemy position 100 yards EAST of their company locality. On 20 Jun 45, following a series of artillery concentrations on the enemy position, they again pushed forward with tanks and cleared the enemy from the position.

A Company of 58/59 Aust Inf Bn, moving forward along the southern route, took over the tanks that had been with A Company and the platoon guarding the tanks rejoined the company. The complete company established a defensive locality approximately 800 yards WEST of the MOBIAI RIVER and SOUTH of the BUIN ROAD. From this position patrols were sent EAST to the MOBIAI and NORTH to the BUIN ROAD. Patrolling continued through 22 Jun and on 23 Jun A Company 57/60 Aust Inf Bn moved NORTH on to the BUIN ROAD and patrols cleared the BUIN ROAD through to the OGORITA RIVER to within 400 yards of the MOBIAI ford.

On 24 Jun an enemy force with a 37 mm tank attack gun cut in on the BUIN ROAD from the NORTH and engaged an armoured patrol from B Company moving through to contact A Company. The 37 mm gun registered several hits on the tanks without effect. The tanks moved forward to engage the position and the enemy artillery opened fire on the patrol. After a period of extensive shelling the enemy force was dispersed. Many fresh mines and booby traps were found on BUIN ROAD and in the jungle on both sides of the road. The patrol then moved on to A Company without encountering further enemy opposition.



40 ENEMY ACTION

This phase was specially significant from the enemy viewpoint as our rapid encirclement of their strong defensive positions on the HARI threw the whole of the defence plans for SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE awry. By committing a large fighting force on the HARI with the newly reorganised 23 Inf Regt as a nucleus, the enemy had hoped to delay our advance for at least one month.

During this period the plan was for the 6 Engr Regt to construct defensive positions along the line of the MIVO RIVER similar to those on the HARI and capable of accommodating a force of equal size. When the HARI position became untenable the withdrawal to the MOBIAI would take place and the enemy expected to gain at least another month there. This time gained would allow for the complete reorganisation of the whole enemy force in SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE and for preparations to be made to fight a decisive battle from positions sited in depth between the MIVO and SILIBAI RIVERS to accommodate a force of up to 3000. The fact that these strong positions on the HARI were made untenable in a matter of days caused a complete revision of enemy plans and a frantic withdrawal from the HARI in an attempt to occupy the MOBIAI positions in time to cause at least some delay to our advance.

Time at this stage was vital for the enemy as the MIVO defences were nowhere near completed and 17 Army troops who were to occupy these positions were not organised or ready for battle. There was ample evidence from many sources that the enemy was completely bewildered by the turn of events and apart from the outflanking of the HARI positions the speed of the advance to the OGORATA was completely beyond enemy expectations.

Our ability to move tanks across country was the principal factor which threw enemy plans astray. At all times his defences were sited with primary consideration to our employment of tanks along the main axis and the sudden appearance of strong forces with tanks from a flank which was considered tank proof was totally beyond enemy comprehension.

Credit must be given to the enemy for a well organised and speedy withdrawal along prepared escape routes of a force of over 1000 men from the HARI positions. The decision to withdraw was made and executed quickly and before our outflanking forces could establish ambush positions on the many escape routes. At no time was there any intention by the enemy to occupy defensive positions on the OGORATA RIVER and the withdrawal was direct to the MOBIAI.

On arrival there the enemy found that the positions supposed to have been prepared for occupation were nowhere near completion, again owing to the speed of our advance and the fact that prior knowledge of enemy intentions gained from PW enabled air and artillery to continuously bombard the positions under construction.



The immediate action taken by the enemy was to occupy the MOBIAI positions with the bulk of 23 Inf Regt and send forward a covering force of other elements of 6 Div to occupy positions between the MOBIAL and OGORATI and make a final desperate attempt to stem our advance sufficiently long to allow reasonably strong defensive positions to be constructed on the MOBIAI. Also the patrolling policy was considerably increased and reconnaissance patrols were continuously active endeavouring to find out our intentions for the next phase of operations.

PW reported at this time that there had been a change in policy as far as the siting of defensive positions was concerned. Following the series of outflanking moves that had been employed against him in the past, more attention was paid to depth in siting of positions and the policy of very wide frontages was discarded. Again during this phase PW information proved of utmost value as it enabled us to follow in detail every move of the enemy and to be familiar at all times with his intentions. This enabled the most effective use to be made of supporting fire power and the softening up programme was concentrated on disorganising the preparations the enemy were known to be making to carry out their delaying action.

It is quite definite that this HARI RIVER operation has had far reaching results in directing the course of the SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE campaign. During this phase of operations known enemy casualties were 163 killed, 26 wounded and 15 PW. These figures are considered to be most conservative and make no allowance whatever for the casualties which must have been inflicted during the intense bombardment of the HARI positions. By interrogation of prisoners from different units who were in the HARI force it is estimated that at least one tenth of the total enemy force committed were casualties of some form from our heavy bombing, shelling and mortar concentrations. The effect on enemy morale of the HARI action was tremendous and all prisoners reported an increase in defeatist spirit among the men.



PHASE VI

THE ASSAULT ON THE MIVO RIVER

41 THE PLAN TO REACH THE MIVO

3 Aust Div OO 19 of 24 Jun 45 directed that 15 Aust Inf Bde would continue the advance and complete operations to establish control of the area as far EAST as the MIVO RIVER. Again it was considered essential to continue the advance with a minimum of delay to prevent the enemy from organising any strong resistance WEST of the MIVO.

The first stage of the brigade plan was a reorganisation of forces involving the relief of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn on the MOBIAI by 58/59 Aust Inf Bn; the move of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn to a concentration area at MUSAKAKA and the reorganisation of 24 Aust Inf Bn less the two companies committed at KINGORI and MUSARAKA in a concentration area also in the vicinity of MUSAKAKA.

From information gained by patrolling and from PW it was decided that a northern outflanking move would be made with two battalions - 24 Aust Inf Bn having the task of securing the BUIN ROAD between the KOOPANI and IVANA RIVERS; and 57/60 Aust Inf Bn having the task of securing the BUIN ROAD at SHISHIGATERO 5000 yards in rear of the enemy forward positions. The role of 58/59 Aust Inf Bn was to carry out diversionary actions on the southern flank and to secure a crossing of the MOBIAI RIVER at the main ford.

42 PRELIMINARY REORGANISATION AND RECONNAISSANCE

It was considered essential that the battalions carrying out the northern outflanking moves should operate with tanks as considerable enemy resistance was likely to be encountered during the final stages of their assault. This necessitated very thorough reconnaissance of the country over which the moves were to be made and the task of finding and preparing a tank track to suitable assembly areas on the MOBIAI RIVER NORTH of BUIN ROAD was given to 24 Aust Inf Bn while 57/60 Aust Inf Bn continued their advance to the MOBIAI RIVER.

After very thorough reconnaissance, suitable concentration areas were selected for the two units on both sides of the MOBIAI RIVER and work commenced immediately by engineer teams and infantry working parties to construct a tankable lateral track to the concentration areas which was known as LAWNS TRACK. After negotiating seemingly unsurmountable obstacles in the shape of extremely difficult escarpments and swampy country, the engineer teams completed LAWNS TRACK in time for 57/60 Aust Inf Bn to move through to their concentration areas without any waiting at MUSAKAKA after their relief by 58/59 Aust Inf Bn.

From this time on there was a steady flow forward to the concentration areas of personnel, stores, rations and ammunition from both units and by 27 Jun 45 all personnel and stores of both battalions were complete in



the concentration areas. During this move protective patrols from 24 Aust Inf Bn were operating forward across the MOBIAI and patrols from 58/59 Aust Inf Bn were carrying out diversionary tactics in the SOUTH.

Simultaneously with the move to the concentration areas along LAWNS TRACK, work had already commenced on a further tank track across country between the MOBIAI and MIVO RIVERS to link the concentration areas with KILLENS TRACK which leads SOUTH to BUIN ROAD along the WEST bank of the MIVO. The country through which this track was constructed proved to be far more difficult than that through which LAWNS TRACK was constructed and the engineer teams were presented with a mammoth task to achieve what was required of them. Heavy rains during this preparatory stage made the task even more difficult. For protection of the engineer parties, one company of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn with two troops of tanks moved along the track as it was constructed, the tanks rendering valuable assistance to the bulldozers when boggy patches were encountered.

Long range reconnaissance patrols were carried out by D Company 1 PIB supplementary to the local patrolling by the infantry battalions and designed to prevent the enemy from finding out what our intentions were. At this stage enemy patrols were very active and it was only by very thorough protective patrolling on the part of the infantry battalions that the enemy were prevented from taking any action to interfere with the progress of our preliminary moves.

As an additional precaution against enemy interference with the preparations, specially organised ANGANI patrols were despatched with the task of locating and cutting enemy signal lines running from forward observation posts and used to direct the fire from 150 mm guns sited EAST of the MIVO. Several patrols had located these observation posts and some action was necessary to deal with them and prevent the enemy from bringing down observed artillery fire onto our concentration areas.

Owing to continuous wet weather LAWNS TRACK to the concentration areas was impassable to jeeps and the stores, ammunition and rations and other supplies for both battalions had to be conveyed to the concentration areas by native carrier lines; approximately 2000 boy loads were placed in the concentration areas.

43 MOVEMENT TO ASSEMBLY AREAS

C Company 57/60 Aust Inf Bn with two troops of tanks and bulldozer teams continued the construction of the track to the assembly area on KILLENS TRACK and by the evening of 27 Jun 45 the track was completed and the company in position. During the construction of the track it was found essential to have the tanks moving immediately behind the bulldozers owing to the numerous fast flowing streams. Any delay in moving tanks across the streams after the crossing had been constructed meant that the crossing would probably be washed away and the work would have to be done again.



The fact that this move was completed without any enemy opposition was a tribute to the thoroughness of the protective patrolling and that fact that once again speed of movement had outwitted the enemy.

By 28 Jun 45, 57/60 Aust Inf Bn had moved across the newly constructed track and was complete in the battalion assembly area on KILLENS TRACK. As D Company were moving into their position and had commenced consolidation, a fanatical counter attack on the position was made by a large enemy force of at least 100 on a frontage of 100 yards. The company hurriedly adopted fire positions and withstood a series of determined attacks which were kept up for half an hour. Although the company was not dug in or in a prepared position, the much superior enemy force was driven off with severe losses to the enemy.

During the moves of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn, reconnaissance parties from 24 Aust Inf Bn were making thorough reconnaissances of approach routes from their assembly areas and of suitable forming up points for the final assault on their objectives. Following immediately behind 57/60 Aust Inf Bn, the two companies and battalion HQ completed the move to the assembly areas allotted approximately midway between the MOBIAI and MIVO RIVERS along the track constructed by 57/60 Aust Inf Bn. The move was completed by 28 Jun 45. During the move protective patrols operating SOUTH of the assembly area contacted several enemy patrols and in one fierce engagement killed nine of an enemy fighting patrol. It was now apparent that the enemy had realised that something was happening in the northern sector and patrols became much more aggressive and frequent.

44 SOFTENING UP EAST OF MIVO RIVER

During this reconnaissance and preparation period an extensive softening up programme by aircraft and artillery against known enemy positions astride the BUIN ROAD and likely enemy assembly areas for counter attack on the EAST side of the MIVO RIVER was carried out. Mortars of 24 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns were organised into a 16 gun battery and employed to bombard the known enemy strong points on the EAST bank of the MOBIAI. From their location the mortar batter could also be used to soften up the objectives of 24 Aust Inf Bn before their assault.

Acting on every available piece of information from any source whatever, all known enemy localities particularly those between the MOBIAI and MIVO were subjected to continuous artillery harassing fire throughout the preparator period. A series of airstrikes were carried over a period of three days during which the whole of the BUIN ROAD between the MOBIAI and MIVO RIVERS was covered with particular attention to unit objectives. Additional strikes were made against enemy concentrations EAST of the MIVO. During this period Corsairs flew 192 sorties and dropped 78 tons of bombs. At the completion of bombing, each area was thoroughly strafed.

Information was received from several PW that the enemy 6 Div HQ was still located in a position between the MOBIAI and MIVO RIVERS on a southern lateral track.



The suspected area was given a thorough bombardment by a two regiment concentration of artillery.

45 DIVERSIONARY ACTIONS BY 58/59 AUST INF BN

The role given to 58/59 Aust Inf Bn to occupy the attention of the enemy and to assist the operations of 24 and 57/60 Aust Inf Bns was to despatch a force of two companies, each to establish a base SOUTH of BUIN ROAD and from bases to carry out diversionary and harassing attacks against any enemy positions on the SOUTH side of BUIN ROAD and attempt to intercept any enemy forces moving back from MOBIAI positions along the southern escape routes.

The same day that these companies were despatched on their tasks, the information regarding the location of 6 Div HQ was received. As the information also contained the fact that the HQ proposed to withdraw EAST of the MIVO the following morning, every effort was made by both companies to find and attack the HQ before any move could be made.

As insufficient time was available, the forces were not able to locate the position before nightfall and as it was considered that the position would be abandoned before first light the following morning, the attempt to reach the HQ with ground forces was abandoned and a two regiment artillery concentration was brought down on the suspected area.

During the search for the HQ area, both companies were attacked by strong enemy forces, possibly a protective screen to cover the withdrawal of the 6 Div HQ. D Company was attacked by a strong force while on the move and in the fierce engagement which followed the PIB platoon operating with the company became isolated, were unable to regain contact and returned to their base. At this stage all communications with the harassing forces were cut. The companies then returned to their original bases and carried out diversionary actions, harassing patrols and set ambushes in accordance with their original task.

46 THE CROSSING OF THE MOBIAI

On 28 Jun 45 while 24 and 57/60 Aust Inf Bns were completing their moves to assembly areas, A Company 58/59 Aust Inf Bn commenced to force a crossing of the MOBIAI RIVER on the main BUIN ROAD. Throughout the previous night the mortar battery ceaselessly pounded the enemy positions on the high ground EAST of the river and under covering fire from the remainder of the company and from the tanks, one platoon made a successful crossing over the main ford. As the second platoon commenced to cross the enemy opened fire with automatic weapons from positions on top of an escarpment on the eastern side of the river.

The remainder of the company then moved to the lower crossing where no opposition was encountered. With the company complete on the eastern side of the river, one troop of tanks crossed at the main ford and joined the company. Following consolidation by the



company EAST of the river, patrols immediately probed forward and made contact with the enemy still in position on top of the escarpment.

Throughout the night 28/29 Jun 45 the mortar battery again pounded these positions. This crossing, in addition to creating another diversion from the main operation, allowed work to proceed with the construction of a jeep crossing over the MOBIAI and so reduced the delay in opening the L of C through to the MIVO once the other two units had seized their objectives.

47 THE ATTACK BY 57/60 AUST INF BN

On 29 Jun 45 while 57/60 Aust Inf Bn were moving forward from their assembly areas on KILLENS TRACK to selected forming up points, the maximum availability of aircraft was employed against their objectives in the SHISHIGATERO area. The move to the forming up point was carried out without any resistance by the enemy and from the assembly area the attack on BUIN ROAD was preceded by a series of artillery concentrations with prearranged lifts, the rate of lift being controlled by forward observation officers moving forward with the advancing troops. By this means the maximum support was obtained at all times from the artillery concentrations and also the troops were assisted in their navigation by the direction of the line of the concentration and by successive lifts.

The task given to the artillery for this operation was to provide sufficient supporting fire to enable the infantry to reach their objectives without suffering casualties. This task was carried out to the letter and not one casualty was sustained by the battalion during the actual assault on the objectives. As the troops moved forward there were ample signs of very recently and very hurriedly vacated enemy positions indicating that the enemy had the intention of resisting the advance but were driven from their positions by the devastating and extremely accurate artillery concentrations. The objectives of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn were secured without encountering any enemy opposition and the WEST bank of the MIVO RIVER was reached on BUIN ROAD.

Apart from a slight delay to C Company when moving off from their assembly area due to heavy overnight rain converting a previously dry watercourse into a temporary tank obstacle, there was no hitch in the movement of tanks. KILLENS TRACK proved quite suitable for tank movement and once the track was reached, the tanks were able to proceed at whatever speed was required by the infantry.

As NORTH flank protection during the attack one platoon PIB moved NORTH along KILLENS TRACK and set ambushes on possible enemy approaches from the NORTH. A Company also established a company locality astride KILLENS TRACK NORTH of the assembly area to provide additional protection as the other companies moved to SOUTH to their forming up points. Apart from an **attack on the platoon while constructing a medical evacuation route from Battalion HQ to KILLENS TRACK by an enemy force of unknown strength** there were



no contacts with the enemy throughout the day's operations.

4.8 THE ATTACK BY 24 AUST INF BN

Simultaneously with the move of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn, the two companies of 24 Aust Inf Bn, each with one troop of tanks, commenced to move SOUTH along previously reconnoitred routes to their forming up points NORTH of BUIN ROAD. Owing to heavy rains during the previous night, watercourses which had been previously dry and easily negotiable by tanks, were now fast-flowing streams requiring engineer work to effect a crossing. In addition, the ground generally throughout the area was soft and spongy and movement of the tanks was much more difficult than was expected.

After approximately 600 yards the tanks with both companies became bogged, were extricated and were bogged again. The engineer reconnaissance party moving with D Company decided it was impossible for tanks to proceed over the route to be followed by that company and it was decided to send the tanks back to the assembly area and from there they could be sent to KILLENS TRACK to assist the operations of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn.

In the case of A Company it was decided that the tanks would be able to get through eventually and a platoon was left to protect the tanks while the remainder of the company moved forward to the forming up point. This meant that one company had to achieve its task without tank support and the other company made its attack less tanks and one platoon. Both companies arrived at the forming up points without further event and under cover of controlled artillery barrages, identical with those employed by 57/60 Aust Inf Bn, made their assault on their objectives on BUIN ROAD.

No enemy opposition was encountered during the advance but again ample evidence was seen of extensive enemy positions very recently vacated. As in the case of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn, due to the supporting fire given by the artillery and the mortar battery, both companies reached their objectives without sustaining any casualties. By 1500 hours the two companies had consolidated on their objectives and contact patrols had been sent EAST to contact 57/60 Aust Inf Bn.

The troop of tanks which had been operating with A Company continued to push on with its bulldozer team and escorting infantry through seemingly impassable country. After being bogged and extricated many times the tanks continued to push forward and for the night 29/30 Jun established a defensive locality approximately 600 yards NORTH of the company objective on BUIN ROAD. The following morning they continued the advance and rejoined A Company in time to assist in the clearing of BUIN ROAD.

The troop of tanks which had been with D Company returned to battalion HQ and from there moved across to KILLENS TRACK, joined A Company 57/60 Aust Inf Bn and with that company moved SOUTH along KILLENS TRACK to



assist in the consolidation by 57/60 Aust Inf Bn. On 30 Jun 45 the tanks moved along BUIN ROAD and rejoined D Company.

49 CONSOLIDATION AND OPENING OF L OF C

The first task in the consolidation and clearing of the area WEST of the MIVO was to drive the enemy from the positions they were occupying on top of the escarpment EAST of the MOBIAI RIVER facing A Company 58/59 Aust Inf Bn.

On 29 Jun 45 a platoon from B Company 58/59 Aust Inf Bn with one troop of tanks crossed the MOBIAI and joined A Company. Two fighting patrols were then despatched from A Company, one moving on each side of the BUIN ROAD and following the fighting patrols the armoured patrol from B Company commenced moving along the road. After proceeding approximately 300 yards both fighting patrols came under enemy fire and the patrol moving on the eastern side of the road was pinned down by intense fire from enemy automatic weapons from well prepared positions EAST of the BUIN ROAD.

The tanks then moved forward and engaged the position allowing the patrol to withdraw. While one tank was manoeuvring into a fire position it became bogged in soft ground on the side of the road and had to be extricated while still under enemy fire. When all troops of the fighting patrol had been extricated, the armoured patrol returned to A Company locality and the mortar battery engaged the enemy position with 300 bombs in two minutes.

On 30 Jun 45 A Company reconnaissance patrols probing along the escarpment where the enemy positions had been found, the enemy still in occupation of some positions WEST of BUIN ROAD. A B Company armoured patrol then commenced to move forward from A Company locality and after dealing with a small enemy force on the WEST side of the road continued the advance clearing the road as it went of mines and booby traps and finally linked up with D Company 24 Aust Inf Bn. A considerable number of improvised mines and booby traps consisting mainly of 150 mm shells and 81 mm mortar bombs were discovered and destroyed by bomb disposal personnel.

To open up a further section of BUIN ROAD A Company 24 Aust Inf Bn despatched a patrol WEST along BUIN ROAD to link with D Company. The patrol linked up without any contact with the enemy and this section of the road was checked by engineers for mines and booby traps. Later in the day a bulldozer escorted by an infantry party was moving through A Company to D Company 24 Aust Inf Bn and had reached within 150 yards of D Company locality when an enemy 150 mm gun, particularly well concealed on the SOUTH side of the road, fired at point blank range registering a direct hit on the bulldozer and putting it completely out of action.

This gun had remained concealed while contact patrols had moved past its position and did not open fire until a suitable target presented itself.



As soon as its position had been given away, the gun commenced shelling D Company locality apparently with the object of inflicting as much damage as possible before being destroyed. Patrols moving out from 24 Aust Inf Bn found a strong enemy position guarding the gun and, as it was then almost dark, the position was pinpointed and registered by artillery. Throughout the night artillery harassing fire was brought down on the position and at first light 1 Jul 45, following a heavy artillery concentration, two platoons from 24 Aust Inf Bn with the flamethrower platoon moved in to attack the enemy position. The force found that the enemy had blown up the gun during the night and abandoned the position.

In the meantime, contact patrols had established contact between 57/60 Aust Inf Bn and 24 Aust Inf Bn and the BUIN ROAD was considered open for traffic from the MOBIAI to SHISHIGTERO.

During the consolidation stage, enemy parties were very active in carrying out harassing attacks on company localities and nuisance raids during the night. One enemy succeeded in penetrating a company locality of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn and placed a mine on the track of a tank causing minor damage to the track. A similar attempt in another company locality was unsuccessful.

On 30 Jun 45, the two companies of 58/59 Aust Inf Bn and the PIB patrols who had been operating in the area SOUTH of BUIN ROAD between the MOBIAI and MIVO RIVERS returned to the battalion locality after having carried out several successful ambushes and staged mock battles as arranged in the diversionary plan. On 1 Jul 45, the area WEST of the MIVO was considered clear of organised enemy pockets of resistance and the task allotted to the brigade had been accomplished.

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#### ENEMY ACTION

Once again the employment of wide outflanking moves destroyed the enemy's hopes of gaining time for the construction of the vitally important MIVO RIVER defences. The surprise effect in this case was greater than before, not because the enemy were not expecting an outflanking move but because it seemed utterly impossible to move tanks through the extremely rough country in between the MOBIAI and MIVO RIVERS. This country was considered definitely tank proof and evidence was received from PW and from captured documents that the enemy considered any tank threat must come along the main road.

The hastily constructed defences on the MOBIAI failed to achieve their purpose as also did the covering forces pushed forward from the MOBIAI. Following the outflanking of these positions and our occupation of the SHISHIGTERO area, the enemy took the only possible course of action and withdrew the bulk of his force EAST of the MIVO leaving behind several strong well organised fighting forces with the task of moving about continuously in the area between the MOBIAI and the MIVO making harassing attacks against



our company localities or against our L of C whenever opportunity presented itself.

Once again, a 150 mm gun which could not be withdrawn over the MIVO in time was left in a suicide role to achieve as much damage as possible before destruction.

The lack of determined enemy resistance during the final stages of the assault on the MIVO was due to the intensive softening up programme that was carried out and also to a complete change in enemy tactics. At this stage the enemy appeared to abandon the policy of holding positions at all costs and was prepared to let our advance achieve its object and employ his forces as a mobile harassing force by which means the full effect of our superior fire power could, to some extent, be avoided.

The only chance now of gaining time so vitally needed was to harass our positions on such a scale as to prevent sufficient reorganisation for the commencement of another drive.

During the final phase of the operation, casualties inflicted on the enemy were 160 killed, 29 wounded and 3 PW making a grand total for the operation of 803 killed 116 wounded and 47 PW since 13 Apr 45 to 30 Jun 45.

From the enemy viewpoint, the net effect of the brigade's operations in SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE was the complete disorganisation of his timetable for preparation of the main defences from which the decisive battles will be fought. Since the enemy was thrown off balance by the failure of his HONGORAI line he has never been allowed to regain the initiative and every frantic effort to gain the time so vitally for reorganisation was defeated by the speed and manoeuvrability of our forces. The effect of this operation on enemy morale cannot be overstated and the defeatist spirit among the men noticeable after the SLITERS KNOLL operation has now reached really large proportions.



PHASE VII

RELIEF BY 29 AUST INF BDE AND OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF  
29 AUST INF BDE

51 METHOD OF RELIEF

3 Aust Div OO 19 of 24 Jun 45 directed that 15 Aust Inf Bde would continue its operations to clear the enemy from and establish control over the area as far EAST as the MIVO RIVER. On completion of this task 29 Aust Inf Bde would pass through 15 Aust Inf Bde and would secure the line of the SILIBAI RIVER.

When this task was duly carried out and following a conference of Brigade Commanders convened by GOC 3 Aust Div an instruction was issued by 3 Aust Div on 30 Jun 45 directing that the relief would commence on 1 Jul 45 and would be completed by 3 Jul 45.

On 1 Jul 45, 42 Aust Inf Bn moved across the MOBIAI RIVER and commenced relief of 24 Aust Inf Bn in the KOOPANE RIVER area and 47 Aust Inf Bn moved forward and took up a position in rear of 58/59 Aust Inf Bn on BUIN ROAD. On 2 Jul 45, one company from 47 Aust Inf Bn moved via LAWNS TRACK to a position on KILLENS TRACK in preparation for a northern outflanking move by that battalion.

On 3 Jul 45, 15 Aust Inf Bn moved forward and commenced relief of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn at SHISHIGATERO. The relief was completed in the one day and by the evening of 3 Jul 45 the whole brigade with the exception of B Company 24 Aust Inf Bn at KINGORI and C Company 24 Aust Inf Bn at KATSUWA had been relieved of their operational roles.

to 3 Jul 45

During the period from 1 Jul 45, 57/60 Aust Inf Bn carried out vigorous patrolling NORTH and SOUTH from their localities to determine that the area WEST of the MIVO RIVER was clear of prepared enemy defensive positions and also provided a screen of protective patrols while the inter-brigade relief was in progress.

On completion of the relief, 24 Aust Inf Bn concentrated in the MUSARAKA area less the companies at KINGORI and KATSUWA; 57/60 Aust Inf Bn concentrated at HARI I, with the exception of one platoon at the PW Reception Point at MAMAGOTA; and 58/59 Aust Inf Bn concentrated in the area WEST of the MOBIAI RIVER.

52 ROLE OF THE BRIGADE ON COMPLETION OF RELIEF

It was laid down by 3 Aust Div OO 19 of 24 Jun 45 that on completion of relief by 29 Aust Inf Bde, 15 Aust Inf Bde would be disposed with one battalion at HARI, one battalion at RUSEI with one company at KINGORI, one company at the COMMANDO ROAD - TOHODO RIVER crossing and one battalion in the MOBIAI ford area. The task of the brigade would be to provide operational and administrative support for 29 Aust Inf Bde and protect the L of C WEST of the inter-brigade boundary, which was the MOBIAI RIVER. The brigade would also carry out protective patrolling in the area WEST of the inter-brigade boundary.



As soon as all units were concentrated in their allotted areas, extensive patrolling commenced in accordance with brigade policy. A screen of protective patrols was maintained by units having due regard to the necessity for resting personnel and providing working parties for repair and maintenance of the L of C.

53 OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF 29 AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION

For these operations, 58/59 Australian Infantry Battalion was located in the area of the MOBIL FORD; 24 Australian Infantry Battalion at MUSAKKA with one company at KINGORI and one company near KATSUWA; and 57/60 Australian Infantry Battalion at HARI 1. Brigade HQ remained in its previous location at RUSEI. One platoon from 57/60 Australian Infantry Battalion took over the PW Reception Point at MAMGOTA.

An intensive patrolling policy was carried out and the general area covered by patrols was bounded on the NORTH by COMMANDO ROAD, on the WEST by the HARI RIVER SOUTH to MAMGOTA and on the SOUTH by a general line 2000 yards SOUTH of the BUIN ROAD.

During the first few days patrolling, evidence was found of recent enemy movement throughout the area generally. Indications were that a number of small parties were in the area and no definite signs of large organised forces were found.

On 9 Jul 45 information was received from a PW that a party of 350 men from 13 Infantry Regiment and 45 Infantry Regiment were moving WEST between the MIVO and MOBIL RIVERS NORTH of BUIN ROAD with the task of attacking our troops in the RUSEI area.

Future patrolling resulted in contacts with large and heavily armed enemy parties, mainly in the area of BARRETT'S ROAD and signs were also found of the presence of a large enemy party in the vicinity of HARI 3. In view of this increased enemy activity all units were ordered on 14 Jul 45 to increase the number of patrols and to comb thoroughly the area bounded by the MOBIL and TOHODU RIVERS, the COMMANDO, TITIL and BUIN ROADS. This patrolling was to continue until the enemy parties were destroyed or driven out and the area reported clear. An instruction was received from 3 Australian Division as a result of which 57/60 Australian Infantry Battalion provided three platoons for the protection of the HARI, POROREI and HONGORAI RIVER bridges.

During the period from 14 to 21 Jul 45, extremely heavy monsoon rains fell, completely inundating the low lying areas in the vicinity of the rivers. All rivers were in flood and cross-country movement was very restricted. Patrolling continued under very difficult conditions and enemy parties were also active within the areas between the main rivers.

At this stage, a series of ambushes of vehicles on BUIN ROAD occurred. These were carried out by small enemy parties of strength up to 15, using light machine guns, rifles and light mortars. Ambushes



usually occurred late in the afternoon and the enemy parties dispersed rapidly from the scene of the ambush. Attempts by patrols to follow up these parties were defeated by the failing light.

Patrols from 24 Aust Inf Bn located a concentration of enemy EAST of HARI 3 and to deal with this concentration one troop from 2 Aust Fd Regt was made available. The guns were turned around to fire to the rear from their forward positions. During the next seven days a number of contacts with large enemy parties were made and suspected bivouac areas located. Against these the artillery support was employed.

In spite of the intensive patrolling by all units, small enemy parties continued to set ambushes along the L of C and to carry out harassing raids against engineer and workshop units in an attempt to destroy mechanical equipment.

As an additional precaution against these raiding parties all units carried out first light patrols along allotted sectors of BUIN ROAD to disperse any ambushes and to locate any mines which may have been laid during the night. This measure succeeded in considerably reducing casualties and damage to vehicles from mines.

During the period from 21 Jul to 8 Aug 45, patrols made almost daily contacts with enemy parties of varying sizes but very few of these parties succeeded in penetrating to the L of C and the few that did were operating well to the rear and penetrating to the L of C in the vicinity of the POROREI RIVER.

On 10 Aug 45 61 Aust Inf Bn was sent from TOROKINA to take over responsibility for protection of the L of C WEST of the HARI RIVER. This allowed 57/60 Aust Inf Bn to again concentrate in their original area at HARI 1 and to increase their protective patrolling in the HARI area.

During the period from 10 Aug to 13 Aug 45 patrols still made contacts with enemy parties but all signs of movement by the enemy were to the EAST indicating that the raiding parties were being forced to abandon their tasks. In view of this and the fact that an early cessation of hostilities seemed likely, an instruction was issued that patrols would be restricted to those essential for local security and that every effort would be made to avoid sustaining casualties. Apart from two harassing attacks against company localities of 24 Aust Inf Bn, there were no further contacts with the enemy until hostilities ceased on 16 Aug 45.

Casualties inflicted on the enemy by the brigade during these operations were 64 killed, 27 wounded and 1 PW.

The principal significance of these operations is that the troops who had just completed almost four months of continuous and arduous operations and who would normally be resting had the task of carrying out patrolling equally intensive to that carried out during the main operations. That these battle weary troops



were so successful in preventing the enemy raiding parties from achieving their object and in inflicting such heavy casualties on the enemy is a fine achievement for all concerned.

In addition the enemy failed badly in his object to harass and cut the L of C. Apparently he established bases a few thousand yards NORTH of the BUIN ROAD and after our patrols continually clashed with his locations, he did little but maintain his force with food from the gardens.

54. CONCLUSION

The brigade has successfully carried out the task as originally allotted and in doing so has cleared a distance of 35150 yards or 20 miles along the main axis of advance in SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE. This represents the distance along BUIN ROAD from SLATERS KNOLL on the PURLATA RIVER to SHISHIGATERO on the MIVO RIVER. The total area cleared of organised enemy defences by the brigade in its main drive, the subsidiary drive along COMMANDO ROAD and by patrolling, is approximately 250 square miles.

The operation was conducted throughout against a determined and aggressive enemy who offered continuous resistance to every advance. Having regard to this fact the casualties sustained by the brigade in carrying out their task are considered to be exceptionally light. Total casualties for the operation were:

OWN	112 killed	387 wounded	
ENEMY (KNOWN)	803 killed	116 wounded	47 PW

The operation was conducted through difficult terrain and the physical strain on troops was considerable. During the operations the following distances were covered by the infantry battalions. These distances are measured along the main axis of movement of the units and do not include distances covered by patrols, diversionary or subsidiary actions.

24 Aust Inf Bn	37530 yards	21.3 miles
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	46704 "	26.5 "
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	33290 "	18.9 "

An indication of the extent of patrolling carried out by the infantry battalions is given by the total number of patrols carried out by each unit over the period of operations. These totals are:

24 Aust Inf Bn	393
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	254
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	354

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TOTAL	1001
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*A. J. Hammer*  
 Brig  
 Comd 1st Aust Inf Bde



15 AUST INF BDE

REPORT ON OPERATIONS

PART II

A1 REPORT

SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE OPERATIONS

PURIATA RIVER to MIVO RIVER

13 APR 45 to 15 AUG 45

1 INTRODUCTION

During the whole period of operations, the brigade was maintained by a composition of air dropping, motor transport and native carriers.

Due to the fact that the main force operated on an axis which was generally jeepable, supply was maintained throughout on the principles laid down in FSR Vol I Chapter xiv Sections 99 and 107.

2 ORGANISATION OF THE LINE OF COMMUNICATION

In the early stages of the campaign, the brigade was almost entirely maintained by air dropping with the exception of heavy ammunition and ordnance stores. The principle was that a dropping zone with a Supply Depot Platoon to staff it should be established as close to the forward troops as possible, and that unit B Echelons should be sited well forward in reasonable proximity to the dropping zone to reduce the time taken in the collection and distribution of supplies.

Prior to any attacks which had objectives well forward of the dropping zone, possible future dropping zone sites were selected close to the objectives from air photographs, and as soon as the objectives were secured, the most likely garden areas were reconnoitred by the Staff Captain and brigade ASC officer in conjunction with OC DID and work commenced on the clearing of the selected area, erection of huts and establishment of traffic circuits usually within 48 hours of the objectives being taken.

The forward dropping zone was purely a brigade installation but as supporting units moved forward behind the brigade on the L of C, previous DIDs were maintained by road under Divisional arrangements to service the supporting units.

As there was, at all times, a DID well forward with the brigade and its maintenance was by Division in accordance with all accepted principles of supply, the brigade strength was never dissipated by maintenance of lines of communication installations which had often previously been the experience in campaigns in New Guinea.

3 MOVEMENT OF PERSONNEL

Movement of personnel along the line of communication was carried out by utilising divisional ASC vehicles which brought heavy ammunition, etc forward to the DIDs.

4 EVACUATION OF SICK AND CASUALTIES

Medical evacuation was, in all cases, carried out with the resources of one field ambulance and the comparative speed of



evacuations made it unnecessary to have more than one medical staging post forward of the advanced dressing station at any time.

Advanced dressing stations were leap-frogged to keep pace with the advance, and MDS was later built up on the rear advanced dressing station in two cases.

As evacuation of casualties rarely took more than five hours before surgical treatment was available, it was not found necessary to arrange overnight accommodation in medical staging posts.

As 57/60 Aust Inf Bn was moving well away from the main L of C, a light section with surgical and holding facilities was pushed as far forward as possible behind the unit and evacuation was carried out by jeep ambulance or native carriers to the nearest advanced dressing station.

Because of the fact that it was not possible to evacuate badly wounded stretcher cases in jeep ambulance owing to the rough surface of the corduroy, a certain number of native carriers were stationed at unit regimental aid posts. For any specific battle in which casualties were expected to be higher than normal, additional natives were stationed with regimental aid posts, medical staging posts and advanced dressing stations for rearward evacuation.

## 5 TRACKS

In this operation in the early stages up to the POROREI RIVER, the entire L of C was corduroyed and constant attention and supervision was necessary to keep it in a serviceable condition, particularly as movement of tanks, tractors and artillery displaced the timber.

Until the POROREI RIVER every yard of the axis over which the brigade advanced had to be corduroyed and, in the case of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn moving away from the main axis, an additional stretch of 9070 yards had to be layed to the upper reaches of the HONGOLAI beyond which terrain difficulties made the use of motor transport impossible.

In all, a total of 20627 yards of corduroy was layed by the brigade, not including many passing bays.

## 6 TRAFFIC CONTROL

The corduroyed jeep track was only wide enough in most places for one jeep and, in consequence of this, numerous passing bays and passing circuits were necessary. Even so, with the volume of traffic of unit vehicles, artillery, signals, tanks, guns, tractors, engineer and AASC vehicles, a very rigid traffic control was necessary.

Within the brigade area of responsibility this was achieved by placing a number of control posts, in phone communication with each other, at narrow stretches of road and holding vehicles until a proximately a dozen collected then allowing them to proceed while vehicles at the other end were held to give them a clear run through.

Whilst this method seemed to cause delay, it was found in practice that it was the only feasible method of utilising the road as otherwise traffic jams occurred with vehicles trying to pass each other and falling into the deep drains on the roadside thus delaying traffic for considerable periods.



## 7 SIGNPOSTING

In accordance with brigade policy, considerable emphasis was placed on the signposting of all units, installations, creeks and rivers, and track junctions. In addition, many posters and signs were erected indicating speed limits and reminding personnel of the importance of roads and maintenance of communications.

## 8 ANGAU COMPOUNDS

Native compounds were always sited close to the dropping zone, principally from the point of view that that was the most forward administrative installation and relatively safe from enemy action. It was necessary to have natives close to their tasks to save time in movement and siting compounds at the dropping zone proved an ideal solution as the native compound and DTD could give mutual protection.

A day's work was invariably lost when a compound was moved forward owing to the time taken for natives to carry their personal possessions forward and to construct living quarters. The effect of this was largely overcome by moving one third of the strength forward each day for three days.

Compounds were always sited close to a creek and natives were forbidden to wash or draw water from any other creeks used by white troops, or to bathe well down stream from water points if this was not practicable.

## 9 SUPPLIES

### (a) Rations

Rations were at all times of good quality and were supplemented by fresh commodities approximately four days each week. Fresh bread was issued daily and other fresh items were meat, butter, potatoes, onions and apples.

The quality and quantity of rations left nothing to be desired and this was in a large measure responsible for the low sick rate and high morale of all personnel.

### (b) Reserves

The policy maintained throughout the operations was for forward battalions to hold a reserve of 5 days SWPA and 2 days FOR; and for the reserve battalion to hold 3 days SWPA and 2 days FOR.

These rations were maintained in company areas and received high priority for forward movement following consolidation.

### (c) Field Operation Rations

Only patrols remaining out over a period of more than two days were permitted to consume field operation rations and it was insisted in all cases that SWPA ration be consumed for other patrols.

### (d) Emergency Rations

An A3 emergency ration was carried by every man, but was only used by one man who lived on it for two days while cut off and wounded.



(e) Native Rations

These were in the main found quite satisfactory, although on occasions when carriers lived out with detached companies and patrols and were prohibited from lighting wood fires they were unable to consume the rice portion of the ration.

10 AMMUNITION

(a) The brigade policy was to, at all times, maintain full WET ammunition, plus additional 3 inch mortar as ordered from time to time for specific operations.

(b) Expenditure of 3 inch mortar ammunition was particularly heavy due to the use of mortars in batteries for the softening up periods prior to attacks and the weight of support during the battles. For these special tasks the anticipated expenditure was dumped at the battery prior to the commencement of the task making daily replenishment unnecessary.

(c) Maintenance

Ammunition reserves were constantly turned over, and were continually checked and maintained by the brigade ammunition examiner.

(d) Storage

Generally the storage of ammunition was satisfactory as units were able to carry sufficient tent flys etc for coverage and the constant maintenance and turnover gave ammunition little time to deteriorate.

11 PETROL, OIL AND LUBRICANTS

Supplies of petrol, oil and lubricants were always available in sufficient quantities and were dropped in store-pedoes to units and detachments where road supply was not practicable.

12 WATER

Water was plentiful and easily obtainable but due to the rate of the advance it was considered impracticable to establish water points.

All water was drawn under unit arrangements from streams in their own areas and treated before use.

13 REPAIR AND RECOVERY

LAD was located with brigade headquarters with a section attached to each battalion. This arrangement was invaluable and saved a great deal of time as numerous repairs which would normally be evacuated to LAD were carried out at unit B Echelon.

A considerable amount of work was carried out in the early stages of the operation in maintaining Hydra burners in a serviceable condition but when newer burners were made available this commitment was greatly reduced.

A daily service was maintained to the detached sections taking forward spare parts and repaired equipment, and evacuating work beyond the capacity of the detachments. This allowed a quick and constant repair and replacement service which was of great value to the units.



14. ORDNANCE

In the main, ordnance supplies were available quickly and in the desired quantities. Items that were in generally short supply or not available were as follows.

(a) Tents, shelter halves

Numerous replacements were necessary owing to normal wear and also because of damage caused by shell fire. The life of these shelters under operational conditions appears to be about 8 - 10 weeks but as the shelters held by the brigade were four months old before operations commenced and had regularly been used in training, they were of little effective use after about the first month's operations.

Very few replacements were available, but towards the end of the operations 300 of the new poncho type were acquired, on the basis of 100 per battalion.

(b) Small size Trousers

Usage on clothing was fairly high due to tearing in thick undergrowth and because it was constantly wet from perspiration and rain and because not sufficient sunlight was available for drying after washing.

There was a high demand for small size trousers, but as these were not available, ill-fitting larger sizes were issued.

It is considered that these were responsible for some cases of skin disease on the thighs and crutch as when the trousers were wet and baggy they were drawn across the skin causing irritation and infection.

(c) Hydra burners

These were found to be invaluable but the brigade commenced operations with approximately 5 serviceable burners per battalion instead of 21 allowed by WET.

However after about three weeks supplies commenced to come forward until 16 were available for each unit.

(d) Axes felling

Due to the amount of corduroying in the first half of the operations, axes were urgently required but were only available in very small quantities for the first few weeks and then cut out altogether and were not available from either ordnance or engineer sources.

It is considered that the WE of axes in this type of operation should be 150, with ample replacements of good quality handles available.

15. ORDNANCE DUMP

A small ordnance dump was established at brigade headquarters under the supervision of Brigade Ordnance Warrant Officer and stocks of items in constant demand were held. This also served as a breaking down point for distribution of items delivered in bulk.



16 AIR DROPPING OF ORDNANCE SUPPLIES

During movement of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn away from the main axis, urgent ordnance supplies were dropped to them from aircraft. In addition, urgently required supplies not readily available from Division ordnance dump for units on the main axis were dropped on the dropping zones.

17 ENGINEER STORES

Throughout the operation a dump of 300 - 400 coils of barbed wire was maintained at brigade headquarters to supply the needs of forward units. Other stores were being brought up from the Field Park at TOKO by AASC transport when required or drawn from 15 Aust Fd Coy if available.

It is considered that an engineer dump should be maintained at the forward dropping zone under engineer supervision to include barbed wire, ARS mesh, sisalkraft, nails, axes, shovels RE and AR CO culvert.

The DID at the dropping zone is the logical place for a brigade dump as it is the terminal point for both first and second line transport.

The proposition of drawing engineer stores from the supporting field company was not generally practicable as it was found that field company dumps were not always sufficiently close to the forward troops, causing much additional traffic in rear of the brigade area and involving unnecessary delay in the collection of stores.

18 SALVAGE

A detachment 3 Aust Div Salvage Unit was allocated to the brigade and was attached to the DID at the forward dropping zone.

Units were very salvage conscious and returnable containers, empty ammunition cases, petrol drums, etc were regularly returned from forward battalions.

The return of parachutes from detached units and sub-units was a constant problem but except in one instance was achieved from resources within the brigade. The exception was when a large number accumulated at WINCHESTER JUNCTION at the dropping ground from which 57/60 Aust Inf Bn was maintained. These were returned under Divisional arrangements by motor transport when the lateral HAMMER TRACK was opened as sufficient native carriers were not at that time available.

19 PROVOST

A detachment 3 Aust Div Pro Coy was attached to the brigade and were most essential for traffic control and the handling of prisoners of war.

At some periods when the L of C within the brigade area of responsibility was considerably lengthened owing to rapid movement the resources of the detachment were particularly strained, generally because of the fact that a lengthy movement of the forward troops had an almost immediate result of all supporting arms and unit B Echelons being moved up also.

The policy for the employment of the provost on the L of C as to man traffic points from the rear boundar to the rear of



the forward battalion, unit regimental police being used for traffic forward of this point.

20 TRANSPORTATION

The major administrative problem of the operation was one of transportation as is normally the case in jungle warfare, particularly in an operation involving a great number of moves for the complete force.

(a) Jeeps

The unit WE of 8 jeeps and trailers was found to be inadequate for the task and AASC vehicles had to be drawn from Division daily to cope with normal unit requirements.

It was found that on soft ground the driving wheels of the jeeps cut down with the result that after a very short time two deep wheel ruts developed, which caused the jeeps and trailers to 'belly'. The only solution was to corduroy all tracks as quickly as possible which, though slow and heavy work, enabled supply to be maintained.

(b) Tractor trains

It was found, whenever a battalion advanced beyond the corduroyed track, that the earth tracks would only stand up for a very short time and when rain co-incided with a forward move approximately six jeeps and trailers would render the track useless and so prevent urgently needed consolidation stores, reserves etc from being moved forward.

To overcome this, tractors towing approximately 4-6 jeep trailers were employed. It was found that this did not damage the track to the same extent as a similar number of jeeps and trailers owing to the low track pressure.

However, as tractors were not always available, on occasions trailers were hooked on to tanks.

It is suggested that Carriers Universal on the scale of four per battalion would have been ideal in this operation to move stores forward before corduroyed tracks had been laid.

Tractor trains also proved their worth in the operation involved in crossing the HONGORAI, POROREI and HARI RIVERS where wide outflanking movements away from the main axis were carried out. Tracks were made by bulldozers through the jungle and tractor trains with supplies moved to the assembly areas.

21 PRISONERS OF WAR

A total of 47 prisoners of war were captured and held for short periods in the PW cage, at brigade headquarters, built and manned by provost personnel.

When available, provost were used to escort PW from the forward units to brigade headquarters thence to Division.

PW were immediately fed on arrival and where necessary given clothing. This appeared to put them in a suitable frame of mind for interrogation.



22 CANTEENS

In the initial stages, units on the main L of C sent back to Bulk Canteen for goods, whilst units and detachments away from the main axis had their goods dropped by aircraft with normal maintenance deliveries.

After the crossing of the HARI RIVER, a meeting point was arranged at 3-ton road head and units on the main axis went back to this point, the other units still being supplied from the air.

Payment was arranged by a levy on all personnel prior to commencement of operations and each man ordered his requirements weekly, the cost of which was deducted from the amount to his credit.

In general, canteen supplies were found to be adequate.

23 NATIVE CARRIERS

Many times throughout the operations, companies were called upon to make outflanking movements and carriers were extensively used for this purpose.

In the operation which culminated in the capture of the MOBLAI - MIVO RIVER area, involving a wide movement around the northern flank, 400 carriers were employed to carry equipment, ammunition reserve, 4 days SWPA and native rations for two battalions to the force concentration area and subsequently to the battalion assembly areas; a total of 1400 boy loads, which were moved in two days.

24 GENERAL

The forward movement of a battalion which carried approximately 15 tons of rations and ammunition together with wire, POL and normal unit stores, presented a difficult problem for the limited transport facilities available. Priorities for the movement of stores and reserves were worked out, and ferried forward, often necessitating the use of tractor trains, native carriers and jeeps and trailers.

The policy of keeping a dropping zone close to the forward troops proved of inestimable value in the saving of transport and time.

25 TRACK CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

It was found essential for an officer to be employed on constant supervision and co-ordination of track construction and maintenance, as at times troops from each battalion and natives were working at the one time on different sectors.

Fairly heavy timber was required, pegged at close intervals and well sanded.

The following rates of construction are repeated for information:

Europeans - 3½ yds per day with suitable timber available close to the job, otherwise approx 2 yds.

Natives - 5 yds per day under best conditions, otherwise 3-3½ yds.



Vehicles moving at more than 4 mph tend to throw the corduroy up from the track and once one timber becomes displaced the others quickly followed and had to be re-layed and re-pegged.

Numerous signs were erected showing speed limits and painted in bright colours with slogans pointing out the necessity for observing the speed limit and reminding drivers of the importance of the road.

Constant maintenance was necessary particularly in the rearward areas where the corduroy had been in position for some time and had to withstand heavier traffic from guns, artillery, ammunition vehicles and tractors.

ARC mesh was layed over the corduroy in one stretch and gave relatively smooth riding but after a short time tanks and tractor tracks turned up the ends, causing many punctures and torn tyres and damage to sumps of jeeps.

26 POSTAL

A detachment 3 Aust Div Postal Unit was attached to the brigade and operated a field post office at brigade headquarters.

Mail was sent forward from TOKO to the field post office, unit bags sorted and delivered by the detachment to unit B echelons for distribution.

The delivery of first class mail was good throughout and the frequency and speed with which it was delivered was a very important contribution to the high morale.

Second class mail was delivered every three to four weeks, but on several occasions, owing to operations, it was necessary to retain it until the situation became more static.

27 AMENITIES

(a) Philanthropic Representatives

The Salvation Army and YMCA representatives were at all times employed with the forward units and supplied hot drinks and comforts to the forward troops often under very difficult circumstances and were frequently under enemy fire.

Adequate supplies of note paper, envelopes, etc were distributed by them and were much appreciated by the troops.

These representatives gave much assistance in providing comforts, indoor games and sporting gear for the Brigade Rest Camp and their service and the organisations behind them are deserving of high praise.

(b) Films

It was a policy to show films regularly as far forward as possible allowing one third of troops of units within reasonable distance to attend. Two screenings a week were available and provided much needed entertainment.

It was found that the dropping zones formed ideal sites for films and at least one show per week was screened on the forward dropping zone, the second occasionally being screened further to the rear for the benefit of troops on the L of C.



As the forward cropping zone was often only 2000 yards from the enemy, protection had to be very thoroughly co-ordinated but this proximity made it possible for the forward troops, who were under the greatest strain, to obtain entertainment and relaxation.

28 RESTING OF TROOPS

Three weeks after the operations commenced, a Brigade Rest Camp was established on the beach at TOKO with accommodation for 75 personnel and a small permanent staff of 12 men, drawn from within the brigade and commanded by the Brigade Education Officer.

Personnel showing signs of battle strain were included in the first drafts, which were drawn from the three battalions, the larger proportion coming from units in close contact. They were given three days complete rest without any duties or parades other than meal and atebirin parades.

Quartering was on the basis of four men per tent and stretchers and cupboards for clothing and a small table were provided in each tent.

A mess hut, a well stocked canteen, amenities hut and writing room were provided stocked with a gramophone, games, wireless set and ample reading matter and writing material. Showers were available and facilities for the washing of clothes included boiling water.

Each incoming draft was inspected for skin complaints and treated at the regimental aid post.

By the conclusion of operations approximately 1000 personnel had spent three days at the rest camp and the relaxation, rest and opportunity to sunbathe were in a large measure responsible for the low sick rate and the cheerfulness, physical fitness and high morale of the brigade.

29 MEDICAL

(a) Incidence of Sickness

The incidence of sickness was remarkably low and can be attributed to the close attention paid to man management, provision of resting facilities and the quality of the rations.

(b) Malaria

Over the 20 weeks period 1 Apr to 17 Aug there were 66 cases in the brigade - an average of 1.48 per thousand per week.

Close attention was given to anti-malarial discipline at all times and this was closely policed by officers and NCOs.

Every case was carefully investigated, statements being made by the casualty, his officer and NCOs to ensure that the taking of anti-malarial precautions and the administration of atebirin had been properly supervised, and action taken where necessary.

(c) Scrub Typhus

During the period of operations no casualties were incurred through scrub typhus.



(d) Skin Diseases

During the period 1 Apr - 17 Aug, there were 183 evacuations from skin disease, representing an average of 9.15 cases per week or 4.1 cases per thousand per week.

The incidence of this disease is largely attributable to the constant dampness as, owing to the frequent rain and lack of sunlight in most areas, clothes could not be dried.

All personnel were inspected once weekly by RMOs and all officers exercised close supervision and carried out daily inspections of their men.

Patrolling was particularly vigorous throughout and in the case of two or three-day patrols, clothing was wet the whole time particularly as numerous creeks and streams had to be forded.

(e) Dysentery and Diarrhoea

Over the period there were 59 evacuations.

57/60 Aust Inf Bn suffered the most casualties from these complaints, the majority of cases occurring whilst the unit had been moving through an area which the enemy had avoided as far as possible, according to captured documents because of the high casualty rate while there.

Taking all factors into consideration, the number of cases is not considered high.

(f) Accidents

Although figures from accidental injuries were not high, a few cases occurred from the careless handling of small arms and from clumsy use of machetes.

Special instructions were issued that all normal safety precautions laid down for the various weapons would be observed at all times.

(g) Battle Casualties

During the operations to 17 Aug 45 casualties were as under:

Unit	Killed in Action	Wounded in Action	Wounded remaining on duty
24 Aust Inf Bn	33	134	23
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	30	82	23
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	39	138	22
HQ Aust Inf Bde and supporting units	11	49	6
TOTAL	113	403	74



(h) Wastage

From 1 Apr to 17 Aug wastage was as follows:

Killed in action	113
Wounded in action	403
Sickness evacuations	740
	<hr/>
	1256
	<hr/>
Returned to unit	802
Reinforcements	122
	<hr/>
	924
	<hr/>
Wastage	332

Total wastage for the period being 16.6 per week or 8 per thousand per week.

30 HYGIENE

Close supervision by Brigade Hygiene Officer and unit officers and RMOs kept hygiene at a high standard.

No outbreak of any disease could be attributed to lack of supervision and all personnel were very hygiene conscious.

Regular inspections are most necessary to ensure that a high standard is maintained with particular emphasis on the cleanliness of latrines, sullage pits and cooking and eating utensils.

31 COOKING

Unit Warrant Officer caterers exercised close control over cooking arrangements and excellent results were achieved. A very firm policy was maintained that well cooked hot meals would always be served, and the effect on the health and morale of the troops was most noticeable.

In relation to this, hydra burners have proved invaluable and are a most essential item of unit equipment, and should always be placed amongst the highest priority for the movement of stores.

32 CONCLUSION

The AQ Services were able to function in this operation in accordance with normal principles of supply and evacuation.

The main problem was that of transportation, which was in all cases overcome by making maximum use of every available means so that, at no stage, were operations interrupted or delayed by a break down in supply.

*A. H. Hamming*

Brig  
Comd 15 Aust Inf Bde



COMPARATIVE STRENGTH STATES - 15 AUST INF BDE

1 APR 45 - 15 AUG 45

UNIT	STRENGTHS				Rfts and X List personnel received		BATTLE CASUALTIES						SICK	
	1 APR 45		15 AUG 45				KILLED		WOUNDED		TOTAL			
	Offrs	OR	Offrs	OR	Offrs	OR	Offrs	OR	Offrs	OR	Offrs	OR	Offrs	OR
24 AUST INF BN	31	692	32	608	12	336	2	31	8	126	10	157	13	209
57/60 AUST INF BN	38	686	26	559	22	250	1	29	5	78	6	107	13	139
58/59 AUST INF BN	41	725	32	581	10	184	2	37	8	130	10	167	3	156



SUMMARY OF SICKNESS EVACUATIONSSOUTH BOUGAINVILLE OPERATIONSPERIOD 1 APR 45 - 17 AUG 45 - 20 WEEKS

UNIT	MALARIA	PUC	DIARRHOEA & DYSENTERY	SKIN	URTI	OTHERS	TOTAL
HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde	4	3	1	5	1	24	38
24 Aust Inf Bn	23	28	10	53	9	95	218
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	21	17	42	102	38	129	349
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	18	9	6	23	4	75	135
TOTALS	66	57	59	183	52	323	740

DiseaseCases per 1000 per week

Malaria	1.48
PUC	1.28
Diarrhoea and Dysentery	1.32
Skin	4.10
URTI	1.16
Others	7.24

Total evacuations per 1000 per week	16.58
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Average daily strength	2230
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Daily percentage of sickness evacuations	0.22
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## NOTES ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DROPPING ZONE

### 1 SELECTION OF THE SITE

Garden areas make the best sites and can be quickly and easily cleared and enlarged.

In most cases a site can be selected from air photographs followed by a ground reconnaissance.

The main requirements are:

- (a) Easy access to the main axis
- (b) Firm sandy soil, well drained
- (c) A clear run at either end of the ground not obscured by tall timber.

### 2 DEVELOPMENT

The first stage is clearing and enlarging the ground, if possible, to an area 300 yards long and 100 yards wide, and then the construction of road circuits, followed by the erection of store huts and ammunition bays.

If the traffic circuit is at all likely to break up under rain, high priority must be given to corduroying the surface.

### 3 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this area, the air force will not permit supply aircraft to fly over enemy territory except in case of emergency and this necessitates the dropping zone being sited at right angles to the axis. Similarly, another restriction is that a dropping zone may not be less than 2000 yards from the forward defended localities to obviate the danger from enemy small arms and light antiaircraft fire.

As artillery batteries are usually sited close to the main axis, and in rear of a dropping zone there is a possibility that aircraft may be endangered by our own shells and therefore it is necessary to have a wireless link from the batteries or regimental headquarters to warn the aircraft from the area while a shoot is in progress.

The procedure adopted by this brigade was to allow the aircraft priority over counter battery work, normal registration and ranging. During timed programmes, defensive fire tasks or calls for supporting fire from the forward troops, artillery had the priority being responsible, however, for warning the aircraft and advising the pilot when the fire would be likely to finish to enable him to carry on with his mission. In addition when artillery programmes were known, the GSO III(Air) was advised and the aircraft timings were adjusted to conform.



NOTES ON BRIGADE MAINTENANCE AREA

1 Operations in SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE have been, in the main, conducted along a main axis of a jeepable road and consequently, evacuation and supply can follow the generally accepted principles with few, if any, departures necessary.

2 Experience has shown that it is most advisable to have all administrative installations sited in the one area, as far forward as tactically possible, mainly to effect economy in time and transport and also for mutual protection.

3 Accordingly it is considered that the following installations could be grouped in the vicinity of the DID to form a brigade maintenance area:

Light Aid Detachment	
Engineer dump	{ staffed by field company}
Ordnance dump	{ Brigade ordnance officer}
Salvage dump	{ Salvage detachment}
Field Post Office	{ Brigade Postal Section}
Staging post	{ if necessary}
ANCAU compound	
Field Cash Office	

4 This would, of course, require additional signal facilities and it would be most desirable where all of the above are under command to have an officer detailed to co-ordinate all the various activities. The brigade transport officer, under the supervision of the Staff Captain, could carry out this task, under present conditions, in addition to his normal duties.



15 AUST INF BDE

REPORT ON OPERATIONS

REPORT BY BRIGADE ASC OFFICER

SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE OPERATIONS

PURIATA RIVER to MIVO RIVER

13 APR 45 to 15 AUG 45

1 GENERAL

During the recent operations, at times, the three battalions were committed together, which will give an indication of the amount of rations, ammunition and fuel required to maintain a fighting brigade in action. At no time was the advance of the brigade held up on account of supplies; mainly due to prior planning by the brigade staff and early advice as to movement. Consequently BASCO was able to maintain adequate reserves in the BIDs sufficient to meet unexpected or heavy drawings on any item of AASC supply.

Close liaison between brigade and HQ Comd AASC 3 Aust Div kept Division fully in the picture regarding future or proposed operations. Thus sufficient time was given to get the necessary supplies from BSD, FAD and BIPOD TOROKINA.

2 TOPOGRAPHY

To enable a complete understanding of supply problems and methods by which they were overcome in this campaign, a brief description of the terrain over which the brigade operated is necessary.

The terrain was difficult for supply and maintenance as it consisted of dense jungle interspersed with some few clearings and garden areas,

In the SOUTH it was generally low lying swampy ground while in the more hilly NORTH, there existed only few tracks in most cases intersected by numerous fast flowing streams and rivers with sheer banks sometimes rising well over 100 feet.

In the early stages of the advance, the condition of the main BUIN road caused many delays owing to its boggy nature resulting in miles of corduroy having to be laid. EAST of the POROREI RIVER the road was in a much better condition but was soon torn up due to the amount of heavy traffic passing over it. Once again the solution was more corduroy, and though this naturally slows down vehicles, it meant that supplies were delivered more quickly in the long run.

Movement off the main road was seldom possible for wheeled vehicles, necessitating the use of tractor trains and native carriers to supply units or sub-units when air dropping was impracticable for tactical reasons.

Thus it will be seen that nature was not particularly helpful in the matter of supplies and the overcoming of natural obstacles on the road (in addition to those left behind by the enemy in the shape of blown bridges, tank ditches, barriers, mines and booby traps as well as our own bomb craters, together with the road being only wide enough for a single line of traffic) presented major engineering tasks.



The fact of having a main road of sorts, in spite of its many faults, as the main axis of advance was a considerable help in bringing forward supplies. Mention might also be made of the three ton road, of three lane traffic width, constructed by our own engineers through virgin jungle as the advance progressed. Although far outstripped by the speed of the advance, it was a considerable help in reducing time from base installations at TOKO and enabled three ton vehicles to transport supplies much nearer to the DIDs.

### 3 BRIGADE POLICY

The brigade policy in reserve rations was for battalions to carry five days SWPA and two days FOR when in contact with the enemy and the reserve battalion to hold in three days SWPA and two days FOR. These reserves were maintained throughout and the policy bore fruit on two occasions when sub-units were cut off from the main force for a short period.

### 4 SITING OF SUPPLY INSTALLATIONS

DIDs, in order to perform their correct procedure in giving quick, full and efficient service to the fighting units, must be as far forward as the tactical situation permits. Owing to the speed of the advance, at times it was found impossible to keep the depot up to the forward troops so a system was devised whereby the forward battalion would be maintained by air or a dropping zone cleared by the battalion until another DID was opened on the new ground. This system also proved its worth during outflanking movements when units or sub-units were off the main line of advance.

### 5 AIR MAINTENANCE

The brigade used air dropping to the full and over the period of operations opened up and used twelve dropping zones in addition to four already in use when the brigade took over.

From 18 May 45 when 57/60 Aust Inf Bn was operating in the area of HAMMER ROAD - COMMANDO ROAD junction they were wholly maintained by air including ordnance, engineer, signal and medical stores as well as AASC supplies until 9 Jun 45 when HAMMER ROAD was corduroyed for jeeps as an alternate L of C.

Without air maintenance it is safe to say the advance could not have been so swift, and indeed may have bogged altogether such was the state of the roads after heavy rain that it was even impassable to light traffic on some occasions.

These operations again proved the value of air dropping in maintaining that vital principle of war under jungle conditions, namely MOBILITY.

### 6 RATIONS

Throughout the operations, rations were ample and of excellent quality. Fresh commodities were issued on an average of four days per week due to the fighting troops being given first priority on all fresh supplies.

Towards the end of the operation, battalions were able to supplement their rations with the addition of various fresh items from captured Japanese gardens which, in many cases, were well kept and had crops ready for harvest. Such additions were paw paw, pumpkin, beans, sweet potatoes, coconuts, etc.



(a) Fresh bread

Fresh bread baked at TOKO by Field Bakery Platoon using wood ovens, capable of producing 5000 lb per day, was supplied to battalions seven days a week and six days a week to other units.

(b) Fresh fish

On four occasions supplies of fresh fish were obtained from the Marine Supply Platoon. This commodity was found hard to handle, for by the time the consignment was brought from MOTUPENA POINT to the forward troops it was generally found to be unfit for human consumption due to putrefaction and damage enroute over the lengthy and rough L of C. Arrangements were then made to divert supplies to the brigade rest camp instead.

(c) Field Operation Rations (O3)

Field operation rations were only consumed when a patrol of two days duration or more was sent out or when the tactical situation necessitated.

Complaints were received from units regarding the meat content in the pack prepared by Nestles prior to April 45. Stocks of these have now been frozen and fresher packs were issued in lieu. Throughout, where possible, SWPA rations were used to the fullest extent.

(d) Emergency Ration (A3)

Emergency ration was carried one on each man at all times but the only occasion when consumed was the instance of a soldier being wounded and cut off from his unit for two days. He reported the ration to be very sustaining.

(e) Native rations

This ration is quite satisfactory but it was found that when natives were doing continuous hard labour such as road making the preserved meat ration is insufficient. Fortunately extra stock was able to be supplied from surpluses held by battalions and issues were made to ANGAU when required.

(f) Ice cream

Ice cream was issued once weekly to the brigade rest camp at TOKO. Owing to the lengthy L of C it was found impossible to supply it to forward troops in an edible condition, due to thawing. Supply by air dropping was unsuccessful as damage to churns resulted in spoiling the contents. In addition, it was found difficult to return the churns in time to BSD TOROKINA - they being in very short supply.

Taken generally the ration position throughout the whole brigade was very good, and it is considered that the brigade has never been better fed in any other operational area.

7

AMMUNITION

Supplies were adequate and at no time was there a shortage of any types.

Constant checking by the brigade sergeant ammunition examiner has helped to prevent any misfires and deterioration due



to weathering and careless handling. The procedure has guaranteed to battalion personnel 100% efficiency from their ammunition at all times, instilling into them further confidence in their weapons and proving no small factor in the high morale of the brigade

Artillery and 3 inch mortar HE - expenditure of both these items was very heavy, which, with the track conditions existing, caused considerable transport problems. For a period of ten days, AASC vehicles were working 24 hours a day to keep up the supply until the use of three ton vehicles was permitted.

Figures are shown hereunder of the expenditure over the period for the brigade group and supporting units who were supplied through this headquarters:

15 Aust Inf Bde

3 in Mortar HE	30382	.380 Rev	610
Smoke	1395	PITA bombs	16
2 in Mortar HE	308	WP 77 Gren Smoke	154
Smoke	50	1 in sig ill	51
.303 bdr chgr	103485	red	156
ctn	69402	green	80
belt	48050	2 pr Tk A AP	13
9 mm SMGO	142980	HE	90
36W Gren 4 sec	5066		
7 sec	540		

2 Aust Fd Regt

25 pr (all types) 43558

2/11 Aust Fd Regt

25 pr (all types) 22631

U Aust Hy Bty

150 mm HE 927

A Sqn 2/4 Aust Arm'd Regt

Besa 7.92 mm 21050  
2 pr Tk A HE 195  
3 in How 65

B Sqn 2/4 Aust Arm'd Regt

Besa 7/92 mm 85050  
2 pr Tk A HE 813  
3 in How 279

When it is computed that these amounts alone total some 1400 tons it will be realised that the transport required for ammunition supply and maintenance alone is no small problem in the AASC organisation.

FUEL

All demands were fulfilled throughout the period and units were never held up for supplies. Fuel was dropped in 4 gallon drums packed in aerial storepedes to units being maintained by air.



Towards the latter part of the operations, stocks of range fuel became very low but petrol MP 80, issued in lieu for use in hydra burners, gave satisfactory results.

9 ACCOUNTANCY

Normal indenting for rations three days ahead was carried out by units when they were drawing from a DID. Battalions found that by indenting three days ahead, it was too far in advance, as companies, detachments, etc, were sent away at short notice causing overdrawals. Arrangements with officers commanding DIDs enabled battalions to indent today, for issue the following day; this helped them to control their ration drawings more satisfactorily.

All units were notified weekly of overdrawals and these were adjusted by underdrawing the following week. At the end of operations, the overdrawals and underdrawals position in the brigade was very satisfactory.

10 LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Supplies - early warning of intended movements enabling plans and preparations to be made in advance is most essential. Especially is this so, where long difficult L of C exist, as was the case in these operations.

Insufficient time was given for the establishment of DIDs. Quite often, owing to heavy rain, the DID circuits became impassable causing inconvenience and waste of time. The laying of corduroy in and out should be given the same priority as the initial clearing of the dropping zone site.

It is suggested that battalion WE should include a bulldozer and/or tractor with two one-ton tracked trailers when the battalion is working in the type of terrain that the brigade has covered in the past eleven weeks. This would obviate the necessity for long and arduous carries by native carriers and time spent in preparing boy packs.

11 CONCLUSION

It is desired to record appreciation for the splendid co-operation given to the brigade by DAQMG 3 Aust Div in regard to air maintenance, and CASC and staff with all AASC supplies. Also to the officers commanding and personnel of 3 and 4 Aust Sup Dep Pls who serviced the brigade throughout. They never failed to deliver the goods at the right time, on time and with no discrepancies.

The brigade as a whole has never before completed a tour of operations with the majority of personnel so fit, healthy and contented and with such high morale. It is considered the contributing factors of:

- (a) plenty of good food, fresh as often as possible; and
- (b) constant checking of ammunition for deterioration or faults by sergeant ammunition examiner

were responsible to a high degree.



15 AUST INF BDE

REPORT ON OPERATIONS

**PART III**

REPORT ON INTERCOMMUNICATIONS

SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE OPERATIONS

PURIATA RIVER to MIVO RIVER

13 APR 45 to 15 AUG 45

1 INTRODUCTION

Detailed planning before and during the operation has been essential insofar as the means of communication to be employed; the method of installations; and the equipment requirements, holdings and distribution. Information regarding the signals layout, its adaptability for alterations, the whereabouts and state of repair of equipment must be continually available to signals officers and NCOs to allow of quick installations and clearance of traffic, both telephonic and message. Much time has been saved by keeping those concerned in the picture.

2 LINE TELEGRAPHY

Line communication has been relied upon to speedily bridge the gap between commanders and staffs. It has proved the quickest means of contact due to the fact that on the move of any headquarters, whether brigade, battalion or company line has always either been in position at the new headquarters or has been laid with the headquarters during its advance. In the event of any delay in the advance, a telephone has been connected across the line and the reason for the delay advised. Rear headquarters have not been closed until the new headquarters has been established thereby ensuring continuous contact.

Two factors governed the installation of line communications:

The disposition and lines of communication of units;

The use of lateral and alternate lines.

Due to the nature of the operation, cable routes selected themselves. Lateral lines between battalions moving on the one axis of advance were essential both as alternate means of contacting a battalion whose line was out and to relieve the telephonic congestion on brigade lines when one battalion wished to speak to the other. This principle has been followed throughout the operation. From battalions to companies, alternate and lateral lines have been installed. This was essential to maintain communications with lines being broken by shellfire or troop movement. In the operation, artillery co-operation necessitated the laying of lines to battalion artillery liaison officers and forward observation officers. Use of these as alternate lines was also borne in mind and on occasions used. Difficulty in identification between artillery and infantry lines was experienced until the policy of artillery laying on the right and infantry laying on the left was instituted.



Operations were commenced with cable holdings as under.

	<u>D VIII Twisted</u>	<u>D III</u>	<u>PVC assault</u>
Brigade Signal Section	10	15	60000 yds
24 Aust Inf Bn	-	6	
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	-	10	
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	-	8	

This was sufficient but it is essential that ready access to further supplies be available. A cable dump was established at divisional and brigade headquarters and replacement effected as cable was expended. To 28 May 45 cable expenditure was:

D III Single	268 miles
D VIII Twisted	70 "
D III "	20 "

Jeepable tracks allowed of cable being laid from Barrows Drum and Number 3 layers, therefore twisted cable (D VIII and D III) was used to supply metallic circuit to battalions and lateral lines between battalions advancing along BUIN ROAD. Due to the weight and rate of laying, it was not practicable to lay twisted cable within battalions. D III single was used to supply earth return circuits. Overhearing on these lines has been prevalent, but with the spacing of earth pins and installation of six volt globes in switchboards to dry them out, this has been reduced. It is considered that the magnetic substance of the soil is to some degree responsible for the more than usual amount of overhearing.

57/60 Aust Inf Bn's task along BATAI TRACK indicated that twisted cable would not be satisfactory due to the length of line involved. Using twisted cable speech drops to a strength of 1 - 2 over ten miles. As artillery also required line communications to 57/60 Aust Inf Bn, a line detachment of ten personnel comprising artillery and brigade signalmen was formed to construct five spaced D III pairs; the distribution to be:

2 pairs	brigade to battalion
1 pair	battalion to B Echelon or sub-units in rear
2 pairs	artillery.

This proved a satisfactory arrangement and has resulted in reliable communications to the battalion.

### 3 LINE CONSTRUCTION

Before building lines, the programme of track and road construction along the route had to be taken into account. This makes close liaison with staff and engineers essential. The only satisfactory way to protect the cable was to lift it off the ground either on undergrowth or 5 ft poles as it is laid and then following in rear of corduroy or road construction parties, building the line approximately 10 ft high.

Early in the operation, it was found that particular care must be taken in building twisted cable. Self ties were the cause of many failures. When a tree fell or was knocked against the line, the strain on the cable was often sufficient to bare the insulation at the self tie resulting in either serious current leaks or dead shorts. The only satisfactory way in which to build twisted cable is to use a clove hitch or bind in with spun yarn.

The D type cable has been found tough and durable. PVC assault cable, due to its lightness and ease of handling, has



proved satisfactory and is particularly suitable for mortar detachments. When used in this manner it has been recovered for future use.

#### 4. LINE INSTRUMENTS

Magneto type switchboards used are all comparatively new and have given excellent results. Superposing units containing transformers of early Australian manufacture were inefficient after one month's tropical service.

Three UC switchboards in use have given good results although they have had two years operational service.

L type telephones have proved reliable under all conditions.

The fullerphone has again given excellent results.

The two telephones F high powered Australian held by brigade signals section have been essential when working over long distances on weak lines. It is considered that each battalion should also carry a telephone of this type for use when working from battalion headquarters to patrols.

Line equipment WE has been sufficient except in the case of telephones. It is considered that the establishment of telephones should be increased for a battalion from 12 to 20 and brigade signals section from 8 to 15 due to, in the case of battalions the requirements for companies and patrols; and brigade signals section to provide for the number of sub-units such as MDS, ADS, DIDs, engineer platoons etc.

#### 5. WIRELESS

##### (a) Number 11 Set

The Number 11 set working between brigade and battalion headquarters has been reliable during daylight, but it is not satisfactory from 2000 hrs to 0600 hrs. The Number 22 set with its lower frequency band is essential for night wireless telegraphy working. No failures with the Number 11 set working to aircraft have been experienced.

##### (b) 208 Mark 2 Wireless Telegraphy sets

26 sets were made available for the operation; 3 being issued to each battalion and 17 held in a pool at brigade headquarters. Establishment of a pool at brigade headquarters allowed for the redistribution of sets to battalions as the necessity arose and the continued maintenance under favourable conditions of the sets.

An establishment of 9 sets per battalion is necessary, allowing for 5 sets for rifle companies and 4 for patrols. The 208 set has given excellent results covering all distances required, the greatest being 13 miles. Their lightness and reliability have given commanders and patrol leaders complete confidence in the set.

Inverted L type aeriols have been used throughout because of failures experienced when using the vertical issue aerial. In rain forest country in which the sets have been working it requires from 5 to 10 minutes to prepare for transmission. **By using a microphone plugged into the key socket, radio telephony communication is satisfactory.**



(c) 108 Mark 3 Wireless Telegraphy sets

7 sets were held under brigade control; distribution being effected to the battalion committed.

In addition to 9 208 sets per battalion it is considered that 6 108 Mark 3 sets should also be on establishment for use as mobile sets at infantry companies.

All the sets held had been in tropical use for over a year and have required continual technical repair and maintenance. When working as ground stations, results have been the same as the 208 sets on both radio telephony and wireless telegraphy. In the type of country encountered mobile working up to 400 yards has been the best result obtainable.

6 PIGEONS

Supplies of birds have been available from a loft located at Division headquarters. They have been used with success by patrols. Before the patrols' departure it has been found necessary to instruct them in care and handling and time of release of the birds.

57/60 Aust Inf Bn have been supplied with four birds daily and these have been used to carry strength and ration state messages.

7 SIGNALS OFFICE

The brigade signals office has handled an average of 17000 groups daily, with a maximum of 27000, 95% of which has been sent over the 6 fullerphone channels operating. Peak period is from 1800 hrs to 2330 hrs when it is necessary to have 7 operators on shift.

Due to the number of operators available, it is necessary to work them 12 hours in 24. The establishment of 18 operators is not sufficient to man the brigade signals office and wireless telegraphy sets at battalions. It is considered that the establishment should be increased to 24 operators. (A typical signals diagram is attached.)

8 BATTALION SIGNALS PLATOON

As has been proved in the past, the 22 trade group 2 signalmen of the battalion signals platoon is insufficient to maintain battalion communications in this type of warfare. At battalion headquarters, 4 operators are required on shift from 1800 hrs to 2300 hrs and 3 at other periods. This allows no reserve in the case of casualties or the opening of an advanced headquarters. It is considered that the establishment should be increased to 26 traded grouped 2. Line work within the battalion is considerable and as in the case of a brigade signals section, line installation and maintenance should be the duty of a separate line detachment of 8 men.

From a personnel strength point of view the only other alteration recommended is the posting of a trade group 1 instrument mechanic. During the operation, equipment repair has not been difficult due to the short E of C but there are continual adjustments necessary which are the work of a specialist. The policy with the brigade has been to send forward an instrument mechanic from brigade signals section to make a periodical check of equipment.



9 GENERAL

In the event of units carrying out flank movements and attacks, all means of communication must be known and co-ordinated and it was found advisable to compile a separate signals diagram for the particular operation.

Line communications have held during the initial phases but as soon as pressure is brought to bear on the enemy's front and he withdraws to the flanks, these lines cannot be relied on therefore, wireless channels will carry the majority of traffic - the most reliable link being the tank wireless. With ground stations, sets are liable to become wet or damaged in movement. Information apart from signals was gained by listening out on tank frequencies and on a Number 4 reception set and passing on any intercepted traffic.

Many equipment faults were caused by moisture in instruments and every opportunity must be taken to dry them out whenever there is sunshine. Other methods used have been to place instruments in hot boxes in which a 60 watt globe is burning and in tins placed on primus stoves.







THE EMPLOYMENT OF PROPAGANDA

1 PROPAGANDA AS A WEAPON

Throughout the operation every endeavour has been made to fully exploit the possibilities of propaganda as a weapon for the ultimate destruction of the enemy. The object of propaganda as employed by an infantry brigade in operations is to supplement the general propaganda programme which is carried out by FELO and higher formations.

On the brigade level general propaganda is of little value as it is unnecessary duplication of what is already being done elsewhere and it is essential to ensure that the propaganda used is that most suited to the particular set of circumstances, the type of operation and the characteristics of the particular enemy force at which the propaganda is directed. Spontaneous propaganda dictated by a set of local circumstances is much more likely to be considered sincere as it is something in the nature of a personal message to the troops receiving it.

The lowering of morale, the undermining of discipline and the inducement to desertion are the factors which make propaganda a worth-while weapon in any operation.

2 METHODS OF EMPLOYMENT

- (a) The FELO Front Line Broadcasting Unit.
- (b) Air dropping of surrender leaflets.
- (c) Employment of the 25 pounder propaganda shell.

3 FELO FRONT LINE BROADCASTING UNIT

(a) Employment

At all times throughout the operation, this unit was kept as far forward as possible so that when companies in contact with the enemy reported opportunities for its employment no time was lost in getting the unit to the locality where it was required. This is essential to ensure that the propaganda reaches the enemy as soon as possible after an engagement before the enemy have time to reorganise and before the officers can regain full control of their men.

Careful consideration was always given to the time of broadcast. Untimely propaganda is harmful and will do much to nullify previous good work. During the heat of an actual engagement, propaganda is useless as it only aggravates the enemy, but during meal times or in the early evening, propaganda is considered to have had the greatest effect.

(b) Subject matter

It was considered advisable to avoid in broadcast anything of a threatening nature or reference to any such things as the bombing of TOKYO or the devastation of the Japanese mainland. The following four themes formed the basis of practically all propaganda broadcasts during this operation

- (i) Assurance of good treatment in order to nullify Japanese propaganda concerning our treatment of PW;



- (ii) The food angle, particularly in areas where food was known to be scarce;
- (iii) The opportunity to continue to live and assist in building a new Japan after the war;
- (iv) Undermining the authority and influence of officers.

(c) Scope

In addition to the broadcast of specially prepared addresses, use was made of the records which are standard equipment of the front line broadcasting unit. From these, well chosen selections of Japanese music were played at appropriate times and other records which brought back poignant memories of home.

4 SURRENDER LEAFLETS

(a) Types

Many and various types of leaflets are produced by FELO, but the simpler types such as those setting out the terms of the Geneva Convention or depicting PW working on farms in Australia were the ones selected for use. As with broadcasts, the simple themes are those most likely to produce results.

(b) Employment

Auster aircraft were extensively used for dropping leaflets on the enemy immediately opposed to our own troops.

This method proved most satisfactory as it ensured that the leaflets reached the troops to whom they were addressed, also as it provided a quick means of getting the propaganda to the target areas as soon as a situation arose which called for its employment. On two occasions when large enemy forces were concentrated to oppose our advance, leaflet bombardments were employed as part of the softening up process prior to our attacks.

Use was made of the 25 pounder propaganda shell when forward observation officers with forward units were engaging known enemy concentrations. Owing to the small number of leaflets contained in a shell, it is essential to ensure that the shells are being directed at a definite target and not merely a suspected area.

5 PW RECEPTION POINT

In order to overcome the common fear of many potential deserters of being shot at by our own troops or by natives while attempting to reach our lines a propaganda leaflet was drawn up instructing those wishing to desert to make their way to a point well away from the area of operations where a meeting place would be established for their reception. To this point they could come without fear of being fired on or of their intention to desert not being recognised. The first reception point was established at FURIATA RIVER mouth and was later moved to MAMAGOTA. Instructions regarding this procedure were also broadcast by the front line broadcasting unit.



6 EMPLOYMENT OF PW

Throughout the operation, PW proved of great assistance to the propaganda campaign. Among those who surrendered were many well educated Japanese who were only too anxious to assist in inducing others to follow their lead and surrender.

Several PW made constructive criticisms of our propaganda and valuable suggestions for its improvement. Some leaflets were re-written using better and more typical Japanese expressions and special leaflets were drafted along lines suggested by the PW which they knew from their own experiences would be most effective. Every PW was thoroughly interrogated as to the effect of our propaganda which enabled us to pay increased attention to the forms of propaganda which were most effective and to discard some which were apparently unsuitable.

7 RESULTS OF PROPAGANDA

The fact that 47 PW were taken during the operation, of which 34 surrendered is more than sufficient justification for the intensive propaganda programme carried out. In addition, there are other results of propaganda which are not immediately evident. An important factor is the steady undermining of the enemy's fighting efficiency which is going on all the time. Ample evidence has been obtained that almost all troops are now reading our propaganda and taking notice of it in defiance of their officers' orders.

The keystone of Japanese fighting efficiency is the authority and power of the officer which in the past has been unquestioned. Our propaganda is steadily weakening this.



EMPLOYMENT OF AIR SUPPORT

1 GENERAL

From the time the first organised enemy resistance was encountered at the beginning of the operations a firm policy was followed with regard to employment of air support. This was to use fully the maximum availability of all forms of air support once enemy concentrations had been located.

On many occasions during the operations this policy made it unnecessary to commit infantry in what would have been costly attacks against strong enemy prepared positions to achieve their objectives. The types of air support employed may be divided into three main categories:

- (a) Bombing missions carried out by RNZAF Corsairs
- (b) Long range tactical reconnaissance and artillery reconnaissance carried out by 5 Tac R Sqn RAAF
- (c) Close tactical reconnaissance, artillery reconnaissance and mortar reconnaissance carried out by Austers from 17 Air OP Flt RAAF.

The methods used for employment of these types of air support are outlined below.

2 EMPLOYMENT OF BOMBERS

(a) Close support missions

These were the principle form of air support employed during the operations and played a very important part in enabling our infantry to maintain their advance and drive through previously prepared enemy positions.

The first close support strike employed in the operations was to precede the advance of 24 Aust Inf Bn along BUIN ROAD from SINDOU CREEK to the BIAGU FORKS on 26 Apr 45, and from this action many valuable lessons were brought out regarding the employment of close air support.

In this operation the nature of the country astride the BUIN ROAD was such that visibility was restricted to a few yards. Our troops were making contact with the enemy in his prepared positions at from three to five yards and had no chance of seeing the enemy until fired on. Also the dense timber affected the movement of tanks off the road. It was felt that some method should be tried to open up the country along the axis of advance and it was considered that bombs could be employed for this purpose in addition to their normal role of destruction of known enemy localities. Accordingly, it was requested that heavy bombs, either 650 lb depth charges or 1000 lb stick bombs, be used for this mission.

In the action 36 aircraft were employed in three strikes each of 12 aircraft commencing from a target bomblines 300 yards forward of the leading infantry and extending astride BUIN ROAD to the BIAGU FORKS. Smoke from mortars was employed to indicate the target bomblines with complete success. Later aircraft coming in were guided to their targets by smoke laid from the lead-in aircraft at a point 500 yards forward of the initial target bomblines. Ground to air communications using Number 11 set worked satisfactorily throughout.



The result of this very successful strike was that the enemy were driven from their prepared positions on the sides of the road and visibility for both infantry and tanks was considerably increased during the advance. There was little cratering of the road due to accurate bombing and to the type of bomb used and also the trees and undergrowth felled by the bombs had little effect on the manoeuvrability of tanks.

In this operation the successful employment of air support enabled the infantry to gain their objectives with the absolute minimum of casualties and it is considered bombing in depth along an axis held by the enemy in a series of defended localities had an effect on enemy morale which was of great assistance to immediate future operations.

As the operations proceeded there were many more occasions when close support bombing was employed along the same lines as in this action and with the same success. Arrangements were made to have aircraft on call during various stages of the operations so that when infantry probing forward encountered strong enemy defences, immediate employment of close air support could be effected.

An example of the value of close support bombing was supplied at EGANS RIDGE which was an extremely strong enemy position on a commanding feature with pillboxes and underground shelters with sufficient overhead cover to withstand ordinary bombing and shelling and to make the capture of the position by an infantry assault an extremely costly action. Close support bombing was employed against this position and kept up day after day until finally a strike by stick anti-personnel bombs forced the enemy to abandon the position and no casualties were caused to our own troops in overcoming the strongest enemy position encountered during the entire operation.

In each phase of operations up to the MIVO RIVER close support bombing was employed to the full availability of aircraft as soon as targets were located. The employment of this support enabled the rapid rate of advance to be maintained and prevented the enemy from organising and constructing strong defensive lines.

#### (b) Tactical bombing

Supplementary to the close support bombing programme was the regular bombing of tactical targets located by patrols or tactical reconnaissance or received from enemy sources such as prisoners of war or captured documents.

The maximum use was also made of this form of support particularly for softening up an area of future operations and for disorganising the enemy's attempts to form a strong defensive line some distance ahead of our advance. Every such target located was engaged provided aircraft were available and ample evidence was obtained, particularly from prisoners of war, of the tremendous effect on enemy morale of this form of bombing.

All the principal outflanking moves made during the operations were preceded by an intensive softening up programme which continued while the preliminary moves were being made and assisted in concealing our intentions from the enemy.



In the diversionary actions carried out during the crossing of the HONGORAI, HARI and MOBIAI RIVERS, air strikes were employed to assist the diversions by bombing occupied positions in the areas where the diversionary troops were operating.

3 SUMMARY OF BOMBING MISSIONS

The following figures have been compiled to show the amount of air support employed during the whole of the operations of the brigade, between 22 Apr 45 and 30 Jun 45:

Number of sorties flown	2262
Categories and weights of bombs dropped	890 x 1000 lb 70 x 700 lb DC 434 x 650 lb DC 89 x 500 lb 1408 x 325 lb DC
Total weight of bombs	1723200 lb (768.7 tons)
Number of flying days	62
Days on which flying was cancelled due to weather	23 Apr 27 " 8 May 23 " 4 Jun 14 " 15 " 30 "
Average number of Corsairs against each target	16
Number of targets engaged	140

4 CASUALTIES FROM BOMBING

It is impossible to give an accurate estimate of the number of casualties caused to the enemy by the bombing programme but some indications were given by various prisoners of war who had been in positions subjected to bombing. In some cases casualties were practically nil owing to the enemy abandoning the position as soon as they saw the aircraft coming but there were many occasions when the enemy could not afford to evacuate his positions, such as EGANS RIDGE and the HARI RIVER defences: in these cases casualties inflicted were considerable.

One prisoner of war told how the position in which he and four others were stationed was completely demolished by a bomb and his four comrades and their weapons were buried under a pile of debris.

Patrols investigating positions after bombing raids frequently reported a heavy stench of dead from under the debris and fallen trees over the demolished positions and it is reasonable to assume that there were many instances such as that described by the prisoner of war. Two prisoners of war received from the COMMANDO ROAD area following a series of air strikes against strong positions along the road were extremely bomb happy, one so much so that he was incapable of any coherent speech or action and died shortly after being admitted to the MDS. The other prisoner of war stated that many men suffering from bomb and shell shock had been evacuated to rear areas. Almost all



prisoners of war admitted that the continuous bombing was breaking down morale and creating a defeatist outlook.

## 5 LONG RANGE TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS

This very important form of air support was used extensively throughout the operations and the missions were carried out by RAAF Boomerangs and Wirraways. By continuous patrolling over enemy positions, any enemy movement by day would be liable to detection and also reduced enemy movement by day along roads or tracks to almost nil.

Information supplied by tactical reconnaissance aircraft supplementary to patrol reports and enemy information from other sources enabled a very complete check to be kept on enemy movements and activities.

During the planning stages of each phase of the operations, maximum use was made of tactical reconnaissance to obtain much needed topographical information, particularly concerning tracks and the suitability of terrain for use by tanks.

In addition to their primary task of obtaining information, tactical reconnaissance aircraft were used extensively for artillery reconnaissance and particularly for counter battery targets. Early in the operations the enemy made no attempt to fire his guns during the day but was content to carry out harassing fire against occupied areas by night.

Later in the operations when he was hard pressed he began using his guns by day with forward observers so as to fire on our troops when on the move or when moving in to occupy a position. On several occasions tactical reconnaissance aircraft were able to observe the flash of guns and pinpoint them so that they could be dealt with either by bombers or artillery. On many occasions when tactical reconnaissance aircraft located enemy concentrations they were able to take immediate action against them by strafing.

## 6 AUSTER AIRCRAFT

Auster aircraft were employed throughout the operations on the following tasks:

- (a) Tactical reconnaissance
- (b) Mortar reconnaissance
- (c) Contact reconnaissance
- (d) Air cover - as protection from enemy artillery fire.

The use of Auster aircraft for mortar registration and ranging provided a very satisfactory substitute for ground observation posts which were particularly difficult to establish on account of the flat terrain encountered. Immediately on occupation of company localities mortar registrations were conducted on enemy positions and probable areas of future air strikes thereby enabling accurate registration of target areas by mortar smoke which proved to be the most satisfactory method of target indication.

The slow speed and reduced height from which the aircraft is able to operate allows for very close reconnaissance and very accurate and useful information, particularly topographical, was provided by tactical reconnaissance pilots.



One particularly valuable service given by Austers was the compiling of detailed sketches of enemy positions confronting our troops. During the advance along BUIN ROAD from RUNAI by 58/59 Aust Inf Bn sketches of each enemy position encountered were provided by the Austers in time for the infantry companies to receive them before proceeding to attack the position.

When the enemy commenced shelling by day it was found advisable to have an aircraft continuously airborne and the fact that the aircraft was in the air and could observe flash reduced enemy shelling by day to a minimum and when shelling did occur, only very few rounds were fired.

Contact reconnaissance was frequently employed to determine the location of our patrols of companies particularly after long cross-country moves where navigation was difficult. The artillery reconnaissance aircraft always provided a sure check on navigation so long as communications were available.



## APPENDIX C

### THE EMPLOYMENT OF HEAVY BOMBING TO CLEAR TIMBER AND UNDERGROWTH ASTRIDE THE AXIS OF ADVANCE ALONG THE BUIN ROAD - SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE APRIL 1945

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

The nature of the country astride the BUIN ROAD was such that visibility was restricted to a few yards. Contact with the Japanese by our troops was at 3 - 5 yards. Tanks were very restricted in their support as they could not see the enemy or enemy positions. The heavy timber restricted manoeuvre of tanks off the track to support the infantry.

It was felt that some method should be tried to open up the country along the axis of advance. In the same way as the machete and axe is employed by the infantry to clear tracks, defensive positions and fields of fire, it was thought that bombs may be employed ahead of the infantry for that purpose as an additional role to the destruction by bombing of known enemy localities.

Since these tests have been made it has been found that on advancing into heavily bombed areas the fighting has been easier, mainly because increased visibility permitted accurate fire support by supporting arms and battalion weapons.

#### 2 OBJECT

It was hoped, by the employment of heavy bombing using 1000 lb "daisy cutters" and 325 - 650 lb depth charges, to clear timber and undergrowth to increase visibility as well as to have a destructive effect on enemy positions and morale.

#### 3 RESULTS

Visibility was greatly increased both for troops and tanks. Little cratering to the track was caused mainly due to accurate bombing astride the BUIN ROAD.

Manoeuvrability of tanks was very little effected. Any trees felled by the bombing were either removed by the bulldozer or blasted through with the tank 3 inch howitzer. Troops moved around the edges of the cleared areas with the tanks in the centre along the axis of the track.

The increased visibility permitted better and more accurate fire support by tanks on any remaining enemy positions.

Artillery fire effect with concentrations on known enemy positions was greatly increased due to the clearing by bombing.

The whole general effect was that our troops were able to gain objectives on the advance with ease and with few casualties. The smashing effect on enemy morale when bombing in depth along an axis held by the enemy in a series of defended localities in depth was a great help to immediate future operations.



4 DETAILS OF EFFECT OF BOMBING

The effect of aerial bombing along the axis of BUIH ROAD between SINDOU RIVER and BIAGU THREE FORK JUNCTION, SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE in April 1945, is outlined hereunder.

- (a) Single bomb blast effect in close proximity to the track cleared an area of 40 square yards of practically all undergrowth, the only vegetation left standing was trunks of trees.
- (b) Secondary undergrowth was literally pushed back into the jungle but this in itself presented a much more difficult problem to advancing infantry. On the other hand, infantry can easily move around this tangled mass to either flank.
- (c) Visibility across the bomb blasted area was very good.
- (d) In the case of two bombs landing in close proximity to one another, one on either side of the road, the area cleared was 100 yards square.
- (e) Invariably trees up to ten and twelve inches in diameter were knocked down and presented a slight obstacle but it does not take infantry long to scramble over these logs.
- (f) In the case of trees falling across the road, difficulty was experienced in clearing the road for the passage of tanks; an engineer team with bulldozer is essential to cope with any eventuality as outlined above.

In regard to different types of vegetation experienced along the axis of advance, comparison can be drawn, as with lawyer vine and wait-a-while a definite obstacle presents itself because the bomb blast although clearing an area simply makes the immediately surrounding jungle an absolute tangled mass of prickly vine; but with dense to light secondary growth it is just blasted out of the way and does not tangle nearly so badly with the surrounding jungle.

Visibility for tanks across bomb blasted areas is very good and the tactics employed are for tanks to move along the road observing to right and left and infantry to move around the edge of the blasted area. Control is always from centre to right and left and the troop commander can direct his tank fire on to any target located on the opposite side of the blasted area with the 536B wireless.

Artillery shelling along the sides of the road was quite effective, but in some cases difficulty was experienced by advancing troops in that trees felled by artillery fire tangled badly with the existing undergrowth. This affected, to some degree, control of troops advancing and frequent checks had to be made to ensure that control was maintained.

The effect of bombing and shelling during the advance helped considerably, as since the occupation of



NOTES ON RATES OF ADVANCE IN THE JUNGLE

REPORT BY 24 AUST INF BN (AIF)

1 OBJECT

To test the rate of advance of infantry moving through different types of jungle.

2 SUMMARY

Tests were carried out in this area during the past week in measured distances up to 300 yards in different types of terrain.

The preliminary arrangements were as follows: 100 yards were paced out and a length of signal cable 100 yards in length was laid to check the distance; later 300 yards of cable was laid out and this distance was also paced.

The types of terrain covered were:

- (a) Virgin jungle with thick secondary growth, lawyer vine with intermingled undergrowth.
- (b) An area which had just been subjected to artillery shelling.
- (c) An area which had been blasted by 1000 lb bombs and depth charges.

The strength of the force used was a rifle platoon and the formation adopted was two sections up and one in reserve moving from 10 paces off the road up to 60 in the jungle.

3 RESULTS

Distance	Type of terrain	Time taken	Remarks
100 yds	thick jungle, heavy secondary growth with frequent small re-entrants and marshy patches, visibility 10 - 15 yds	6 mins 30 secs	Control difficult contact lost on some occasions
100 yds	as above	5 mins 10 secs	as above
100 yds	Jungle thinned by extensive shelling	5 mins	
100 yds	Jungle lightly shelled	6 mins	Control difficult on account of trees knocked down and which caused a tangled mass of vegetation. Short halts necessary



Distance	Type of terrain	Time taken	Remarks
100 yds	Area blasted by bombs and depth charges	10 mins 35 secs	Visibility was good across the area, but in tests troops moved around the edge and consequently took longer than if they had moved straight across.
300 yds	A combination of the above mentioned types of terrain	18 mins 30 secs	Average time 6 mins 10 secs
300 yds	as above	17 mins	Average 3 mins 40 secs
300 yds	As above but on the opposited side of the road	16 mins	Average 5 mins 20 secs

4 GENERAL

The difficulties experienced moving on a broad front are caused by the undulations in the ground and minor creeks which invariably are encountered. It also creates a problem for control by sub-unit commanders, but this can easily be overcome if all ranks practice the lessons they have previously been taught in training. Another important point is the use of voice control and section leaders and platoon commanders must shout out instructions and orders; after all, if there is artillery shelling and the noise of tanks moving in close proximity to advancing troops, a few burly voices doesn't make a great deal of difference to any surprise effect on the enemy but it does assist control.

The speed of tanks has also to be considered closely and their ability to move along a jungle track without experiencing any difficulties. It has been found in practice that very careful driving is necessary if the tanks are to remain mobile; the slightest slip in driving has in cases left the tank bogged down in drain holes dug in close to the sides of the road, this, in itself, should not hold up advancing infantry as the tank, once out of <sup>the</sup> bog, can quickly catch up to the infantry.



of the UMAMU CREEK line and BIAGU THREE FORK JUNCTION patrols to front and flanks have located several large well developed Japanese defensive positions recently occupied and vacated by the enemy.

Tests for the advance of infantry through different types of undergrowth on a broad front are being held in this area and this will bring out many very important and valuable points, especially the rate of advance and the coordination of times in respect to an artillery barrage or a series of timed concentrations.



15 AUST INF BDE

OPERATION ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS

OPERATIONS - PURIATA RIVER to HONGORAI RIVER - SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE

SECRET

15 AUST INF BDE OP INSTR 5

Copy No . . .

31 Mar 45

Ref Maps : 1/25000 series  
1 in series

INFM

- 1 (a) All available infm indicates that the enemy will stage his main battle in the area between HONGORAI and HARI rivers and will fight a series of delay-ing actions WEST of HONGORAI river in order to gain time for regrouping of forces and completion of def works.
- (b) Regrouping of forces in the area PURIATA river -- HONGORAI river is being effected by 3 Aust Div as follows:

MOV

- 2 (a) Mov will be effected by either of the following means:
  - (i) MT from TOROKINA to MAWARAKA, ALC 20 to MOTUPENA PT; thence march route to TOKO;
  - (ii) MT from TOROKINA to MAWARAKA thence LCT or ALC 20, if surf permits, to TOKO;
  - (iii) LCT from TOROKINA to TOKO.
- (b) Future mov will probably be by coy, etc, gps.

3 Date of Mov

- (a) 3 Aust Div priority of mov places units of 15 Aust Inf Bde as follows:

Priority	Unit	Present Locat- Locat- ion	Locat- ion on arrival	Under comd on arrival
1	Flamethrower Pl 15 Aust Inf Bde	TOROKINA	TOKO	7 Aust Inf Bde
16	Elements HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde	"	845480	
19	58/59 Aust Inf Bn	"	835477	15 Aust Inf Bde
22	Balance HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde	"	845480	
23	57/60 Aust Inf Bn	"	855477	15 Aust Inf Bde



- (b) Mov is dependant on availability of ldg craft and progress of rd constr. Warning will be issued NOT less than 24 hrs before mov.

RECCE PARTIES

- 4 Will proceed to TOKO as advised by this HQ and be accommodated by area comd TOKO.

Separate instrs have been issued for mov 24 Aust Inf Bn.

ADM

5 Accn

- (a) Only a limited scale of tentage will be taken initially on a basis of a maximum of 3 complete tents and 3 additional flys per coy.

- (b) At a later date it may be possible to move more tentage to the fwd area.

6 Water

- (a) Reports indicate that water in PURIATA river is suitable for drinking and washing purposes, but MUST be chlorinated.

- (b) Water may be obtained from wells sunk to a depth of 3 to 5 ft.

7 Ann

- (a) Units will move with first line ann.

- (b) Future replenishment will be through DID TOKO.

8 POL and Expense Stores

- (a) Units will move with 4 days maint and 3 days res unless otherwise ordered.

- (b) Future maint from DID TOKO.

9 Sups

- (a) Each coy, etc will move with 4 days SWPA rations for maint and 3 days res unless otherwise ordered.

- (b) Future maint issues will be drawn from DID TOKO.

- (c) It is anticipated that a fd bky will shortly be in op at TOKO.

10 Blankets

- (a) One blanket per man will be carried.

- (b) Only anti-mite treated blankets will be taken fwd.



11 Eqpt and dress

Full marching order will be carried in accordance with bde standard pack.

12 Med

- (a) Lt sec CCS MAWARAKA
- (b) MDS TOKO
- (c) ADS TOKO
- (d) Evac from MDS TOKO is by ALC to lt sec CCS MAWARAKA, or direct by ALC to TOROKINA thence by amb car to 2/1 Aust Gen Hosp TOROKINA.

13 Repair and rec

- (a) Until arrival of 266 Aust LAD in TOKO, all repairs will be handled by LAD secs with units as far as possible.
- (b) In the event of these secs being unable to deal with specific repairs, arrangements have been made with OC 241 Aust LAD (att HQ 7 Aust Inf Bde TOKO) for evac to 104 Aust Bde Wksp MAWARAKA, for replacement of damaged assemblies.
- (c) Should armourers be unable to deal with repair of weapons, arrangements may be made through OC 241 Aust LAD for an armourer sec to be sent fwd from 104 Aust Bde Wksp.

14 Ord

- (a) An ord dump is to be est at TOKO.
- (b) Units will indent in the normal manner through BOO/BOWO and requirements will be met through this dump.
- (c) In emergency, arrangements may be made through this HQ for ord stores to be dropped by air.

15 Pro

One sec 3 Aust Div Pro Coy will be att from 31 Mar 45.

16 Canteen

A canteen issuing pt is to be est at TOKO.

17 Engr stores

Engrs stores dump is to be est at TOKO.

18 LOB area

Separate instrs issued.

19 Rd Reports

Issued separately (vide this HQ G734 of 27 Mar 45).

ACK



Signed at 1300L  
Issued by SDR and DR

F D H WALKY  
Capt for Maj  
BM 15 Aust Inf Bde

DISTRIBUTION

	<u>Copy No</u>
24 Aust Inf Bn (AIF)	1
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	2
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	3
15 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec (AIF)	4
14 pl 2/1 Aust Cd Regt	5
15 Aust Fd Amb (AIF)	6
266 Aust LAD (AIF)	7
Comd	8
BM	9
SC	10
T.O.	11
I's	12
TO	13
File	14 - 15
War Diary	16 - 17



MESSAGE FORM

FROM 15 inf bde APR 051140L  
TO 24 inf bn 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn  
INFO adv 3 div 15 fd amb  
COPIES COMD BM SC

---

GS130. SECRET. op instr 6. ref map 1/25000 series.  
15 inf bde will provide L of C protection WEST of PURIATA  
river as follows. bdy between 24 inf bn and 58/59 inf bn  
EAST WEST line through MCKINNAS br 838479 incl to 24 inf bn  
. 24 inf bn remain present location with following tasks.  
one. as ordered by adv 3 div. two. CO to recce suitable  
site for HQ 15 inf bde in sq 8347. 58/59 inf bn move present  
location under mutual arrangement adv 3 div to following  
locations. bn less three rifle coys BARARA area 855504.  
one coy G.LVINS CROSSING 870488. one coy BARNES CROSSING  
898515. one coy clearing area sqs 8751 8752. probable tasks.  
one. protect L of C WEST of 7 inf bde. two. patrol EAST to  
maint contact with units 7 inf bde. three. clear out enemy  
WEST of PURIATA river. 57/60 inf bn will conc ELWARAKA  
763615. details mov and tasks to be advised later. 15 inf  
bde adv party to move present location under arrangements  
adv 3 div to area WEST of PURIATA river in sq 8347 and  
est HQ 15 inf bde ready for occupation by mon 9 apr. ACK  
all infm

---

If liable to be intercepted or fall into enemy hands, this msg must be sent IN CIPHER

Originator's instrs  
Degree of Priority

Signed H G ROBSON Maj



SECRET

15 AUST INF BDE OO 3

Copy No . . .

Ref Map: 1/25000 series

16 Apr 45

INFM

1 Enemy

- (a) Following his series of attacks in the SLATERS KNOLL area, the enemy has withdrawn to the gen line of the HONGORAI river where it is assumed that he is reorganising his forces. Between the HONGORAI and PURIATA rivers there are still parties of enemy, some of which are remnants of the attacking force and some of which appear to be organised parties sent out to gain infm and to delay our adv to the HONGORAI river.
- (b) Except for possible small isolated parties who have been cut off and are living in native gardens, the area WEST of the PURIATA river is clear of the enemy.
- (c) As yet, no definite infm has been obtained of the enemy's disposns and the reorg of his units following the unsuccessful op.

Att as Appx B is an estimate of enemy str by units and areas after allowance has been made for cas inflicted in the recent enemy attacks.

2 Likely enemy action

- (a) It is possible that the enemy will resist strongly our occupation of the HATAI track junc and our clearing of the lateral track to HATAI. He may op:
  - (i) WEST along the main BUIN road;
  - (ii) WEST along the secret HATAI trail;
  - (iii) Harass our forces on the HATAI track junc from the NORTH along the axis of the HATAI lateral track.
- (b) A strong reaction can be expected immediately WEST of and around the HONGORAI crossings. It is possible that tk K mines and tk A guns may be employed by the enemy between the HATAI lateral track and the HONGORAI river.
- (c) Arty concs can be expected in the adv. It is almost certain that the enemy registered prominent topographical objects such as the HATAI track junc, DAWE creek, HIRUHIRU, etc. These target areas should be avoided where possible.

3 Own tps

(a) 2/8 Aust Cdo Sqn

2/8 Aust Cdo Sqn is patrolling to obtain infm and carry out tasks with the following priority:

- (1) Recce of the NUMBER 2 GOVERNMENT rd EAST of the HONGORAI river to determine the



capabilities of the rd for use by MF and  
tks;

- (ii) Recce of enemy defts along the HONGORAI river between NUMBER 2 GOVERNMENT rd and BUIN rd to locate any prepared posns, apty disposns, or tk defts;
- (iii) Recce area EAST of HONGORAI river between NUMBER 2 GOVERNMENT rd and BUIN rd to the gen line KINDO - TAITAI - UNANAI - HARI river junc 999372 for gen topographical infm, location of enemy L of C, location of enemy dumps or staging posts, and locating enemy HQ with a view to raiding it.

- (b) Special roles allotted incl recce of OSO area, raiding parties and ambushes on enemy L of C to attempt to obtain PW.

4 Tps under comd

See OOB att as Appx D

5 Tps in sp

See OOB att as Appx D

6 Topographical infm

- (a) Rd TOKO - GALVINS CROSSING - HONGORAI CROSSING at 943434 known as BUIN rd.
- (b) Trail RUMIKI running EAST and parallel to main BUIN rd - known as NUMBER 2 GOVERNMENT rd.
- (c) Air dropping ground at 869485 - known as GALVINS DZ.
- (d) Air dropping ground at 877474 - known as KERO DZ.

INTENTION

- 7 15 Aust Inf Bde will secure the line of HONGORAI river from coast to incl track junc at 975494.

METHOD

8 Summary

- (a) At present the 15 Aust Inf Bde have 24 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns operating on the TOKO - BUIN rd just EAST of PURIATA river.
- (b) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn is at MAWARAKA.
- (c) 9 Aust Inf Bn is operating in the HATAI - RUMIKI area and the inter bde bdy between 7 and 15 Aust Inf Bdes is as per Appx A att.
- (d) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn is to be relieved shortly by one bn 29 Aust Inf Bde then 57/60 Aust Inf Bn will become available for the relief of 9 Aust Inf Bn in the HATAI - RUMIKI area.



9 Tps and roles

(a) 24 Aust Inf Bn

- (i) Located SHINRU river astride main BUIN - TOKO rd;
- (ii) In sp two tps of B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt and one bty 2 Aust Fd Regt:  
will  
continue adv as ordered from SHINRU river area to secure crossings of HONGORAI river at 943434;

Probable bounds in the adv to HONGORAI river will be:

- HATAI track junc at 892463;  
Track jun HIRUHERU area 912445;  
HONGORAI crossing at 943434.
- (iii) Lateral responsibilities:

Clear the HATAI track from the HATAI track junc incl to the junc 9 Aust Inf Bn on the northern flank in the HATAI area;

Patrol NORTH along the HONGORAI river to est contact with northern bn;

Patrol SOUTH along HONGORAI river to incl junc HONGORAI - POROREI rivers.

- (iv) Further orders will be issued from time to time in accordance with the situation.

(b) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn

- (i) Located at MAWARAKA;
- (ii) With in sp one bty 2 Aust Fd Regt  
will

On being relieved by one bn 29 Aust Inf Bde move from MAWARAKA to relieve 9 Aust Inf Bn in area HATAI - RUMIKI;

Protection of northern flank on NORTH of main 15 Aust Inf Bde adv EAST along BUIN rd;

Continue adv from HATAI - RUMIKI area to secure probable crossings over HONGORAI river in sqs 9749, 9548, 9648;

Patrol NORTH along line HONGORAI river to SINANAI and SOUTH to contact leading bn astride main BUIN rd;

Further orders will be issued on relief of 9 Aust Inf Bn.

(c) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn

- (i) Located NORTH of KERO creek astride BUIN rd;
- (ii) With in sp one bty 2 Aust Fd Regt and one tp 2/4 Aust Armd Regt; as bde res will:  
will

Protect areas WEST of 24 Aust Inf Bn to the line of PURLATA river along gen line BUIN - TOKO rd;

Assist in constr and main of jeep track along TOKO - BUIN rd;

Control KERO DZ.



10 Future tasks

On securing the line HONGORAI river 15 Aust Inf Bde will adv to the line of the HARI river.

11 Patrolling policy

- (a) Patrolling bdys between 7 and 15 Aust Inf Bns as shown vide Appx A att.
- (b) HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde will issued a patrolling policy within the bde from time to time.
- (c) Units will be responsible for their own local patrolling and arranging their own patrol tasks in addition to those instructed by this HQ.
- (d) ANGAU native and NGIB patrols will be given patrol tasks in accordance with the bde patrolling policy.
- (e) Units may request NGIB patrols or guides or the assistance of ANGAU guides or patrols in coop with unit patrols.
- (f) The gen policy will be for NGIB and ANGAU patrols to op well fwd of unit patrols.

12 Tks

- (a) 7 and 9 tps B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt are in sp of 24 Aust Inf Bn. 8 tp is located with 58/59 Aust Inf Bn as a bde res.
- (b) HQ B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt is to be est in GALVINS DZ area for tk maint.
- (c) Bulldozer and engr teams will op with fwd tps.  
tp
- (d) Each tk tp will ground one tk/offr for mov with inf to control tk sp.
- (e) Effective tk str will be notified to the unit concerned and this HQ daily at 1800L.
- (f) Tks will bivouac under inf protection at all times. Tk personnel will be responsible for normal local protection.
- (g) In an emergency tk comms may be used by inf for conveying important infm.

13 Arty

- (a) Units may expect full regt cones plus U Aust Hy Bty on suitable targets.
- (b) Requests for sp in addition to one bty may be made to Arty LO at this HQ or bty LO at unit HQ.
- (c) A minimum of 2 FOOs will be maint at each fwd bn and they may be used as FOOs on patrols.
- (d) Requests for a further allotment of FOOs may be made.



- (e) Arty bty LOs will be att to each fwd unit HQ.
- (f) Separate comms by LT or RT will be maint from FOOs to btys. Inf channels to be used only in the case of necessity. Inf may use arty means of comm when necessary.
- (g) Arty R is available for shooting suitable tasks.

14 Engrs

- (a) The OC engr det 15 Aust Fd Coy at this HQ is responsible for coord of inf unit pnr and work parties, and native lab when available, in the constr of jeep track behind leading bn along the BUIN rd.
- (b) Engr bulldozer parties will be att to each tp of tks for the clearance of obstacles, they are to be given inf protection.
- (c) Engr advice will be available for any other tasks required by units.
- (d) 15 Aust Fd Coy engrs in sp of 15 Aust Inf Bde are constructing a 3 ton rd parallel to the TOKO - BUIN track.

15 Air

- (a) Close sp by bombing and strafing may be requested by units to this HQ.
- (b) Air requests may be made in accordance with our G514 of 7 Jan 45.
- (c) Close air sp will NOT normally be requested for targets which can be dealt with by arty except in cases where by cons of fire are required.
- (d) Tac R is available at a minimum of 1 hr notice.
- (e) Auster aircraft is available for tac R observation or unit comd recee.
- (f) Auster aircraft limitations are:
  - (i) Minimum height - 800 ft to tree top, recee usually at tree top height;
  - (ii) Range - 2000 yds fwd of fwd patrols;
  - (iii) Flying time - 1 hr 20 mins maximum.
- (g) This HQ and 3 Aust Div will request air sp for targets other than close sp.

16 A Coy NG Inf Bn

- (a) 4 and 5 pls are available for long range patrolling; their main tasks will be given by this HQ, but units may request for NGIB patrols for specific tasks or for guides to previously patrolled areas by NGIB.
- (b) Units may be requested to sup selected offrs or NCOs for temporary relief of NGIB European personnel.



17 Det ANGLU

- (a) About 30 natives recruited from the villages in the area between PURIITA and HONGORAI rivers are available as guides or for patrols to specific areas; they are usually employed in pairs or greater str.
- (b) They are NOT specially trained but are anti-Jap.
- (c) An ANGLU European interpreter is available to 24 Aust Inf Bn for advice.
- (d) CG ANGLU Det will maintain close contact with this HQ and may suggest tasks.
- (e) They are NOT available for lab and when in unit areas must be given unit protection.

18 15 Aust Inf Bde Flaethrower Pl

At present in sp of 24 Aust Inf Bn; it will be reallocated as considered necessary by this HQ.

19 FELO Front Line Broadcasting Unit

Are now in this area and available for ops by direction this HQ or on unit requests.

ADM

20 Water

- (a) Units will est WPs in own areas from either wells or streams.
- (b) All water must be suitably treated before consumption.

21 Ann

- (a) All units will maint first line ann.
- (b) Daily expenditure as at 1800L will be advised to Bde HQ by 2000L.
- (c) Excessive expenditure will be advised as soon as possible.
- (d) Maint as follows:
  - (i) 24 Aust Inf Bn - draw from DID GALVINS LZ until KERO DZ est, when maint will be by air dropping;
  - (ii) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn - H.T.H.I area - maint by air dropping;
  - (iii) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn - draw from DID GALVINS DZ until KERO DZ est.

22 POL

- (a) Res 3 gals per veh to be maint.
- (b) Maint as follows:
  - (i) 24 Aust Inf Bn - on demand from DID GALVINS DZ until KERO DZ est. Thereafter maint be air dropping



- (ii) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn - HATAI area - maint by air dropping.
- (iii) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn - on demand from DID GALVINS DZ until KERO DZ est.

23 Supps

(a) 24 Aust Inf Bn

- (i) Maint daily from DID GALVINS DZ until KERO DZ est, thereafter daily maint by air dropping
- (ii) Res of 5 days SWPA and 2 days FOR.

(b) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn - HATAI area

- (i) Daily maint by air dropping
- (ii) Res of 5 days SWPA and 2 days FOR

(c) 58/49 Aust Inf Bn

- (i) Daily maint from DID GALVINS DZ until KERO DZ est.
- (ii) Res 3 days SWPA 1 day FOR until further advised.

(d) Bde tps

- (i) Daily maint from DID GALVINS DZ.
- (ii) Res 3 days SWPA or native equivalent where applicable.

24 Med

- (a) Lt sec 11 Aust Fd Amb 878473 - KERO DZ
- (b) Staging post 839481 - MCKINNA br
- (c) LBS TOKO
- (d) Evac from RHP by jeep amb car or native carrier to 874484 (NORTH of SLITERS KNOLL) thence by amb car.
- (e) 50 native carriers available for evac, and will be allotted on priority on demand from this HQ.

25 Repair and rec

- (a) 266 Aust LAD at 872486 - GALVINS DZ.
- (b) 113 Aust Bde Wksp TOKO.
- (c) Requests for rec to be advised to this HQ.

26 Ord

- (a) Adv 3 Aust Div ord dump
- (b) Demands for ord stores to be advised to this HQ.
- (c) Urgently required ord stores if NOT available Adv 3 Aust Div ord dump will be dropped by air.
- (d) All ord stores required by 57/60 Aust Inf Bn on arrival DARARA - BIRNES CROSSING area will be dropped by air in appropriate DZs.

27 Sal

- (a) Following units evac to Bde Sal dump at 872486 - GALVINS DZ
  - Bde tps
  - 24 Aust Inf Bn
  - 58/59 Aust Inf Bn



- (b) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn to evac to 3 Aust Div Sal  
Dump by jeep.

28 TC

(a) Ptsmen

- (i) Track junc 874484
- (ii) SLATERS KNOLL 874482
- (iii) Entrance KERO DZ 879475

(b) Rd patrol

- (i) From track junc 874484 to KERO DZ 879475
- (ii) Duties to signpost detours if necessary and  
to control traffic as may be required by engrs.

29 PW

Bde PW cage opens 972486 at 0800L 17 Apr.

30 Canteen

- (a) Canteen issuing pt is to open TOKO approx 18 Apr.
- (b) Requests for air dropping canteen stores to be  
advised to this HQ.

31 Postal

- (a) FPO 160 - 872486 - GALVINS DZ.
- (b) Outwards mail closes FPO 0900L daily.

32 Engr stores

- (a) Bde engr stores dump to be est at 872486 - GALVINS  
DZ.
- (b) 3 Aust Div engr stores dump 53 Aust Fd Pk Coy TOKO.
- (c) Engr stores may be dropped by air on request to  
this HQ.

33 Burials

(a) Own dead

- (i) 3 Aust Div is to est a war cemetery.  
Location will be advised.
- (ii) Other dead will be buried in fwd area, and  
graves prominently marked.
- (iii) AF W3314 will be submitted.

(b) Enemy dead

Bodies will NOT be evac but will be buried in  
nearest suitable site.

34 Air dropping

- (a) Following may be dropped by air on request:

Amn	Engr stores
POL	Ord stores
Sups	Canteen stores

- (b) Requests for air droppings to be notified to Bde  
HQ by 2000L 2 days before drop required.



35 Native lab

Requests for native lab to be advised to bde HQ by 1400L daily.

36 Tpt

Requests for tpt to be advised to Bde HQ by 1400L daily.

INTERCOMM

37 Bde HQ at present located 878466. Alterations in location and times of closing and opening will be advised.

38 Line

Line providing telephony and telegraphy comm is at present installed as under:

- (a) Direct line from Bde HQ to each bn.
- (b) Lateral line from 24 Aust Inf Bn to 58/59 Aust Inf Bn.

During the adv along BUIN rd, line will be maint to all bns and a lateral line provided between the two fwd bns. On the opening of HQ, fullerphone comms will be est immediately the line is connected. Bns will NOT tee-in subscribers such as B Echls on Bde trunks without authority from this HQ.

39 Wireless

One No 11 set and 2 cps from 15 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec is att to each bn. These sets will remain under comd of and move with bns.

40 DRLS

At present DRLS departs from Bde HQ at 1000L and 1500L daily. Alterations due to changes in locations will be advised.

41 Pigeons

- (a) Two pigeon lofts are est at Adv HQ 3 Aust Div.
- (b) Requirements will be advised to Bde Sig Offr, when possible, 24 hrs in adv.
- (c) Msgs carried will be fwd from Adv HQ 3 Aust Div through normal channels.

42 Eqpt

Bde Sig offr will coord distribution of WSS 208 Mk 2, 108 Mk 3, cables and teles.

43 Att as Appx C is copy of sig diagram as at 161200L Apr 45.

ACK

H G ROBSON  
Maj  
BM 15 Aust Inf Bde

Issued by LO and DR

Signed at 1545L



DISTRIBUTION

	<u>Copy No</u>
24 Aust Inf Bn (AIF)	1
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	2
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	3
15 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec (AIF)	4
14 pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt	5
15 Aust Inf Bde Flamethrower Pl	6
B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt	7 - 10
Sec 15 Aust Fd Coy	11
A Coy NGIB Less one pl	12
266 Aust LAD (AIF)	13
Det 3 Aust Div Pro Coy	14
det ANGAU	15
Comd	16
BM	17
SC	18
7 Aust Inf Bde	19 - 20
29 Aust Inf Bde	21
2 Aust Fd Regt	22
U Aust Hy Bty	23
15 Aust Fd Coy	24
11 Aust Fd Amb	25
File	26 - 27
War Diary	28 - 29



APPENDIX B  
to 15 Aust Inf  
Bde 00 3  
of 16 Apr 45

Copy No . . .

REVISED ESTIMATE OF ENEMY STR INCL ARBITRARY ALLOTMENT  
OF CAS

1 The following estimate of enemy strs is based on the most recent infm available.

2 Allotment of the reduction of str estimated at 1000 (ref 3 Aust Div Daily Summary Number 132) has been made in accordance with the share each unit is believed to have had in the fighting. This will be subject to correction as definite int becomes available; meantime, the figures are put fwd merely as a working basis.

3 UNITS INVOLVED IN FIGHTING

Unit	Number committed	Estimated cas	Balance of attack forces	Number uncommitted	Present str
13 Inf Regt	300	250	50	20	70
23 Inf Regt	530	360	170	490	660
6 Fd Arty	550	300	250	150	400
4 Med Arty	150	20	130	350	480
6 Engr	150	30	120	20	140
19 Indep Engr	150	20	130	150	280
6 Tpt	100	20	80	250	330
	1930	1000	930	1430	2360

4 UNITS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED

6 Div Adv HQ 100 100  
Div units 530 530

TOTAL ALL UNITS FWD OF MIVO 2990

BUIN grn 3860

TOTAL SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE 6850

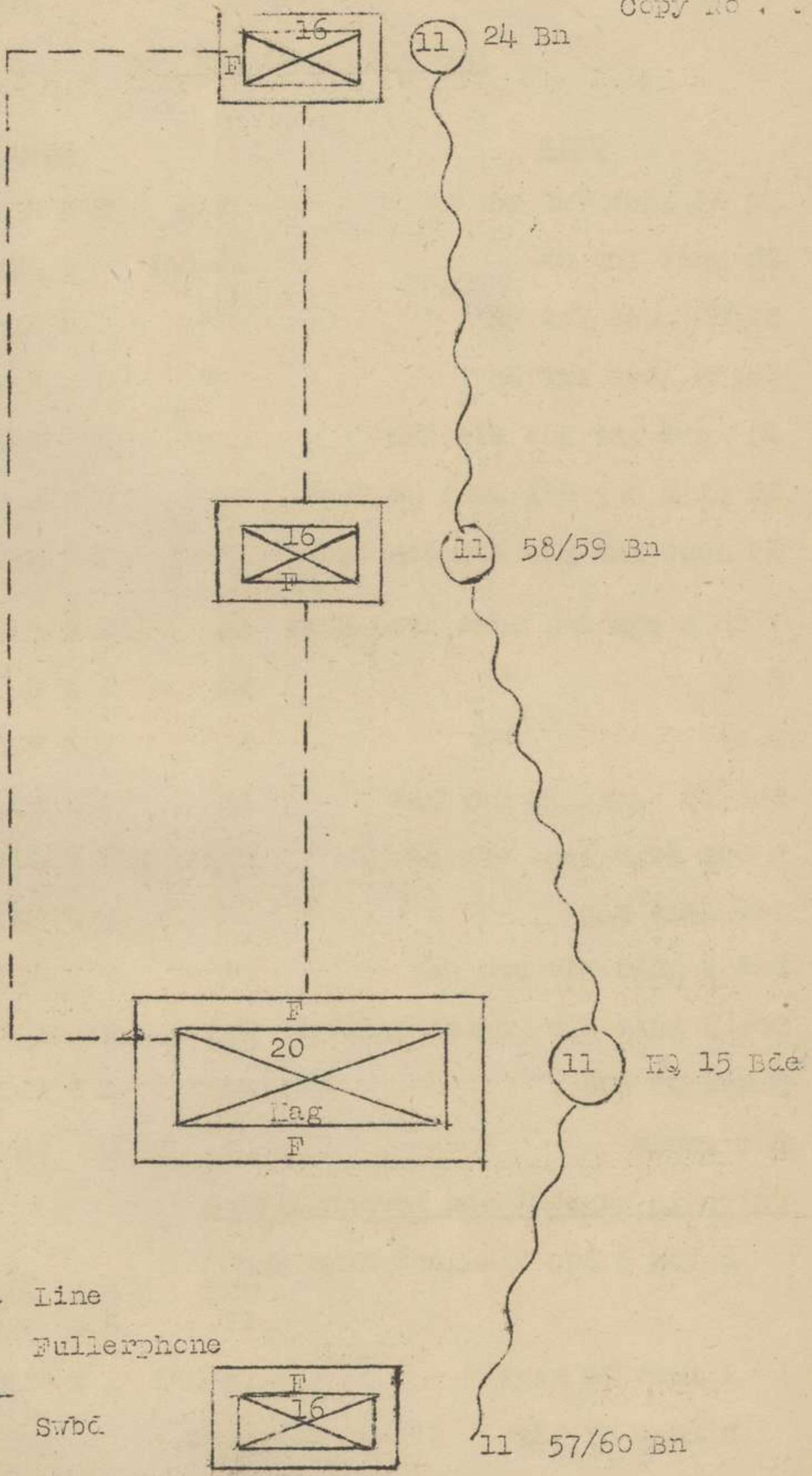


SECRET

APPENDIX C  
to 15 Aust Inf Bde  
Doc 3

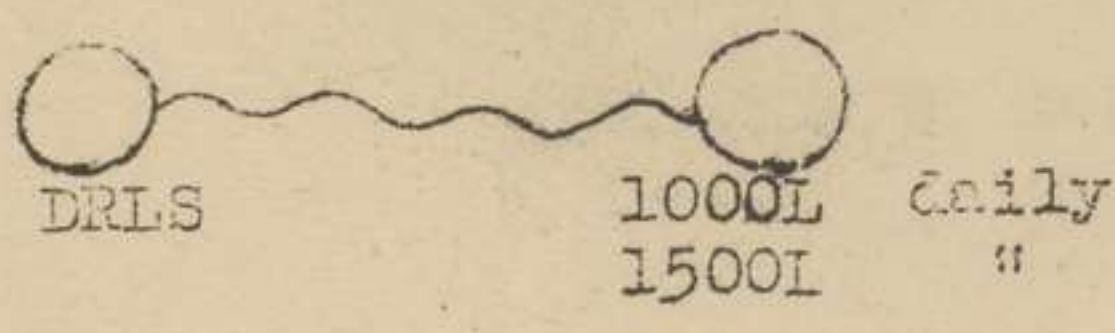
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SIGNAL DIAGRAM  
15 AUST INF BDE



LEGEND

- Line
- F Fullerphone
- [Box with X] Swb



CORRECTED TO 161200L APR  
R BOWDEN Capt  
OC 15 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec



APPENDIX D  
to 15 Aust Inf  
Bde OC 3 of  
16 Apr 45

OOB - 15 AUST INF BDE

Copy No . . .

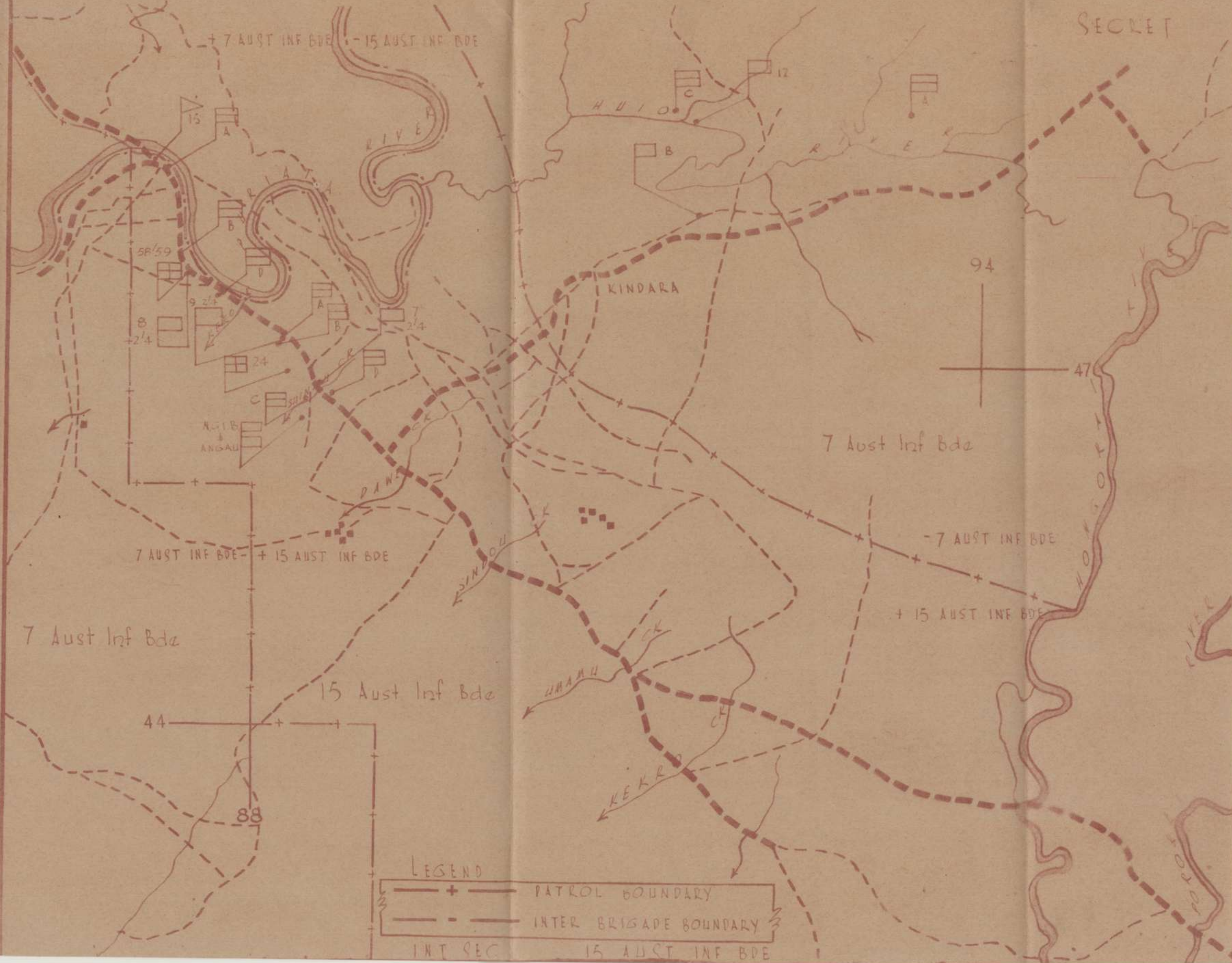
<u>Unit</u>		<u>Commander</u>
HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde	Brig	H H HAMMER
24 Aust Inf Bn	Lt-Col	A J ANDERSON
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	"	P G C WEBSTER
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	"	W M HAYBERRY
15 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec	Capt	R BOWDEN
14 pl D Coy 2/1 Aust Gd Regt	Lt	G R LINE
15 Aust Inf Bde Flamethrower Pl	Lt	I McLEAN
7 tp B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt	Lt	R G SCOTT
8 tp "	Lt	L W YLRITH
9 tp "	Lt	L E FORSYTH
Sec 15 - Aust Fd Coy RAE	Lt	G M DOWNING
A Coy NGIB less one pl	Capt	L R P JOHNSON
266 Aust LAD	"	L J BRENCHLEY
Det 3 Aust Div Pro Coy	Lt	F HUGGINS
Det 3 Aust Div Postal Unit	Sgt	F HOEY
E Sec 63 ADU	Capt	A P PLUMMER
Det ANGAU	Lt	H ROBERTS

Units in support and Personalities

2 tps B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt	Maj	K M H ARNOTT	
	Lt	J A ALLARD	Adm Comd
2 Aust Fd Regt	Lt-Col	A E PARKER	
U Aust Hy Bty	Capt	MCKINNA	
15 Aust Fd Coy RAE	Maj	J G NEEDHAM	
11 Aust Fd Amb	Lt-Col	J M BLAIR	



SECRET





SECRET

15 AUST INF BDE OO 4

Copy No . . .

16 Apr 45

Ref Map: 1/25000 series

Confirming ~~verbal~~ orders issued by Bde Comd to 24 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns at 1400L 16 Apr 45.

INFM

1 Enemy

- (a) Contacts have been made in the area 891462, str approx 50 and a series of contacts have been made EAST of HATAI track junc SOUTH to and incl ULLMU creek astride BUIN rd.
- (b) Arty gun posns are suspected in areas 914456, 921448, 925444.

2 Own tps

9 Aust Inf Bn (7 Aust Inf Bde) are operating in HATAI - RUMIKI area.

3 Air

Tac R aircraft will be operating from 170815L to 171430L.

INTENTION

- 4 15 Aust Inf Bde will attack and capture HATAI track junc area on 17 Apr 45 with a view to opening up a lateral track to HATAI.

METHOD

5 Summary

- (a) 24 Aust Inf Bn will capture and occupy the HATAI track junc area to NE along the HATAI track to track junc 903472 both incl.
- (b) 24 Aust Inf Bn will consolidate with fwd localities immediately EAST of a line along DIWE creek.
- (c) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn will be in res and move EAST to a line along the SHINRU river.

6 Fwd tps

24 Aust Inf Bn with in sp,

7 and 9 tps B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt  
two btys and one tp 2 Aust Fd Regt  
U Aust Hy Bty  
Det 15 Aust Fd Coy  
15 Aust Inf Bde Flamethrower pl  
Det 3 Aust Div Pro Coy



(a) Objectives

- (i) Garden area 892461 to track junc area 903472 both incl;
- (ii) One coy will move by direct route from SHINRU river to a posn astride H.TAI track at track junc area 903472.

(b) Exploitation

- (i) Exploit fwd of objectives if necessary to clear enemy localities harassing consolidation;
- (ii) Be prepared to exploit fwd on 18 Apr 45 to a line of SINDOU creek area at 899454.
- (iii) Exploit NORTH along H.TAI track to junc with 9 Aust Inf Bn;
- (iv) Further details later.

(c) Reorg

Reorg of posn on capture of objective will be EAST of the line of DAWE creek and incl BUIN rd. garden area at 894464 - track junc 903472.

(d) Patrols

- to (i) KINDARA
- (ii) HIRUHIRU area at 898458
- (iii) OLD TOKINOTU area at 895455.

(e) H hr and timings

To be fixed by CO 24 Aust Inf Bn and notified to tps in sp, 58/59 Aust Inf Bn and this HQ.

(f) Axis of adv

EAST along gen line BUIN rd.

7 Res tps

- (a) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn with in sp 8 tp B Sqn 2/4 Aust Arm'd Regt.

(b) Tasks

- (i) Adv in rear 24 Aust Inf Bn and occupy 24 Aust Inf Bn present area along line SHINRU river.
- (ii) Occupy def area SHINRU river NORTH to along BUIN rd to SLATERS KNOLL.

(c) Patrols

During arty concs and throughout 17 Apr 45 patrol to both flanks to protect 24 Aust Inf Bn.

- (i) KINDARA - employ NGIB and ANGLU guides
- (ii) SHINRU river - track 890473 - H.TAI track 896469
- (iii) TOKINOTU 884463 - OLD TOKINOTU area and contact 24 Aust Inf Bn right flank at garden area 892461
- (iv) Continue normal patrolling as for 15 Apr 45.



8 Liaison pts

58/59 Aust Inf Bn will est contact with coys  
24 Aust Inf Bn on objectives.

9 Guides

(a) Both 24 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns may contact  
NGIB and det ANGLU direct for guides.

(b) 24 Aust Inf Bn gain first priority.

10 Arty

Details of arty sp will be arranged direct  
with 2 Aust Fd Regt.

11 Tk A

Proportion of tk A weapons will be moved fwd  
early during reorg.

12 Engrs

Det of 15 Aust Fd Coy with engr and bulldozer  
team will move with tk tps, continue maint and constr  
of jeep track to H.TAI junc and be prepared to build  
lateral track to H.TAI area.

13 NGIB

(a) Will patrol to UMLMU creek area and report any  
enemy localities along BUIN rd between UMLMU creek  
and SINDOU creek 899454. This patrol will move  
SOUTH of the BUIN rd and in accordance with  
timings given by CO 24 Aust Inf Bn.

(b) Patrol from SHINRU river - track junc 903472  
to garden area 913456 thence UMLMU creek returning  
to SHINRU river area SOUTH of BUIN rd. This  
patrol to move well in adv of left fwd coy of  
24 Aust Inf Bn.

(c) Provide NGIB protection to native carriers moving  
with left fwd coy 24 Aust Inf Bn.

(d) Liaise with COs 24 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns  
17 Apr 45.

14 Jeep track constr

Unit pnr pls will continue jeep track maint and  
constr to H.TAI track junc and 58/59 Aust Inf Bn will  
sup patrol maint teams to op from SLATERS KNOLL fwd  
to SHINRU river to maint existing corduroy and to  
repair track NOT corduroyed.

DM

15 Adm instrs issued separately.

INTERCOMN

16 (a) Adv HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde will be temporarily est  
at vacated 24 Aust Inf Bn site, at a time to be  
advised.

(b) HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde will remain 878466







15 AUST INF BDE ADM INSTR 9/45  
(Issued with 15 Aust Inf Bde 00 4)

COPY NO . . .

16 Apr 45

Ref Map: 1/25000 series

1 GEN

This order covers adm arrangements for adv to HNTAI junc.

2 WATER

To be drawn from unit WPs.

3 MMN

- (a) First line to be carried
- (b) Replenishment DID GALVINS DZ

4 POL

- (a) 8 gals res per veh
- (b) Replenishment DID GALVINS DZ

5 SUPS

- (a) Res of 5 days SWPA and 2 days FOR to be carried by 24 Aust Inf Bn
- (b) Res of 3 days SWPA and 1 day FOR to be carried by 58/59 Aust Inf Bn
- (c) Maint from DID GALVINS DZ until KERO DZ est
- (d) Maint drop for 24 Aust Inf Bn on KERO DZ 17 Apr.

6 MED

- (a) Lt sec 11 Aust Fd Amb KERO DZ 878473
- (b) Car post DID GALVINS DZ
- (c) Lt sec 11 Aust Fd Amb MCKINNA br 839481
- (d) MDS TOKO
- (e) Evac from RAP to lt sec KERO DZ unit responsibility
- (f) 30 Natives will be available as from 0800L 17 Apr 45 to carry badly wounded stretcher cases from lt sec at KERO DZ to car post DID GALVINS DZ
- (g) All other cas will be evac to car post by jeep amb.

7 TC

- (a) Pts men
  - (i) Track junc 874484
  - (ii) SLATERS KNOLL 874482
  - (iii) Entrance KERO DZ
- (b) Patrol  
Patrol 874484 to KERO DZ 879475 from 0630L to 1830L



8 PRO

3 pro will be allotted to 24 Aust Inf Bn as from 1200L 17 Apr 45.

9 PW

PW cage opens G.LVINS DZ at 0800L 17 Apr 45.

10 BURIALS

(a) Own dead

- (i) All burials will be in fd
- (ii) Graves will be located as close as possible to main track and, if possible, in gps
- (iii) All graves to be clearly marked
- (iv) AF W3314 to be submitted giving exact map refs and, if possible, sketch of locality.

(b) Enemy dead

All burials to be in the fd.

11 NATIVE CARRIERS

(a) 32 natives for stretcher teams will report to 24 Aust Inf Bn B Ech 0730L 17 Apr 45.

(b) 30 natives as carriers will report 24 Aust Inf Bn at 1730L 17 Apr 45.

ACK

Issued by LO & DRLS

F D H WRAY Capt  
SC 15 Aust Inf Bde

Signed at 162015L

DISTRIBUTION

Copy No

24 Aust Inf Bn (AIF)	1
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	2
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	3
15 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec (AIF)	4
14 pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt	5
15 Aust Inf Bde Flamethrower Pl	6
B Sqn 2/4 Aust Arm'd Regt	7 - 10
Sec 15 Aust Fd Coy	11
A Coy NGIB less one pl	12
266 Aust LAD (AIF)	13
Det 3 Aust Div Pro Coy	14
Det ANGLU	15
Comd	16
BM	17
SC	18
7 Aust Inf Bde	19 - 20
29 Aust Inf Bde	21
2 Aust Fd Regt	22
U Aust Hy Bty	23
15 Aust Fd Coy	24
11 Aust Fd Amb	25
File	26 - 27
War diary	28 - 29



15 MUST INF BDE OP INSTR 7

Copy No . .

20 Apr 45

Ref Maps: 1/25000 series

Confirmation of verbal orders and trace fwd separately.

INFM

1 Enemy

Following the successful adv by 15 Must Inf Bde SE along the main BUIN rd and as a result of the extensive patrolling policy, it appears that the enemy in the TOKINOTU area has broken contact and withdrawn towards the HONGORAI river.

In the maze of footpads and tracks which lead in all directions from the HATAI track, there is ample evidence that parties of the enemy are still moving about in that area although there is no evidence of any org mov in any one direction. This may well be due to considerable confusion among the enemy owing to our extensive patrolling. Contacts have been made in widely dispersed localities and the enemy is probably having some difficulty in interpreting our intentions.

Captured documents in the DAWE creek area have identified the enemy force who were in action there as personnel of 3 Bn 6 Fd Arty who probably did not take part in the SLTERS KNOLL attacks. Also there is indication that some personnel of 6 Tpt and 13 Inf Regt are in the gen area of the HATAI secret trail between the HONGORAI river and the HATAI track.

Further infm is necessary before the enemy's intention can be determined.

INTENTION

- 2 15 Must Inf Bde will:
  - (a) Est HATAI track as a jeep track L of C to the northern bn in the RUMIKI area,
  - (b) Occupy ground vacated by the enemy WEST of HONGORAI river without jeopardising security of the HATAI track during its constr.

ROLES

3 24 Must Inf Bn

Leap frog fwd to vacated enemy areas along axis BUIN rd as under:

- (a) First phase - SINDOU creek
- (b) Second phase Right UMAMU creek  
Left garden area 913455

4 58/59 Must Inf Bn

- (a) Constr HATAI jeep track
- (b) Provide protection during constr of HATAI jeep track.
- (c) Def of area WEST of HATAI track incl to PURLATA river.



5 Alterations to disposns (see trace P att)

Movs of units will be effected in priority as under.

(a) 24 Aust Inf Bn

- (i) B Coy from present location to SINDOU creek area 900454 (with res amm, wire and minimum of 3 days rations;
- (ii) A Coy to recce new location 904463 and move adv parties to prepare the posn;
- (iii) B Ech will move fwd to 24 Aust Inf Bn area (avoid location in likely enemy arty conc areas).

(b) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn

- (i) Recce A Coy 24 Aust Inf Bn posn and move as quickly as possible under mutual unit arrangements (9 tp B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt will remain in present location).
- (ii) Occupy the northern end of KINDERRI clearing at 910479.
- (iii) B Ech will move fwd to an area selected by 58/59 Aust Inf Bn between KERO creek and SHINRU river.

(c) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn

- (i) One pl to arrive BARRER 20 Apr 45.
- (ii) Remainder 57/60 Aust Inf Bn on arrival this area will move to suitable areas to be selected WEST of HATAI track with a view to assisting in HATAI jeep track constr and thereafter relief of 9 Aust Inf Bn in HATAI - RUMIKI area.

6 DZ AREAS

15 Aust Inf Bde reps will recce for suitable DZ in 24 Aust Inf Bn area.

ACK

Signed at 1800L

H G ROBSON

Maj.

Issued by LO & DR

BM 15 Aust Inf Bde

DISTRIBUTION

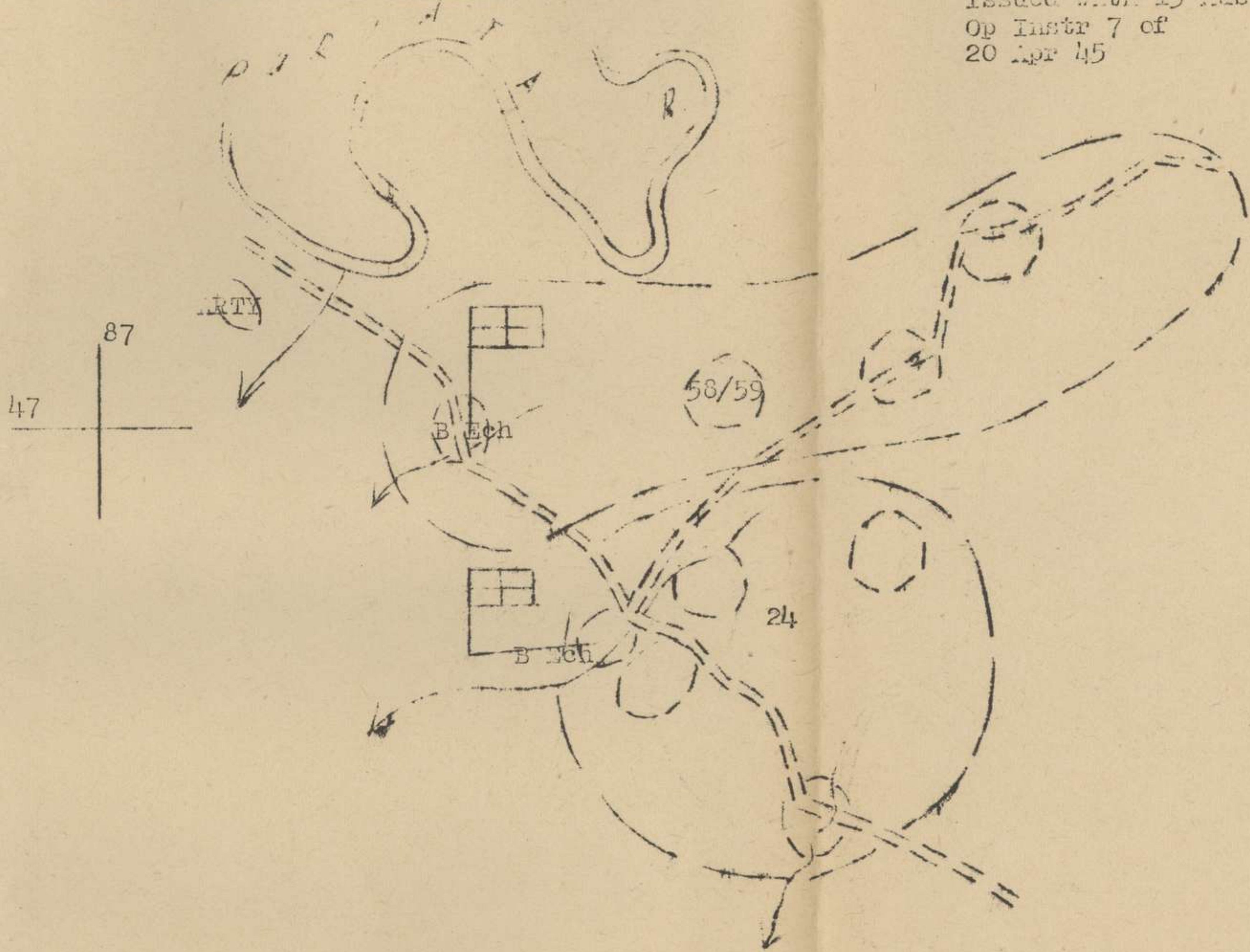
Instr and Trace P

24 Aust Inf Bn (AIF)	1	7 Aust Inf Bde	19 - 20
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	2	29 Aust Inf Bde	21
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	3	2 Aust Fd Regt	22
15 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec	4	U Aust Hy Bty	23
14 pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt	5	15 Aust Fd Coy	24
15 Aust Inf Bde Flamethrower Pl	6	11 Aust Fd Amb	25
B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt	7 - 10	File	26 - 27
Sec 15 Aust Fd Coy	11	War Diary	28 - 29
A Coy NGIB less one pl	12		
266 Aust LAD (AIF)	13		
Det 3 Aust Div Pro Coy	14		
Det ANGLU	15		
COMD	16		
BM	17		
SC	18		



24 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns  
Disposns as from 20 Apr 45

TRACE P  
Issued with 15 Aust Inf Bde  
Op Instr 7 of  
20 Apr 45





SECRET

15 AUST INF BDE OP INSTR 8

Copy No...

21 Apr 45

Ref Maps: 1/25000 series  
2 Apr dyelines

OBJECT

- 1 To patrol the triangular area bounded by the line of the HATAI track to SINANAI, the HONGORAI river to crossings at 975494, 943434 and 944421 and a line 1000 yds SOUTH of and parallel to the BUIN rd, with the following objects:
  - (a) To map the entire area.
  - (b) To permit easy navigation for future patrolling.
  - (c) To obtain complete coverage of the area by patrols.
  - (d) To pinpoint, by accurate map ref, known enemy localities for emp of arty or air strikes.

METHOD

- 2 Patrols in future will include additional personnel whose sole duty it is to make an accurate traverse by pacing and bearings of the route taken by the patrol. This may mean a slower rate of progress for patrols, but this is justified if infm supplied by patrols is definite.
- 3 Pending the mov of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn, patrols will conc on the area bounded by incl the bde patrol bdy from the PURIATA river to the HONGORAI river, the HONGORAI river to crossing at 944421 and a line 1000 yds SOUTH of and parallel to the BUIN rd.
- 4 To assist future navigation all topographical details must be plotted accurately, particularly the following:
  - (a) Tracks and track juncs
  - (b) Clearings
  - (c) Garden areas
  - (d) Villages
  - (e) Swamps
  - (f) Watercourses
  - (g) Special features e.g. prominent trees, cliff banks.
- 5 Track infm should always be given with a view to the possible use of the tracks by jeeps, 3-ton trucks or tks. Nature of obstacles and infm of value to engrs in overcoming obstacles is of the utmost importance.
- 6 As a matter of policy, personnel of 15 Aust Inf Bde will accompany all patrols carried out by NG Inf Bn. These personnel will then be able to guide their own unit patrols when necessary.
- 7 Where traverses are carried out, the patrol report, in the pro forma laid down, will be submitted to Bde HQ and will be accompanied by a traverse overlay in place of a track going map.
- 8 Reports of immediate value will be included in sitreps and the detailed report submitted to this HQ as early as possible.



- 9 Unit 'I' Secs must be kept up to date with detailed topographical infm so that accurate briefing can be carried out by patrols. Guides who have already covered patrol routes should accompany new patrols into known areas. Wherever possible a system of marking routes to facilitate accurate patrolling will be of value.
- 10 In the case of patrols of special interest, patrols must be briefed and interrogated by Bn HQ. Routine patrols may be allocated to, briefed and interrogated by coy comds. Interrogation is essential and patrol comds should not be allowed to report only.
- 11 All patrols should be fully seized with the object of the task and must give accurate and truthful reports. Exaggerations and mis-statements may cause the comd to make a wrong deduction resulting possibly in a wrong decision. The patrol comd and the patrol must realise that they are the 'eyes' of the comd and the accurate and detailed infm they gain will be of great value to him in his planning. Every patrol should be determined to achieve the object of the patrol.
- 12 Patrol briefing sketches made up from air phs, maps, native infm and prior recce will be of great value to the patrol. The patrol navigation team must keep a log of infm during the patrol to fill the gaps of infm and produce a clear picture for the comd.
- 13 Intercomn during the patrol is to be given close consideration and it is hardly necessary to emphasise that good intercomn will permit early infm and control of the patrol as required.

ACK

Signed at 1200L

H G ROBSON Maj  
BM 15 Aust Inf Bde

Issued by DRLS

<u>DISTRIBUTION</u>	<u>Copy No</u>
24 Aust Inf Bn (AIF)	1
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	2
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	3
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14 pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt	5
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B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt	7 - 10
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A Coy 1 NG Inf Bn less one pl	12
266 Aust LAD (AIF)	13
Det 3 Aust Div Pro Coy	14
Det ANGAU	15
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BM	17
SC	18
7 Aust Inf Bde (AIF)	19 - 20
29 Aust Inf Bde (AIF)	21
2 Aust Fd Regt (AIF)	22
U Aust Hq Bty	23
15 Aust Fd Coy RAE (AIF)	24
11 Aust Fd Amb	25
File	26 - 27
War Diary	28 - 29



FROM 15 inf bde T00 April 252055L

TO 24 inf bn 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn 15 bde sig sec  
14 pl 2/1 gd regt 15 bde flamethrower pl B sgn 2/4  
armd regt sec 15 fd coy A coy 1 NG inf bn 266 LAD  
det 3 div pro coy det ANGAU

INFO 7 inf bde 29 inf bde 2 fd regt U hy bty 15 fd coy  
11 fd amb

COPIES COMD BM SC file war diary (2)

---

GS222. SECRET. op instr 9. ref map 1/25000 series. infm. as per daily sitreps. intention. 15 inf bde will capture and hold the line of the UMAMU creek astride the BUIN rd to the EAST end of clearing 913456 on 26 apr 45. method. 24 inf bn. tasks. one coy occupy posn astride UMAMU river crossing on BUIN rd. reorg posn EAST of river crossing. one coy occupy THOMAS CLEARING at 913456. one coy occupy THOMAS CLEARING at 905459. fire sp. bombers from 0730L to 0930L from 300 yds EAST of B Coy 24 inf bn on BUIN rd to BIAGU track junc 913445. 24 inf bn to indicate bomb line with mortar smoke on BUIN rd. arty. series timed concs covering adv of fwd inf and tks. 24 inf bn arrange with 2 fd regt. tks. 8 tp in sp 24 inf bn. 6 tp move to ANDERSON junc by 0900L bde res. 9 tp remain in sp D coy 57/60 inf bn. 58/59 inf bn. tasks. B coy less one pl 58/59 inf bn. relieve D coy 24 inf bn one pl B coy relieve A coy 24 inf bn. D coy 58/59 inf bn to be relieved by D coy 57/60 inf bn. on relief move to 24 inf bn coy locality DAWE ck, 57/60 inf bn. tasks. composite coy relieve C coy 24 inf bn DAWE creek. D coy 57/60 inf bn relieve D Coy 58/59 inf bn KINDARA. engr. bulldozer and engr det at call by 24 inf bn. timings. H hr arty timings and reliefs of coys of 24 inf bn to be arranged by CO 24 inf bn. patrols. all units local patrols and ambushes only. 24 inf bn may arrange flanking protection for adv all ACK all infm

---

If liable to be intercepted or fall into enemy hands, this message must be sent IN CIPHER

Originator's instructions  
Degree of Priority

Immediate

H G ROBSON



SECRET

15 AUST INF BDE OO 5

COPY NO.....

30 Apr 45

Ref maps: 1/25000 series

INFM

1 Enemy

No change from daily sitreps and summaries of ops.

2 Own tps

7 Aust Inf Bde is being relieved of present responsibilities by 15 Aust Inf Bde and 29 Aust Inf Bde, prior to mov to TOROKINA.

INTENTION

3 15 Aust Inf Bde will relieve 7 Aust Inf Bde of responsibilities in the area HATAI - RUMIKI.

METHOD

4 Summary

(a) Relief of 9 Aust Inf Bn by 57/60 Aust Inf Bn and relief of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn by 47 Aust Inf Bn will be carried out in three phases.

(b) 24 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns will continue present ops along the BUIN rd.

5 Phase 1: 2 May

(a) Two coys 57/60 Aust Inf Bn will relieve two coys 9 Aust Inf Bn.

(b) Tactical Bn HQ and two coys 47 Aust Inf Bn are to move to 57/60 Aust Inf Bn area.

6 Phase 2: 3 May

(a) Tactical Bn HQ and two coys 57/60 Aust Inf Bn will relieve tactical Bn HQ and two coys 9 Aust Inf Bn.

(b) Two coys 47 Aust Inf Bn are to move to 57/60 Aust Inf Bn area.

7 Phase 3: 4 May

(a) Balance 57/60 Aust Inf Bn will move to new bn area.

(b) Balance 47 Aust Inf Bn will move to 57/60 Aust Inf Bn vacated area.

8 Assumption of Responsibility

(a) On completion of phase 2 57/60 Aust Inf Bn will assume responsibility HATAI - RUMIKI area.

(b) At 0800L 3 May 47 Aust Inf Bn will assume responsibility of area vacated by 57/60 Aust Inf Bn.

9 Changes in Comd

(a) On completion of phase 2 10 tp B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd regt and det 15 Aust Fd Coy will be in sp 57/60 Aust Inf Bn from under comd 9 Aust Inf Bn



- (b) On completion of phase 2 fighting HQ tp B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt will pass from in sp 57/60 Aust Inf Bn to under comd 47 Aust Inf Bn.
- (c) On arrival HATAI - RUMIKI area sub-units 57/60 Aust Inf Bn will come under comd 9 Aust Inf Bn until comd of area changes.
- (d) A Coy 1 NG Inf Bn less one pl revert to comd 3 Aust Div from 1800 hrs 30 Apr 45.

10 Reece Parties

Reece parties 57/60 Aust Inf Bn to commence reece HATAI - RUMIKI area 28 Apr under mutual arrangements 9 Aust Inf Bn.

11 Bdys

As from 0800L 3 May the following bdys shown vide Trace P will apply:

- (a) Inter bde bdys
- (b) Inter unit bdys
- (c) 15 Aust Inf Bde - 2/8 Aust Cdo Sqn bdy
- (d) Unit patrolling bdy.

12 Initial Role

On completion of relief 9 Aust Inf Bn by 57/60 Aust Inf Bn the initial role will be as follows:

Secure the line of the HONGORAI river from crossing at 963483 to crossing 974495.

13 Future Tasks

57/60 Aust Inf Bn future tasks are as follows:

- (a) Exploit fwd to secure the crossing over the PORORAI river at 970475 and 984485.
- (b) Maintain contact with 2/8 Aust Cdo Sqn on northern flank and the leading bn 15 Aust Inf Bde moving along the axis of the BUIN rd.
- (c) Be prepared to create diversions in the direction of TAITAI area to sp ops along the BUIN rd axis.

14 Patrolling

57/60 Aust Inf Bn patrolling tasks are as follows.

- (a) Destroy enemy by long range fighting patrols.
- (b) Endeavour to draw enemy NORTH from MONOITU area
- (c) Obtain enemy and topographical infm of value to all units 15 Aust Inf Bde.

ADM

15 Amn

- (a) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn will take over amn from 9 Aust Inf Bn as per Appx A att.
- (b) First line amn will be carried by 57/60 Aust Inf Bn.



16 Supps and POL

- (a) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn will move with unconsumed portion of the day's rations.
- (b) A res of 3 days SWPA and 1 day FOR will be carried.
- (c) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn will take over all POL and res rations held by 9 Aust Inf Bn.
- (d) Any discrepancy between 7 days res and the rations held by 57/60 Aust Inf Bn after taking over 9 Aust Inf Bn rations will be made up by air drops.
- (e) 2 days SWPA and 1 day FOR will be transferred from present res of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn to 47 Aust Inf Bn on arrival of that unit.
- (f) Daily maint in initial stages after mov will be by air drop from HORINU DZ 934485.

17 Mov of Personnel and Stores

- (a) Personnel will march to new areas.
- (b) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn stores will be ferried by tractor train from 907477 to 926484 and thence, if condition of tracks permit, by jeep to fwd posns. If tracks NOT jeepable, fwd mov by native carriers.
- (c) 9 Aust Inf Bn is arranging to make jeeps and/or native carriers available for mov of stores fwd of 926484.
- (d) 9 Aust Inf Bn stores are to be back loaded on tractor train from 926484 to 907477 and thence to 3 ton rd head under arrangements 7 Aust Inf Bde.
- (e) Bde TO will supervise all mov of MT.
- (f) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn will provide adequate escorts and loading parties to move fwd with stores.

18 TC

- (a) Ptsmen to be est at:
  - (i) ANDERSONS JUNC
  - (ii) Jeephead 907477
  - (iii) Tractor train head 926484
  - (iv) 3 ton rd head.
- (b) Rd patrols
  - (i) 3 ton rd head - ANDERSONS JUNC
  - (ii) ANDERSONS JUNC - jeephead 907477
  - (iii) Jeephead 907477 - tractor train head 926484.
- (c) Durations

Patrols and ptsmen will op daily from 0730L to 1800L from 2 to 5 May, both dates incl.

19 Engr stores

- (a) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn will take over present stocks held by 9 Aust Inf Bn under mutual arrangements.
- (b) Demands for additional stores will be submitted as early as possible.



INTERCOMM

20 LT

- (a) 5 metallic circuits have been laid from ANDERSONS junc to 57/60 Aust Inf Bn.
- (b) Allocation is - 3 circuits to 57/60 Aust Inf Bn, 2 circuits to 2 Aust Fd Regt; 57/60 Aust Inf Bn circuits will be used as follows
  - (i) Pair 1 - direct line to 15 Aust Inf Bde
  - (ii) Pair 2 - lateral line to 58/59 Aust Inf Bn until that unit moves from present location then spare line to 15 Aust Inf Bde;
  - (iii) Pair 3 - line for connecting B Ech, DID and ADS and any other sub-units.
- (c) D3 spaced pairs will be laid with 57/60 Aust Inf Bn during mov. D3 lateral line from 57/60 Aust Inf Bn to 9 Aust Inf Bn will be teed in to Number 3 pair.

21 WT

No 11 sets will remain and move with 57/60 Aust Inf Bn

22 DRIS

Corrected time table will be issued after first run to 57/60 Aust Inf Bn new posn is completed.

ACK

Signed at 1430L

H G ROBSON Maj  
BM 15 Aust Inf Bde

Issued by DR and LO

DISTRIBUTION

	<u>COPY NUMBER</u>		
	<u>OO</u>	<u>APPX A</u>	<u>Trace P</u>
24 Aust Inf Bn (AIF)	1	1	1
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	2	2	2
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	3	3	3
15 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec (AIF)	4	4	4
15 Aust Inf Bde Flamethrower Pl	5	5	5
B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt	7 - 10	7 - 10	7 - 10
Sec 15 Aust Fd Coy RAE	11	11	11
A Coy 1 NG Inf Bn	12	12	12
266 Aust LAD (AIF)	13	13	13
Det 3 Aust Div Pro Coy	14	14	14
Det ANGAU	15	15	15
15 Aust Fd Amb (AIF)	16	16	16
Comd	17	17	17
BM	18	18	18
SC	19	19	19
7 Aust Inf Bde	20 - 21	20 - 21	20 - 21
29 Aust Inf Bde	22 - 23	22 - 23	22 - 23
2 Aust Fd Regt	24	24	24
U Aust Hy Bty	25	25	25
15 Aust Fd Coy RAE (AIF)	26	26	26
11 Aust Fd Amb	27	27	27
File	28 - 29	28 - 29	28 - 29
War Diary	30 - 31	30 - 31	30 - 31



SECRET

APPENDIX A  
to 15 Aust  
Inf Bde 00,  
5 of 30 pr  
45

COLY NO . .

9 AUST INF BN AMN TO BE TRANSFERRED TO 57/60 AUST INF BN

.303 bandolier	34750
.303 carton	20640
.303 belt	7250
9 mm OSMG	51260
2 in Mortar HE	23
Smoke	43
Ill Red	78
Green	78
3 in mortar HE	429
Smoke	59
Grenades hand	1382
Rifle	127
Cartridges Sig Red	28
Green	28
Grenades 77 White Phosphorus	166

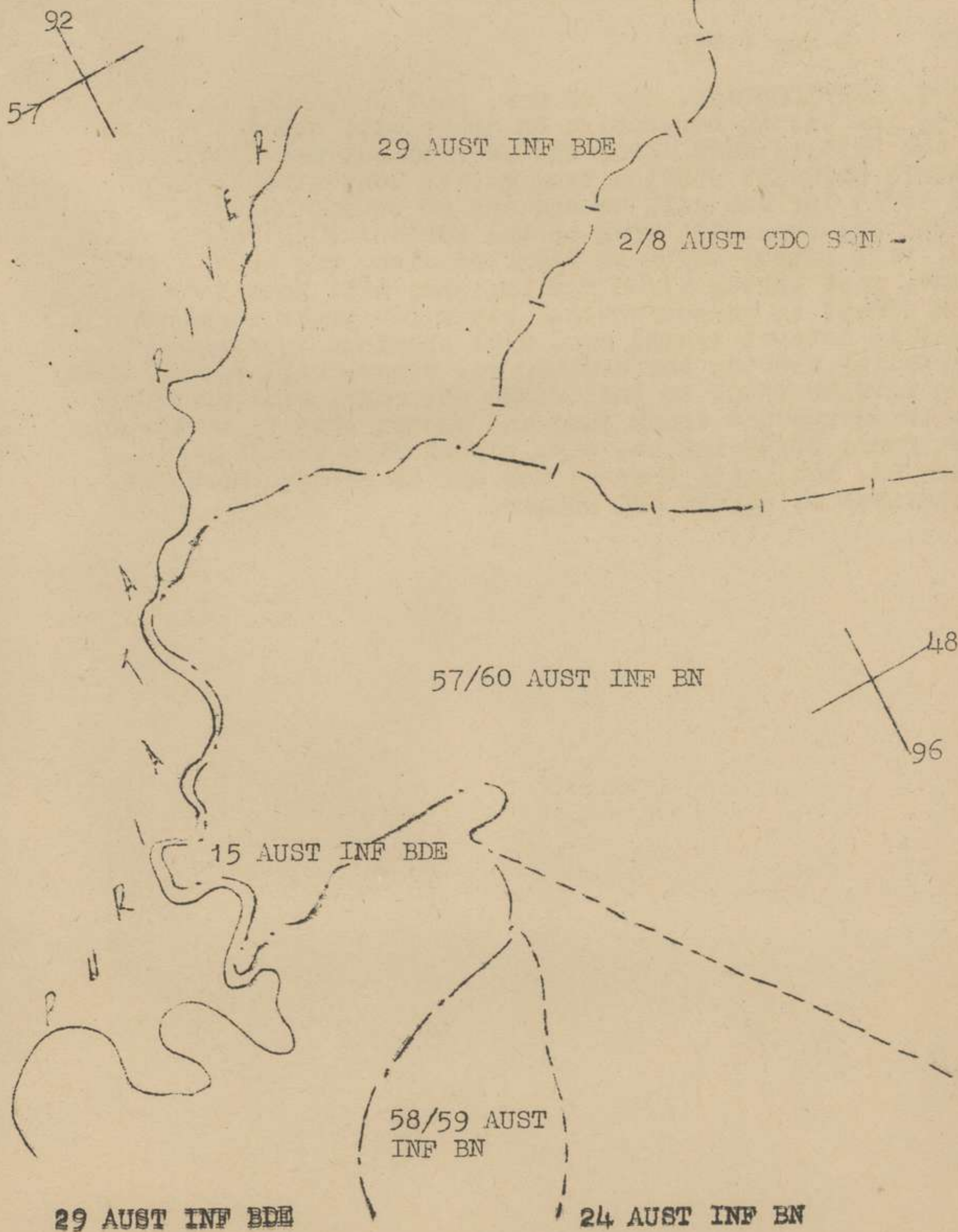


SECRET

TRACE P  
to 15 Aust Inf  
Bde 00 5 of 30  
Apr 45

COPY NO . . .

BOUNDARIES - REF MAP: PURLATA RIVER 1-IN TO 1-MILE





FROM 15 inf bde May 171045L  
TO 24 inf bn  
INFO 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn

GS298. CONFIDENTIAL. ops for 18 may. patrol to MARTINS crossing on completion bomb strike to locate TIGER rd and follow rd EAST to locate enemy disposns. you will report by 181800L if the enemy is still WEST of HONGORAI river in the area between BUIN rd and MARTIN crossing incl all previous known enemy locations which are to be checked. time of air strike to be advised

FROM 15 inf bde May 220015L  
TO 24 inf bn 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn  
INFO D coy 1 PIB

GS309. CONFIDENTIAL. ops 22 may. part one. one. 24 and 58/59 inf bns in respective bn areas will clear the line of the BUIN rd WEST along the rd from culvert 962410 to ARNOTTS CROSSING 939430. two. mutual contact between 24 and 58/59 inf bns will be est and rd opened up. part two. 24 inf bn. one. will open up the POROREI FORD for traffic. two. will patrol NORTH to TIGER rd along the bn NORTHERN front. part three. 57/60 inf bn. one. will patrol track from 978457 to across POROREI river for track recce to est possible lateral track. two. will continue aggressive patrolling astride the USO-OSO rd. three. will patrol SOUTH down LITTLES TRACK to incl TIGER rd. four. will consider ops to occupy OSO track junc and report this Hq earliest. part four. 58/59 inf bn. one. patrol plan for 22 may approved. two. will prepare for ops to capture NORTHERN objectives at 962420 and 964416.



15 AUST INF BDE

OPERATION ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS

OPERATIONS - HARI RIVER - SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE

SECRET

15 AUST INF BDE OO 6

Copy No.....

Ref Maps: 1/25000 series  
1/63360 series

18 May 45

INFM

- 1 Enemy strs and disposns )
- 2 Likely enemy action ) Att as Appx A
- 3 Own tps )
- 4 Additional Tps

B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt came under comd 15 Aust Inf Bde 141800L

5 Air

Maximum aircraft available are bombing selected targets vide Bombing Task Table att as Appx C.

6 Inter-bde Bdy

Line of HONGORAI river incl to 29 Aust Inf Bde.

INTENTION

- 7 15 Aust Inf Bde will continue the adv in the direction of the HARI river and will destroy the enemy.

METHOD

8 Summary

(a) The adv of 15 Aust Inf Bde across the HONGORAI river preceded by a two day aerial bombardment will be made on a two bn front on the following axis:

- (i) RIGHT - BUIN rd - 24 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns
- (ii) LEFT - COMMANDO rd - 57/60 Aust Inf Bn

(b) A diversion created by advs of 57/60 Aust Inf Bn and bombing of MARTINS crossing area is hoped to draw enemy forces NORTH to enable 24 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns to become firmly est on their respective objectives without excessive enemy opposn.

9 Sequence of Events

Att as Appx B. This may be varied as the situation changes.

10 24 Aust Inf Bn with in sp

Two tps B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt  
15 Aust Inf Bde **Flamethrower Pl**  
One sec 15 Aust Fd Coy



(a) Objective - D plus 5

Attack and capture area BUIN rd from excl ARNOTTS crossing 938430 to incl POROREI ford 955420.

(b) Additional tasks

- (i) D plus 3 - patrol NORTH to MARTINS crossing as a preliminary to deception attack on D plus 4.
- (ii) D plus 4 - patrol in str WEST of HONGORAI river to MARTINS crossing area to deceive enemy regarding intentions on D plus 5.
- (iii) D plus 4 - send covering patrols SOUTH of BUIN rd to area of coy objectives between HONGORAI and POROREI rivers to remain overnight.
- (iv) D plus 6 - on capture of objective open sup route along BUIN rd to junc with 58/59 Aust Inf Bn.
- (v) D plus 6 - sp 58/59 Aust Inf Bn ops by patrolling to NORTH and SOUTH flanks.

(c) Axis of Adv

EAST along gen line BUIN rd.

11 58/59 Aust Inf Bn with in sp

Two tps B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt  
One sec 15 Aust Fd Coy

(a) Objective - D plus 6

Attack and capture area BUIN rd from excl POROREI ford to incl BUIN rd river crossing at 962410.

(b) Mov

- (i) D plus 4 - commence mov from present posn to bn assembly area EAST of HONGORAI river in vicinity 945411.
- (ii) D plus 5 - complete conc EAST of HONGORAI river.

(b) Axis of Adv

As arranged by 58/59 Aust Inf Bn from present area SE to HONGORAI crossing 943410, thence by selected routes to objective.

12 57/60 Aust Inf Bn with in sp

One tp B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt  
One sec 15 Aust Fd Coy

(a) Objective - D plus 2

Attack and capture area COMMANDO rd from HONGORAI river to incl TORIPIRU river crossing at 979462.

(b) Additional tasks

- (i) Exploit at very earliest to the line of the TORIPIRU river.
- (ii) Op vigorously and offensively EAST down COMMANDO rd and SOUTH in direction of KINDAI - USO area in sqs 9642, 9643.
- (iii) On D plus 3 send strong harassing force to TIGER rd area via LITTLES track to follow up air strike of D plus 4 and remain out a minimum of 3 days.



(c) Axis of Adv

SE along gen line COMMANDO rd

13 Inter-bn bdy

Inter bn bdy will be adjusted as ops progress and be notified separately.

14 Re-org

Re-org will, in all instances, be rapid against immediate counter-attack.

15 Tks

One tp to remain as bde res at adv HQ B Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt.

16 Arty

(a) RAA 3 Aust Div are supporting 15 Aust Inf Bde ops as follows:

- (i) 2 Aust Fd Regt - RIGHT axis
- (ii) 2/11 Aust Fd Regt - LEFT axis

(b) LOs and FOOs will be supplied by respective fd regts as required by units.

(c) LOs will NOT be relieved without concurrence of Bde Comd.

17 Engrs

Det 15 Aust Fd Coy and bulldozer team will move with tks in sp each unit.

18 Air

(a) Bombing Task Table for period 15 to 21 May, both incl, is att as Appx C. This may be varied in accordance with the situation.

(b) Tac R, arty R and mortar R are available on request this HQ.

19 Det ANGAU

Guides and patrols will be supplied at the request of units.

ADM

20 Water

Units will est own WPs.

21 Amn

(a) First line amn will be carried plus additional authorised res.

(b) Replenishment

(i) 24 Aust Inf Bn } DID JOYCE DZ 920440  
58/59 Aust Inf Bn }

(ii) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn - Air drop DZ 966485. Emergency replacement DID LONGHURST DZ 894464.



22 POL and Sups

(a) 7 days res POL; 5 days SWPA res rations and 2 days FOR will be maintained by 24 and 57/60 Aust Inf Bns. 58/59 Aust Inf Bn will maintain 3 days SWPA res and 2 days FOR res.

(b) Maint

- (i) 24 Aust Inf Bn } DID JOYCE D4 920440  
58/59 Aust Inf Bn }  
(ii) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn - air drop DZ 966485

23 Med

- (a) MDS TOKO  
(b) ADS SHINRU creek 884469  
(c) Lt sec KEKRO creek 920442  
(d) Lt sec B Ech 57/60 Aust Inf Bn  
(e) Native SBs

- (i) 24 Aust Inf Bn - 16 from 0730L D Day  
(ii) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn - own resources  
(iii) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn - 32 from 0730L D plus 4  
(iv) Lt Sec KEKRO creek - 32 from 0730L D plus 5 for evac to ADS

(f) Car posts

- (i) Lt Sec KEKRO creek - two amb jeeps on call to 24 and 58/59 Aust Inf Bns from 0800L D plus 4.  
(ii) ANDERSONS junc 892463

24 Repair and Rec

- (a) 113 Aust Bde Wksp } 850481  
113 Aust Bde Ord Pd Pk }  
(b) 266 Aust LAD KEKRO creek 919441 from 1000L 17 May 45.  
(c) One sec 266 Aust LAD att each bn.

25 Allocation of tpt

- (a) 24 Aust Inf Bn - one tractor to report 1200L D plus 4  
(b) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn - two tractors to report 0800L D plus 3.  
(c) Additional demands for tpt will be advised by 1600L daily.

26 Native lab

Requirements for native lab to be advised by 1600L daily.

27 Ord

- (a) 3 Aust Div Ord Dump 818454  
(b) 15 Aust Inf Bde Ord Dump KEKRO creek 991441.

28 TC

(a) Ptsmen

- (i) SINDOU creek 898451 from D day.  
(ii) two KEKRO creek 919441 from D day.  
(iii) southern track - BUIN rd junc 0730L D plus 2.  
(iv) two HONGORAI - BUIN rd crossing 0730L D plus 4.

(b) Rd patrols

KEKRO creek to HONGORAI - BUIN rd crossing.



29 PW

PW cage closes present location 1000L 17 May 45 and opens KEKRO creek 919441.

30 Engr Stores

Dump - 53 Aust Fd Pk Coy - TOKO.

31 Burials

(a) Own dead

Graves will be clearly marked and, where possible, located in gps near tracks. Exact locations will be notified on AF W3314 with sketch of locality att.

(b) Enemy dead

Burials to take place as soon as possible.

INTERCOMN

32 Location Bde HQ

HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde closes present location 171000L and re-opens 918442 same time.

33 LT

Present line circuits to bns will be maintained to bns with, in addition, one earth return circuit to 58/59 Aust Inf Bn.

34 WT

No 11 set will move and remain with bns.

35 DRLS

Time of departure DRLS will remain at 0900L daily. Alterations to times of arrival at bns will be advised on completion of first run from Bde HQ.

36 D Day

15 May 45.

ACK

Signed at 180800L

H G ROBSON Maj  
BM 15 Aust Inf Bde

Issued by LO and DRLS

DISTRIPUTION

	00	COPY NUMBERS		
		Appx A	Appx B	Appx C
24 Aust Inf Bn (AIF)	1	1	1	1
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	2	2	2	2
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	3	3	3	3
B Son 2/4 Aust Armd Regt	4	4	4	4
15 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec (AIF)	11 - 10	11 - 10	11 - 10	11 - 10
14 pl 2/4 Aust Gd Regt	12	12	12	12
15 Aust Inf Bde Flamethrower Pl	13	13	13	13
266 Aust LAD	14	14	14	14
Det 3 Aust Div Pro Coy	15	15	15	15
Det ANGAU	16	16	16	16
ANGAU Lab Det	17	17	17	17
Comd	18	18	18	18
BM	19	19	19	19
SC	20	20	20	20
17 Air Ops RAAF	21	21	21	21
29 Aust Inf Bde	22	22	22	22
2/11 Aust Fd Regt	23	23	23	23
2 Aust Fd Regt	24	24	24	24
U Aust Hy Bty	25	25	25	25
15 Aust Fd Coy RAE	26 - 29	26 - 29	26 - 29	26 - 29
15 Aust Fd Amb	30	30	30	30
File	31 - 32	31 - 32	31 - 32	31 - 32
War Diary	33 - 34	33 - 34	33 - 34	33 - 34



SECRET

APPENDIX A  
to 15 Aust Inf  
Bde CO 6  
of 18 May 45

Copy No

1 ENEMY STR AND DISPOSNS

COMMANDO rd between HONGORAI and POROREI rivers approx 150.

HONGORAI river between MARTINS crossing and COMMANDO rd approx 100.

HONGORAI - POROREI river from incl TIGER rd to incl BUIN rd and incl TOHU approx 700.

BUIN rd from incl RUNAI to incl MONOITU and MAMAGATA track approx 550.

USO - OSO track from incl USO to incl KOPINKO approx 250.

TAITAI - KAPANA area approx 300.

RUSEI area approx 500.

MAMAGATA area approx 50.

Total str HONGORAI - HARI river areas 2100

Rfts at RUSEI 500.

2 LIKELY ENEMY ACTION

(a) Hold the line of the HONGORAI in an attempt to prevent our gaining control of the vital garden and dump areas WEST of the HARI river.

(b) Attack WEST of the HONGORAI river, probably in the MARTINS crossing area, in order to delay our adv and disrupt our L of C.

(c) A combination of (a) and (b).

(d) Counter-attack any penetration by our forces EAST of HONGORAI river.

(e) Fight stubborn delaying actions to make our adv too costly to continue.

3 OWN TPS

(a) 2/8 Aust Cdo Sqn

The following tasks have been allotted to 2/8 Aust Cdo Sqn:

- (i) Recce of the RUNAI - UNANAI rd
- (ii) Recce of the USO - OSO track
- (iii) Recce area sqs 9939, 9934, 0039, 0038
- (iv) Recce rd UNANAI - TAITAI
- (v) Recce COMMANDO rd to ascertain if enemy intends to reinforce in this area.
- (vi) Gen harassing of enemy by raids and ambushes.

(b) 29 Aust Inf Bde

- (i) 29 Aust Inf Bde will provide op and adm sp for 15 Aust Inf Bde and will be responsible for protection of the L of C WEST of the **inter bde bdy**.
- (ii) 29 Aust Inf Bde will occupy the areas vacated by 24 and 57/60 Aust Inf Bns when the three bns of 15 Aust Inf Bde have crossed the HONGORAI.

SERIAL	
1	D
2	W
3	pl Th
4	pl E



SEQUENCE OF EVENTS - OUTLINE PLAN - 15 AUST INF BDE

D DAY - TUESDAY, 15 MAY 45

APPENDIX B SECRET  
to 15 Aust Inf Bde 00 6  
of 18 May 45

Copy No.....

SERIAL	DAY	UNIT	EVENT	IR	PTY	MOET R	TKS	REMARKS
1	D Day Tue 15	24 Aust Inf Bn area	Bomb BUIN rd to POROREI ford as per Bombing Task Table Task 1	Bombing and strafing targets smoked	Smoke targets for bombers	Concs along BUIN rd to incl POROREI ford		Details on 14 May 45 Maximum strike
2	D plus 1 Wed 16	"	"	"	"	"		"
3	D plus 2 Thu 17	57/60 Aust Inf Bn area	(a) Bomb targets as for Bombing task 2 (b) Attack by 57/60 Bn to TORIPIRU river - exploit to TORIBIRU area. It is hoped this attack will draw enemy attention from SOUTH	Bombing wide Task 2	Concs as ordered by 57/60 Bn	(a) Smoke targets for bombers (b) As ordered by 57/60 Bn	(b) One to as ordered by 57/ 60 Bn	
4	D plus 3 Fri 18	(a) 24 Aust Inf Bn area  (b) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn	(a) Patrol NORTH to MARTINS crossing area as a prelimin- ary to deception attack on D plus 4  (b) Send strong harassing force to TIGER rd area via LITTLES track to follow up air strike on D plus 4. Biv clear of air strike areas on D plus 3. Remain out 3 days minimum	Bombing and Strafing vide Task 3 Maximum aircraft	At call	At call		Prepar- ation for cross- ing HON- GORAI river on D plus 5



SERIAL	DAY	UNIT	EVENT	AIR	ARTY	MORTARS	TKS	REMARKS
5	D plus 4 Sat 19	24 Aust Inf Bn	(a) Patrol in str WEST of HONGORAI to MARTINS crossing area as deception to draw enemy to TIGER track - MARTINS crossing area from SOUTH (b) Covering patrols SOUTH of BUIN rd to coy objectives between HONGORAI and POROREI rivers. No mov closer than 200 yds of objectives. Remain overnight on coy routes to objectives.	Bombing and strafing as for Task 4	Smoke targets for bombing. At call for 24 Bn	Cones prior to deceptive attack	One tp available for deceptive attack. Two tps prepare for crossing HONGORAI river on D plus 5	
		58/59 Aust Inf Bn	Mov to bn assembly areas EAST of HONGORAI river for attack on D plus 6. Objective BUIN rd from POROREI ford excl to creek at 962410		At call if attacked	As ordered by CO 58/59 Bn	Two tps under orders 58/59 Bn	
		42 Aust Inf Bn	Anticipate 42 Bn to occupy 58/59 Bn area as vacated.					
6	D plus 5 Sun 20	24 Aust Inf Bn	Attack and capture area along BUIN rd between HONGORAI river excl to POROREI river incl	Planes on standby for task at 0700L if required Bombing task 5	At call for smoke target for bombing and sp 24 Bn	At call	Two tps move with 24 Bn initially. Third tp at call remain WEST of HONGORAI	



SERIAL	DAY	UNIT	EVENT	AIR	ARTY	MORTARS	TKS	REMARKS
6	D plus 5 Sun 20	58/59 Aust Inf Bn 42 Aust Inf Bn	Complete conc EAST of HONGORAI river ready for attack on objective D plus 6 Anticipate 42 Bn to occupy coy areas WEST of HONGORAI ford		At call	As ordered by CO 58/59 Bn	Two tps with 58/59 Bn	
7	D plus 6 Mon 21	58/59 Aust Inf Bn  24 Aust Inf Bn	Attack and capture objective along BUIN rd from POROREI ford excl to creek at 962410. Re-org rapidly against immediate counter-attacks  (a) Open sup route along BUIN rd to junc with 58/59 Bn. (b) Sp 58/59 Bn ops by patrolling to the NORTH and SOUTH flanks (c) Be prepared to exploit along BUIN rd with tks to close gaps between 24 and 58/59 Bns.	Bombing Task 6 (a) Maxiplanes on standby to sp attack in objective area. (b) (i) secondary task bomb RUNEI area to harass enemy rft. (ii) USO area where USO rd crosses SUNIN river 963423 to harass enemy rft.	At call	As ordered by CO 58/59 Bn	In sp 58/59 Bn	



BOMBING TASK TABLES - OUTLINE PLAN - 15 AUST INF BDE  
D DAY - TUESDAY, 15 May 45

APPENDIX C SECRET  
to 15 Aust Inf Bde  
Copy No. 6 of 18 May 45

DAY	UNIT	NUMBER OF TASK	TARGET	WHETHER IN SP GROUND TPS	PURPOSE OF TASK	DURATION OF STRIKE	ENEMY INFM
Tue 15 D Day to D plus 1 Wed 16	15 Aust Inf Bde 24 Aust Inf Bn area	1	(a) Ridge astride BUIN rd at 946429 (b) 300 yds each side POROREI ford 955420 (c) TOHU or junc AITARA-BUIN track 961414 (d) USO area 961431		Soften up area as a preliminary to attack on these areas on D plus 5	Throughout both days	
D plus 2 Thu 17	15 Aust Inf Bde 57/60 Aust Inf Bn area  24 Aust Inf Bn area	2	13 Regt HQ 968473  Junc POROREI river TIGER rd 958430	Yes	Preliminary bombardment to attack by ground tps same day to capture TORIFIRU river and exploit to TORIBIRU river	Task (a) 1100L-1130L Task (b) 0800L-0830L	
D plus 3 Fri 18	24 Aust Inf Bn	3	MARTINS crossing EAST along TIGER rd and WEST of MARTINS crossing	Yes. Ground tps demonstrate as deception MARTINS crossing	Bomb known enemy localities as deception to main attack BUIN rd	All day	
D plus 4 Sat 19	15 Aust Inf Bde 24 Aust Inf Bn area	4	(a) Enemy posns WEST of MARTINS crossing 939445 943447 (b) Astride MARTINS crossing 941446 (c) EAST of MARTINS crossing along TIGER rd from 941446 to POROREI ford	Yes. Ground tps demonstrate as deception MARTINS crossing	Bomb known enemy localities and main enemy southern route as deception to main attack on BUIN rd to POROREI river	0700L to 1400L	



DAY	UNIT	NUMBER OF TASK	TARGET	WHETHER IN SP GROUND TPS	PURPOSE OF TASK	DURATION OF STRIKE	ENEMY INEM
D plus 5 Sun 20	15 Aust Inf Bde 24 Aust Inf Bn area	5	Planes on standby to repeat tasks 1 (a), (b) and (c)	Yes. 24 Bn attacks to capture BUIN rd between HONGORAI and POROREI rivers		At call from 0700L	
D plus 6 Mon 21	15 Aust Inf Bde 58/59 Aust Inf Bn area	6	(a) Total aircraft availability in close sp 58/59 Bn attack in TOHU area (b) Secondary task bomb USO where USC rd crosses SUNIN river 963423 to harass enemy rft. (c) Secondary task bomb RUNAI during 58/59 Bn attack	Yes	Sp 58/59 Bn attack	0830L plus	



FROM 15 inf bde May 232250L  
TO 24 inf bn 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn D coy 1 PIB  
INFO B sqn 2/4 armd regt det ANGAU 2/11 fd regt 2 fd regt  
3 div 15 fd coy 15 fd amb

GS314 SECRET. WARNING ORDER. INFM. likely enemy action. one. withdraw from line USO OSO rd EAST in direction of HARI river. two. op from HARI river area WEST towards our forces with guerilla warfare tactics and strong raiding parties. own tps. one. with the exception of minor adjustments of bn areas and coy localities there will be no move EAST of present locations until ordered. two. D coy 1 PIB will move to in sp 58/59 inf bn from present locality to an area selected in the vicinity of POROREI ford 955420. INTENTION. 15 inf bde gp will secure the line of USO OSO track and clear EAST to the line RUNAI TONNU. METHOD. one strong patrols up to pl str and if warranted coy str will op EAST to the line of the HARI river. two. patrols to remain out for several days will be organised. three. patrol bdys. one 24 inf bn area EAST HONGORAI river 945406 to 945455 to 972442 972434 974432 to NORTH end plantation 963425 to 945406. two. 57/60 inf bn. area between HONGORAI and HARI rivers NORTH of the line from 945455 972442 972434 005417 to 020403. three. 58/59 inf bn. AITARA via HONGORAI to 945406 to 963425 974432 005417 020403 thence via HARI river to MAMAGATA. this instr will take effect as from 25 may 45. ACK

FROM 15 inf bde June 012140L  
TO 24 inf bn 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn B sqn 2/4 armd  
regt D coy 1 PIB  
INFO 2/11 fd regt 2 fd regt 15 fd coy det ANGAU 3 div SC

GS343. CONFIDENTIAL. ops 3 jun. 15 inf bde will continue adv with intention to secure line of MAMAGATA TAITAI track incl by 3 - 4 jun. 24 inf bn. one. move D coy to RUNAI area first lt 3 jun. two. patrol to clear jap pockets NE of BUIN rd from TOMOI river to SUNIN river incl. three. patrol BUIN rd from POROREI river to 58/59 inf bn rear coy; four. make jeepable BUIN rd in area of responsibility. five. patrol widely in area SOUTH of HAMMER rd between BUIN rd and COMBANDO rd to MAMAGATA HATAI track. 57/60 inf bn. one. continue adv to AMIO track junc with all speed and secure area AMIO TAITAI SIROI. two. mop up japs from HAMMER rd junc to AMIO. three. limit of exploitation this phase HARI river. 58/59 inf bn. one. continue adv with bomber and arty sp to MAMAGATA track junc incl. two. exploit to peperu river astride BUIN rd axis. three. area of responsibility PEPERU river TOMOI river. all units. one. avoid hugging rds and likely arty registered areas. two. anticipate increased enemy arty activity. three. arty and bomber sp at call. four. tk allotment as at present. five. engrs close sp 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn. ACK all infm



FROM 15 inf bde June 051530L  
TO 24 inf bn 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn D Coy 1 PIB  
det ANGAU  
INFO B sqn 2/4 armd regt 2/11 fd regt 2 fd regt 15 fd  
coy 15 fd amb RAFFLES FORCE

GS355. CONFIDENTIAL. ops 6 jun. infm. 15 inf bde gp is re-grouping and patrolling fwd of present localities on 5 jun prior to continuing adv 6 jun. 24 inf bn has est an ambush astride rd at 002398. intention. 15 inf bde will continue the adv on 6 jun. 24 inf bn. one. recce to 002398 with a view to occupation on 6 jun as a coy locality. patrol NORTH to 57/60 inf bn and SOUTH to 58/59 inf bn from 002398 to harass enemy located in these areas. two. relieve B coy 58/59 inf bn in area 983386 and D coy 58/59 inf bn at 989381 under mutual timing arrangements that unit to permit them to continue adv. three. patrol area NORTH of BUIN rd between HANGLER and MANAGATA rds. 57/60 inf bn. one. regp unit in the gen area TONNU TAITAI rd junc. two. patrol of pl str FOO and party native carriers and guides to depart 7 jun enroute KAPANA MATAIASI KATSUWA and est base MUSARAKA area. task. patrol from base SOUTH along line MIVO river to BUIN rd. report on suitability of route as an axis of adv. infm required regarding river crossings over MIVO river NORTH and SOUTH of BUIN rd. gain topographical infm details track going times and track tkability. 58/59 inf bn. one. continue adv along BUIN rd on 6 jun. two. arrange a force coy str FOO and party one pl D coy 1 PIB native guides and carriers to depart 6 jun from 002398 to HARI number 3 COCONUTS 035393 MUSARAKA to RUSEI. task. harass enemy in area of route and op against BUIN rd areas EAST of OGORATA river if required as ops progress. gain infm of enemy forces likely to be encountered during adv of main body along BUIN rd. D coy 1 PIB. in sp 58/59 inf bn. ACK. all infm

FROM 15 inf bde June 082255L  
TO 24 inf bn 58/59 inf bn  
INFO 57/60 inf bn B sqn 2/4 armd regt D coy 1 PIB det  
ANGAU 2/11 fd regt 2 fd regt 15 fd coy 15 fd amb  
3 div 29 bde

GS365. CONFIDENTIAL. ops commencing 0645L 9 jun 45. infm. enemy holding escarpments EAST bank HARI river in str to oppose crossing and delay our adv. 15 inf bde will neutralise and destroy enemy oppsn and defs by emp by fire power. the policy for the crossing of the HARI river will be. one. a fire power softening of known enemy def areas by bombing arty and mortars. two. patrolling to locate suitable crossings over HARI NORTH and SOUTH of HARI ford for either inf or inf and tks. when softening programme completed or as ordered. three. arty programme will be arranged by bde and 58/59 inf bn requests will be incl in the programme. four. limits of bde arty programme areas garden area 996376 incl to HARI ford thence along EAST bank of HARI to 004379 and astride BUIN rd from HARI ford to 007376. five. bombing targets will incl area from river bend 997377 on EAST bank of HARI to track 004379 and astride BUIN rd from HARI ford to 007376. six. 58/59 inf bn will arrange mortar programme with minimum of four mortars and maximum of eight to be superimposed over bombing and arty targets as well as additional unit tasks. seven. 24 inf bn will sup to 58/59 inf bn four mortar dets on their request. eight. mortar fire posns will be clear of likely enemy shelling areas. nine. auster mortar R on request. ten. patrol frontally prepared to occupy EAST bank of HARI if vacated by enemy. eleven. BM 15 inf bde will coord programme timings with comds 58/59 inf bn and arty by 1100L 9 Jun 45



FROM 15 inf bde June 110220L

TO 24 inf bn 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn B sqn 2/4  
armd regt 15 inf bde sig sec 15 fd coy 15 inf  
bde flamethrower pl 15 fd amb D coy 1 PIB det  
ANGAU

INFO A sqn 2/4 armd regt 2 fd regt 2/11 fd regt 3  
div 29 inf bde

GS377. SECRET. confirming verbal orders 10 jun 45. ops commencing 11 jun 45. infm. enemy str 1500 defending line of HARI river. jap 6 div HQ at RUSEI str unknown but considered strong and extending NORTH to MUSAKAKA. strong resistance may be expected with eventual jap withdrawl to MOBIAI river to repeat HARI river def. may use secret route approx 500 yds plus SOUTH and parallel to BUIN rd. outline plan. 58/59 inf bn flank move EAST through HARI NUMBER 3 area to HARI NUMBER 1. 57/60 inf bn flank move from TAITAI to KINGORI RUSEI track to BUIN rd at EAST OF HARI river. bombing arty and mortars will continue present softening programme and will cease by arrangement to coord with unit moves to BUIN rd. fire sp will then be at call by units or on programmes arranged with Bde HQ. if 57/60 inf bn is out of comm bombing and arty will continue on RUSEI area to 1230L wed 13 jun. D day mon 11 jun. intention. 15 inf bde will cut jap L of C at HARI NUMBER 1 and RUSEI and destroy enemy WEST of RUSEI incl astride BUIN rd method. 58/59 inf bn. tasks. one. est crossing HARI river at HARI NUMBER 3 area with 3 rifle coys BHQ and tks. two. seize BUIN rd at area HARI NUMBER 1. three. clear rd to HARI ford. four. clear rd to 57/60 inf bn at RUSEI. five. B. coy 58/59 inf bn remains at 999383. timings 58/59 inf ETA HARI NUMBER 1 morning wed 13 jun. 57/60 inf bn. tasks. one. bn less one coy move via KINGORI RUSEI track to RUSEI area and est bn def area astride BUIN rd. two. by aggressive def and patrolling destroy the japs. three. vigourously attack jap 6 div HQ at RUSEI area. four. when BUIN rd opened from HARI ford to RUSEI pursue japs to MOBIAI river to prevent def of that area. five. complete full reorg of force on line of MOBIAI river. six. maint frequent comm with bde HQ. timings. commence move mon 11 jun ETA RUSEI wed or thu 13/14 jun. 24 inf bn. tasks. carry out diversionary and deception tactics SOUTH of BUIN rd as follows. one. mon 11 jun harass enemy in PEPERU HARI ford area sq 9937 with inf and tks. two. attempt tk crossing of HARI river. three. tue 12 jun continue tactics EAST of HARI river with fake patrol clashes of varying intensity. four. move strong patrol to track sq 0135 and late tue 12 jun stage strong fake attack. five. remain overnight. six. wed 13 jun patrol in sq 0135 at first lt continue fake tactics in different locality. seven. generally harass the area EAST of HARI river and NORTH to BUIN rd except in HARI NUMBER 1 area. eight. relieve 11 jun A coy 58/59 inf bn 993780 with one plus sec MMG. supporting arms. allotments to units remain as at present. engr. provide two bulldozers for 58/59 inf bn. ACK. all infm



15 AUST INF BDE

OPERATION ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS

OPERATIONS - MOBIAI RIVER TO MIVO RIVER - SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE

FROM 15 inf bde TOO June 170530L

TO 24 inf bn 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn A sqn 2/4 armd regt  
15 inf bde sig sec 15 inf bde flamethrower pl D coy 1  
PIB 15 fd coy det ANGAU

INFO 2/11 fd regt 2 fd regt 15 fd amb 3 div 29 inf bde  
RAFFLES FORCE

COPIES Comd BM SC war diary (2)

GS412 CONFIDENTIAL. cp instr 10 . INFM. one . enemy forces have withdrawn in some disorder and are generally moving EAST along a route SOUTH of and parallel to BUIN RD. two. enemy parties str approx total 170 reported in gen KIN RI area by PIB. this str NOT yet verified by 2/8 cdo sqn. three. arty. btys of 2 fd regt and 2/11 fd regt are moving to areas by 1200 hrs 18 jun to bring fire to bear plus of MOBIAI FORD. likely enemy action. one. est hasty def on MOBIAI RIVER to delay our adv to MIVO RIVER. two. launch a strong immediate counter attack from MIVO RIVER area to gain time to constr MIVO defs. three. can expect greatly increased arty cones and guns sited for tk A. four. on COMMANDO RD at MIVO crossing enemy defs may develop. INTENTION. 15 inf bde will continue adv astride BUIN RD to MIVO RIVER. METHOD. 24 inf bn. tasks. one. est coy base KINGORI-RUSEI track junc and patrol EAST to ATKINSON FORCE and areas NORTH and SOUTH of COMMANDO RD. two. take over responsibility BUIN RD WEST of rear coy 58/59 inf bn. three. C coy remains present location temporarily. four. patrol NORTH to the 04 grid line and SOUTH to the 03 grid line. five. endeavour locate HQ 23 inf regt in squares 0036 0037 0136. six. be prepared as required to take over responsibility BUIN RD to TAI TAI track junc. 57/60 inf bn. tasks. one. continue adv to secure EAST of MOBIAI crossing from log crossing 073347 to ford 083352 both incl. two. patrol fwd NORTH and SOUTH of BUIN RD to MIVO RIVER. three. increase ATKINSON FORCE with remainder D coy personnel and maj McCALL to comd. four. ATKINSON FORCE to prevent enemy defs of the COMMANDO RD crossing MIVO RIVER. five. patrol enemy escape routes parallel to BUIN RD. six. conc all rear parties with main body on reaching MOBIAI objective. 58/59 inf bn. one. will take over responsibility of BUIN RD WEST of rear coy 57/60 inf bn. two. patrol NORTH and SOUTH of BUIN RD to close enemy escape routes. three. locate HQ 6 div in RUSEI area. four. patrol KINGORI track to 39 grid line. tks. one tp A sqn 2/4 armd regt to 24 inf bn to move KINGORI area. three tps 57/60 inf bn remainder 58/59 inf bn. engrs. to sup bull dozers on request this HQ or to units by personal contact OC 15 fd coy. D coy 1 PIB less 13 pl. to move in sp 57/60 inf bn in that area NOT later than am 18 jun. 15 inf bde flamethrower pl. mov to in sp 57/60 inf bn 17 jun ack all infm

If liable to be intercepted      Originator's      THI  
or fall into enemy hands, this      Instructions  
message must be sent IN CIPHER      Time cleared  
H G ROBSON MAJ



FROM 15 inf bde June 192359L  
TO 24 inf bn  
INFO 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn D coy 1 PIB 2 fd regt  
2/11 fd regt 3 div 29 inf bde RAFFLES FORCE  
A sqn 2/4 armd regt

COPIES COMD BM SC file (2) war diary (2)

GS429. CONFIDENTIAL. confirming verbal orders. cps for 24 inf bn. one. move one coy known as GRAHAM FORCE to relieve ATKINSON FORCE less 13 pl PIB at KATSUWA area 20 jun 45. tasks. recce from KATSUWA area with a view to seizing ASTILLS CROSSING 105413. recce KILLENS TRACK to 36 northing grid. recce reported track from KATSUWA area SOUTH along EAST bank of TOHODO RIVER to 075375. recce EAST to TAROPA and tracks on EAST bank of MIVO river. fwd regular topography reports. register prominent pts with arty. prepare DZ for sups. two. est patrol base vicinity garden MOBIAI river 075375. take patrol SOUTH along EAST bank MOBIAI river to 36 grid thence EAST to KILLENS TRACK for tk routes and a bn conc area. locate tk crossings over MOBIA in 36 grid area. from patrol base patrol NORTH to KATSUWA and lay LT cable to GRAHAM FORCE. route MUSAKAKA 046373 patrol base 075375 to KATSUWA developed for native carriers for sup and evac all infm

FROM 15 inf bde June 192359L  
TO ATKINSON FORCE  
INFO 24 inf bn 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn D coy 1 PIB  
COPIES COMD BM SC file (2) war diary (2)

GS431. CONFIDENTIAL. C coy 24 inf bn known as GRAHAM FORCE will leave KINGORI for KATSUWA am 20 jun to relieve your force. 13 pl 1 PIB will remain with GRAHAM FORCE. you will be under comd GRAHAM and will NOT return to unit until ordered by him. provide strong force to await GRAHAM arrival at KATSUWA. be in posn by 1200L 20 jun. patrol WEST along KINGORI track to junc with GRAHAM. hand over all topographical infm and unrequired stores. your route out may be SOUTH from KATSUWA to 075375 thence MUSAKAKA 046373 led by 24 inf bn guides ack all infm

FROM 15 inf bde June 241800L  
TO 24 inf bn 57/60 inf bn 58/59 inf bn A sqn 2/4 armd regt 15 fd coy 29 inf bde 3 div  
INFO D coy 1 PIB 2 fd regt 2/11 fd regt

GS447. CONFIDENTIAL. 58/59 inf bn will effect relief of coys 57/60 inf bn to be completed by 251200L. 57/60 inf bn will conc in area WEST of 06 grid line 25 jun and will move at first lt 26 jun to unit conc area on EAST bank of MOBIAI river at 084365 to be complete by 261400L. tks. two tps will move under escort 24 inf bn and two tps under escort 57/60 inf bn to arrive EAST bank MOBIAI river NOT after 1600L mon 25 jun. number 2 tp will move with 58/59 inf bn during relief and number 3 tp will remain at sqn HQ at call to 58/59 inf bn. 57/60 inf bn can anticipate moving two tps tks from EAST of MOBIAI to KILLENS track commencing AM 26 jun taking 3 days to arrive KILLENS track NOT later than 28 jun. 57/60 inf bn will be responsible for adequate escort of tks and dozer for this task and will adhere strictly to the time table laid down in this order. COs 57/60 and 58/59 inf bns will liaise direct for relief 57/60 inf bn. 15 rd coy are to provide all dozer assistance necessary to carry out tasks.



SECRET

15 AUSTRALIAN INF BDE OO 7

Copy No. . . .

25 Jun 45

Ref Map: 1/25000 series

INEM

1 Enemy

Following a very hasty withdrawal of approx 1250 tps from his HARI river defences, the enemy has prepared defensive posns along the general line of the MOBIAI river with which he hopes to delay our adv long enough to enable the main defences on the MIVO river to be completed. Of the 1250 tps known to have been committed on the HARI, the 23 Inf Regt present str estimated at 550-600 have taken up the posns on the MOBIAI and a composite unit from 6 Div tps, incl personnel from 13 Inf Regt, 6 Fd Arty Regt, 6 Tpt Regt and HQ tps totalling approx 300 have been fighting from posns WEST of the MOBIAI astride BUIN road, with the task of delaying our adv to the MOBIAI sufficiently long to enable 23 Inf Regt to est themselves in well prepared posns for their delaying action. This leaves 400 - 450 tps originally committed at the HARI unaccounted for. Of these it is considered that 150 would be casualties from that action and the remainder are 4 Med Arty personnel who have been withdrawn EAST of the MIVO.

There is evidence from FW that the tps of the composite unit are now withdrawing EAST of the MOBIAI to join 23 Inf Regt, and assist in fighting the delaying action to the MIVO.

There is no evidence of any intention of enemy forces at present WEST of the MIVO to take any large scale aggressive action. Their primary task is to delay and gain time.

On the COMMANDO road, present enemy str WEST of the MIVO is estimated at a maximum of 300 consisting of 17 Army tps and 4 South Seas Grn Unit tps. These tps are fresh from rear areas and are more likely to be aggressive than the tps in the BUIN road area.

2 Likely enemy action

- (a) Continue to strongly defend the area astride the BUIN road between the MOBIAI and MIVO crossings. Booby traps, mines and guns sited for tk A can be expected in succession along the rd to delay a frontal adv from the WEST.
- (b) On units gaining objectives, pockets of enemy may resist for a short time and then withdraw SOUTH to cross the MIVO RIVER SOUTH of BUIN RD.
- (c) Strong counter attacks may be expected in the KILLIENS TRACK area from log crossing 111345 to rd junc 112338.



- (d) PW reports by enemy arty fire will probably be brought to bear on the area WEST of MIVO FORD. PW states that this task has been specially surveyed.  
(Note: Units must ensure there is no crowding and all def areas and installations must be well clear of BUIN RD.)

3 Own Tps

On completion of the ops set out in this order it may be expected that 29 Aust Inf Bde will move through 15 Aust Inf Bde and continue ops in the direction of BUIN. 15 Aust Inf Bde will then hold the area between the HARI and MIVO rivers and sp ops 29 Aust Inf Bde. Further orders will be issued later.

INTENTION

- 4 15 Aust Inf Bde will seize the BUIN RD between MIVO FORD excl to MOBIAI FORD incl.

METHOD

5 Summary

- (a) 24 Aust Inf Bn less B Coy (less one pl) and C Coy, and 57/60 Aust Inf Bn with an outflanking move to NORTH of BUIN RD crossing the MOBIAI RIVER at 083365 will capture the following objectives:
- (i) 24 Aust Inf Bn - BUIN RD from KOOPANI RIVER 091339 to IVANA RIVER 098338 both incl,
  - (ii) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn - BUIN RD incl from junc KILLENS TRACK and BUIN RD to track junc 105338.

Two tps tks will move with each 24 and 57/60 Aust Inf Bns.

- (b) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn will hold a firm base on BUIN RD WEST of MOBIAI FORD and will carry out a strong diversionary role to SOUTH flank of BUIN RD with two coys, prior to and during attacks of 24 and 57/60 Aust Inf Bns.
- (c) B Coy, less one pl, and C Coy 24 Aust Inf Bn will continue present role in COMMANDO RD area.

6 Sequence of Events

Att as Appx A with Trace P.  
This may be varied in accordance with the situation.

7 24 Aust Inf Bn

- (a) Objective: Seize BUIN RD from KOOPANI RIVER 091339 to IVANA RIVER 098338 both incl.
- (b) Tasks
- (i) Exploit WEST to track junc 086344 and 085345 and prevent Jap escape to SOUTH from MOBIAI area,
  - (ii) Patrol WEST along BUIN RD to junc with 58/59 Aust Inf Bn.
  - (iii) Patrol EAST along BUIN RD to junc with 57/60 Aust Inf Bn.
  - (iv) Clear mines and booby traps from BUIN RD area to the WEST and objective area.



8 57/60 Aust Inf Bn

(a) Objective: Seize BUIN RD incl from junc KILLENS TRACK and BUIN RD to track junc 105338 and hold KILLENS TRACK from log crossing 111345.

(b) Tasks

- (i) Exploit WEST to junc with 24 Aust Inf Bn and clear the route of mines, booby traps etc.
- (ii) Patrol SOUTH of BUIN RD to intercept Jap forces moving EAST.
- (iii) Patrol NORTH along KILLENS TRACK and MIVO RIVER to prevent enemy counter attack from the NORTH.
- (iv) Re-org rapidly against counter attack from MIVO area.
- (v) Avoid likely enemy shelling areas by keeping clear of track juncs and likely registered pts.

9 58/59 Aust Inf Bn

Tasks

- (i) Hold the area immediately WEST of MOBIAI FORD as a firm base for 15 Aust Inf Bde attack.
- (ii) Carry out diversionary tactics in accordance with sequence of events.
- (iii) Patrol fwd continuously from 25 Jun EAST of MOBIAI FORD and be prepared to occupy any vacated enemy areas immediately located.
- (iv) Pass one tp of tks across MOBIAI FORD as soon as one coy is on EASTERN side.

10 D Coy 1 PIB

Will sp ops on accordance with sequence of events.

11 Routes

12 Conc Areas

13 Assembly Areas

} Att as Appx A and Trace F.

14 Timings

(CO 24 Aust Inf Bn will co-ord def areas of 24 and 57/60 Aust Inf Bns until mov to assembly areas commences.)

15 Tks

A Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt tk tps are allotted as follows:

24 Aust Inf Bn	FHQ and 4 Tp
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	1 and 5 Tps
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	2 and 3 Tps

3 Tp remains with Sqn HQ and is on call to 58/59 Aust Inf Bn.

16 Arty

(a) Arty is allotted in sp units as follows:

24 Aust Inf Bn	2 Aust Fd Regt
57/60 Aust Inf Bn	2/11 Aust Fd Regt

Both regts are at call to units if task is warranted.



(b) Tasks

- (i) Arty tasks under arrangements 15 Aust Inf Bde to 28 Jun incl.
- (ii) On 29 Jun 15 Aust Inf Bde will co-ord unit requests for arty sp on the basis of conc at call on a series of lines from NORTH to SOUTH to sp units onto objectives; thereafter arty at call by units.

17 Engrs

- (a) 15 Aust Fd Coy will sup bulldozers and engr teams in sp each unit and in accordance with sequence of events.
- (b) 15 Aust Fd Coy with unit escorts will clear the BUIN RD of mines, booby traps, etc, from MIVO FORD excl to MOBIAI FORD incl, and carry out necessary works to open the BUIN RD L of C.

18 Air

- (a) Programme of bombing tasks from day to day will be arranged by 15 Aust Inf Bde.
- (b) On 29 Jun to sp units capture of objective, hy strikes will be placed on objective areas.
- (c) During consolidation by 57/60 Aust Inf Bn on objective strikes will be placed on EAST side of and excl MIVO FORD to restrict enemy counter attack and destroy enemy arty sig cables.
- (d) Tac R, arty R, Mortar and contact R - normal daily availability.

19 15 Aust Inf Bde Flamethrower Pl

Remains with 58/59 Aust Inf Bn until moved under orders by 15 Aust Inf Bde to 24 Aust Inf Bn to arrive NOT later than 281200L.

20 Det ANGAU

- (a) Guides already allotted to units may be emp to locate any enemy def areas and escape routes.
- (b) Patrol EAST of MIVO RIVER to
  - (i) obtain infm of any enemy assembly for counter attack,
  - (ii) cut sig wires EAST of MIVO RIVER to prevent comms to HQ and arty.

ADM

21 Water

Units will est own WPs.

22 Conc Area

- (a) All units stores, rations and amn to be complete in unit conc areas by night 25/26 Jun, with the exception of essential HQ stores which are to be in conc area by 1200 hrs D plus 1.
- (b) Route to conc area - via LAWNS TRACK.



- 23 Assembly Areas  
Stores etc to be moved as per Sequence of Events.  
(Appx A)
- 24 Sups  
(a) DID - OGORATA DID  
(b) Sups at Conc Area  
(i) Following sups will be complete in unit conc areas by night 25/26 Jun 45:  
3 days SWPA - maint for consumption 26-28 Jun 45.  
3 days SWPA - res  
2 days FOR - maint (to be carried on the man, consumption 29-30 Jun.)  
5 days Native - 4 days maint, 1 day res.  
(ii) Res will be distributed as follows:  
2 days SWPA at conc area  
1 day SWPA at assembly area  
1 day Native at assembly area.
- 25 Ann  
(a) AP - OGORATA DID.  
(b) 24 Aust Inf Bn )  
57/60 Aust Inf Bn ) To be carried as ordered by COs.  
(c) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn - First line to be carried.
- 26 Med  
(a) MDS - 032363  
(b) Car Posts  
(i) Rear HQ 24 Aust Inf Bn  
To evac cases from LAWN TRACK L of C  
(ii) HQ 58/59 Aust Inf Bn  
(c) Lt sec will be standing by to move fwd when BUIN RD is open for evacs from 24 Aust Inf Bn and 57/60 Aust Inf Bn, or when a shorter cross country L of C is available. Location will be advised later.
- 27 Repair and Rec  
(a) 266 Aust IAD 042361.  
(b) Requests for rec to be made direct to 266 Aust LAD.
- 28 Ord  
Demands to be advised to HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde.
- 29 TC  
(a) Ptsmen  
(i) OGORATA DID  
(ii) Rd and track June 045360  
(iii) MOBIAI RIVER crossing when rd clear for traffic  
(b) Rd Patrol  
To op from 0730 hrs to 1730 hrs daily fwd of OGORATA DID to be prepared to place such additional ptsmen as may be required.



30 PW

- (a) Cage -- 042361
- (b) Pro escorts available on demand.

31 Engr Stores

On demand to HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde.

32 Burials

(a) Own dead

Graves will be clearly marked and, where possible, located in gps near tracks. Exact locations will be notified on AF W3314 with sketch of locality att.

(b) Enemy dead

Burials to take place as soon as possible.

33 Native Lab

- (a) 24 Aust Inf Bn -- 150
- (b) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn -- 190
- (c) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn -- 20
- (d) MDS -- 16
- (e) Natives will be returned to ANGAU Native Lab Compound as soon as possible.

INTERCOMN

34 LT

Line will be laid during adv of HQ. On gaining objectives, main Bde - Bn lines will be laid along BUIN RD and lines laid during adv will then be used as alternatives.

35 WT

- (a) No 11 sets will remain with bn HQ and provide main wireless link Bde to Bns.
- (b) Alternative wireless comn will be provided by:-
  - (i) 109 set Bde HQ to 208 set Bn HQ,
  - (ii) Tk wireless Bn HQ to HQ A Sqn 2/4 Aust Arm'd Regt.

36 SDS

SDS will deliver to rear bn HQ and units will arrange del fwd.

37 ACK.

Signed at: 1940 hrs

H G ROBSON Maj  
BM 15 Aust Inf Bde

Issued by: SDS



DISTRIBUTION

24 Aust Inf Bn (AIF)	1
57/60 Aust Inf Bn (AIF)	2
58/59 Aust Inf Bn	3
D Coy 1 PIB	4
A Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt	5 - 8
15 Aust Inf Bde Sig Sec (AIF)	9
14 Pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt	10
15 Aust Inf Bde Flamethrower Pl	11
266 Aust LAD	12
Det 3 Aust Div Pro Coy	13
ANGAU RUSEI	14
Comd	15
BM	16
SC	17
17 Air OP Flt	18
29 Aust Inf Bde (AIF)	19 - 20
2/11 Aust Fd Regt	21
2 Aust Fd Regt (AIF)	22
U Aust Hy Bty	23
15 Aust Fd Coy (AIF)	24
15 Aust Fd Amb (AIF)	25
File	26 - 27
War Diary	28 - 29



SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

15 AUST INF BDE - MOBIAI - MIVO RIVERS OPS

D DAY - MON 25 JUN 45

SECRET  
APPX A

to 15 Aust Inf Bde  
00 7 of Jun 45  
Copy No.....

SERIAL	DAY	UNIT	EVENT	AIR	ARTY	TKS	MORTARS	REMARKS
1	D Day Mon 25 Jun	(a) 24 Aust Inf Bn (less B and C Coys)  (b) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn  (c) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn	(a) Complete mov to conc area via LAWNS track (b) Res Q stores to be in posn 25 Jun (c) B and C Coys remain present location throughout above ops  (a) Relief by 58/59 Bn in present areas. To be complete by 1200L (b) Bivouac in coy def areas WEST of 06 easting grid on BUIN rd for night 25/26 Jun and reorg. (c) All res Q stores to be in posn on 25 Jun (a) Relieve 57/60 Bn in present areas by 1200L (b) Patrol to NORTH of BUIN rd from MOBIAI river to CONC area (c) Patrol EAST over MOBIAI river astride BUIN rd (d) Patrol EAST over log crossing 068338 to locate Jap secret track continuing EAST from crossing	Bde arrangements: Softening programme on known and likely enemy localities on BUIN rd between MOBIAI and MIVO rivers	Bde arrangements: (a) Softening and harassing programme as for AIR (b) Diversionary shoots on SOUTH flank	(a) Numbers 1, 5 and HQ F tk tps RV rd and track junc 045361 at 1000L 25 Jun for mov to CONC area. Es-corts by 57/60 Bn (b) 2 and 3 tps with 58/59 Bn	Unit arrangements	







SERIAL	DAY	UNIT	EVENT	AIR	ARTY	TKS	MORTARS	REMARKS
2	D plus 1 Tue 26 Jun	(b) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn  (c) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn  (d) 15 Aust Fd Coy (e) D Coy 1 PIB (f) 29 Aust Inf Bde	(a) Bn move via LAWNS track to CONC area to be in posn at 1400L 26 Jun (b) Escort three tps tks from tk RV 045361 at 0900L (c) ATKINSON force to rejoin 57/60 Bn at CONC area (a) Continue tasks as for serial 1 (b) Carry out diversionary tactics SOUTH of BUIN rd EAST of MOBIAI Prepare tk route to 24 and 57/60 Bns ASSEMBLY areas Continue present patrolling plan Anticipate one bn to take over area west of 58/59 Bn					
3	D plus 2 Wed 27 Jun	(a) 24 Aust Inf Bn  (b) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn	(a) Remain in CONC area (b) Complete route to assembly area (c) Escort tks to ASSEMBLY area as required  (a) Reorg in CONC area (b) Patrol routes to ASSEMBLY area (c) Escort tks enroute to ASSEMBLY area as required (d) May be necessary to move bn to ASSEMBLY area on this date 27 Jun	Bde arrangements as for serial 1 May incl MIVO ford area	Bde arrangements as for serial 1	Move tks to 24 and 57/60 Bns on routes to ASSEMBLY areas	Mortar bty at MOBIAI ford: Concs as ordered or on request	



SERIAL	DAY	UNIT	EVENT	AIR	ARTY	TKS	MORTARS	REMARKS
3	D plus 2 Wed 27 Jun	(c) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn  (d) 15 Aust Fd Coy  (e) D Coy 1 PIB	(a) One coy remain BUIN rd WEST of MOBIAI ford (b) At least two coys to prepare to move EAST of MOBIAI to harass enemy and create diversion SOUTH of BUIN rd between MOBIAI and MIVO to be in posn on 28 Jun  Continue constr tk routes to 24 and 57/60 Bn ASSEMBLY areas  (a) One pl under command 58/59 Bn for diversionary tasks. (b) Further orders later					
4	D plus 3 Thu 28 Jun	(a) 24 Aust Inf Bn (less B and C Coys)  (b) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn	(a) Complete mov of whole force to ASSEMBLY area (b) May move to a fwd ASSEMBLY area if desired (c) Q arrangements to be complete at ASSEMBLY area  (a) Complete mov of whole force to ASSEMBLY area (b) May move to a fwd ASSEMBLY area if desired but maint secrecy and security (c) Q arrangements to be completed at ASSEMBLY area	STRIKE areas between objectives on BUIN rd for 29 Jun	Bde arrangements as for serial 1	Arrive at bn ASSEMBLY areas	MOBIAI mortar bty as ordered or at call	



SERIAL	DAY	UNIT	EVENT	AIR	ARTY	TKS	MORTARS	REMARKS
4	D plus 3 Thu 28 Jun	(c) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn  (d) 15 Aust Fd Coy  (e) D Coy 1 PIB (less two pls)	(a) Diversionary forces in posn to harass and prevent escape of Japs to the SOUTH of BUIN rd and lower MIVO crossings  Bulldozer and engr teams with 24 and 57/60 Bns at ASSEMBLY area.  Tasks to be ordered by 15 Aust Inf Bde					
5	D plus 4 Fri 29 Jun	(a) 24 Aust Inf Bn	(a) Seize BUIN rd from KOOPANI river 091339 to IVANA river 098338 both incl (b) Exploit WEST to track junc 086344 and 085345 (c) Patrol SOUTH of BUIN rd and WEST to junc with 58/59 Bn	(a) MAXIMUM strike Three missions if timings suitable on objective areas (b) Third mission may strike MIVO ford to provide EAST flank protection to 57/60 Bn	(a) Series Attack with of conc units NORTH to SOUTH at call. Requests to be submitted by bns and coord by bde. (b) One regt to each 24 and 57/60 Bns (c) On arrival objectives btys at call			Programme to be arranged by bde to coord with arty plan



SERIAL	DAY	UNIT	EVENT	AIR	ARTY	TKS	MORTARS	REMARKS
5	D plus 4 Fri 29 Jun.	(b) 57/60 Aust Inf Bn	(a) Seize BUIN rd incl from junc KILLENS track and BUIN rd to track junc 105338 (b) Hold KILLENS track from log crossing 111345 (c) Exploit WEST to junc with 24 Bn (d) Patrol SOUTH BUIN rd to intercept Jap mov EAST		(d) Shell MIVO ford area to protect EAST flank 57/60 Bn			
		(c) 58/59 Aust Inf Bn	(a) Patrol EAST to 24 Bn to open BUIN rd L of C (b) Harass enemy SOUTH of BUIN rd					
		(a) 15 Aust Fd Coy	(a) Bulldozer and engr teams with 24 and 57/60 Bns in the attack (b) Clear BUIN rd between MOBIAI ford and junc KILLENS track and BUIN rd of booby traps and mines					

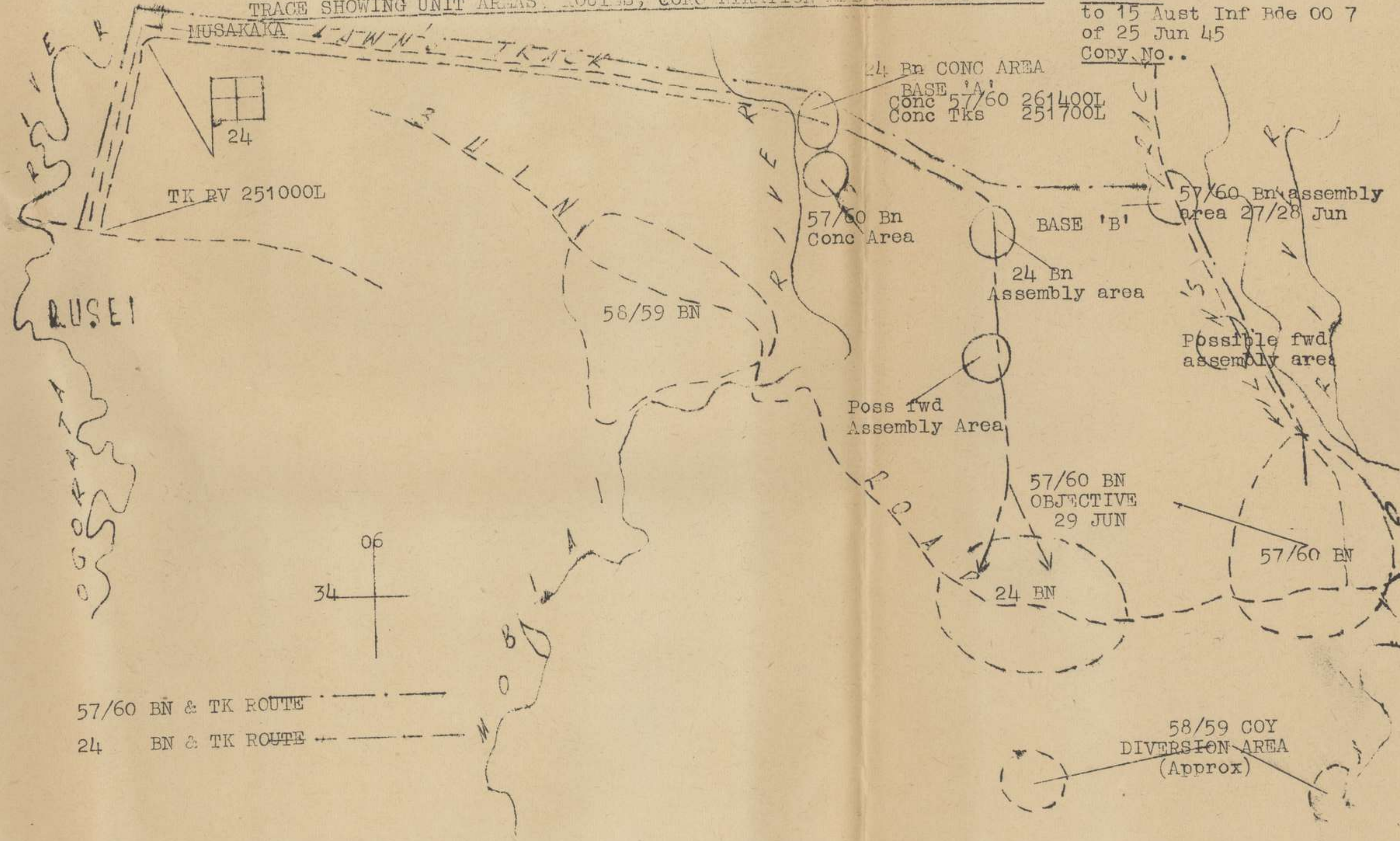
NOTES

- 1 Flamethrower Pl  
Remain with 58/59 Aust Inf Bn until moved by orders HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde to 24 Aust Inf Bn.  
Probable date 27 Jun 45.
- 2 CO 24 Aust Inf Bn is responsible for coord of 24 and 57/60 Aust Inf Bns at CONCENTRATION area.
- 3 This Sequence of Events is subject to variation in accordance with the situation. Events and timings may be changed by orders of HQ 15 Aust Inf Bde



TRACE SHOWING UNIT AREAS, ROUTES, CONCENTRATION AND ASSEMBLY AREAS

SECRET  
TRACE P  
to 15 Aust Inf Bde OO 7  
of 25 Jun 45  
Copy No..





MESSAGE FORM

FROM 15 inf bde TOO June 291710L

TO 24 inf bn 57/60 inf bn A sqn 2/4 armd regt 58/59 inf  
bn 15 inf bde sig sec 15 inf bde flamethrower pl D coy  
1 PIB det ANGAU

INFO 2/11 fd regt 2 fd regt 15 fd coy 15 fd amb 3 div 29  
inf bde 2/4 armd regt

COPIES Comd BM SC file (3) war diary (2)

GS466 CONFIDENTIAL. op instr 11. tasks for 30 jun 45. all units. one. complete opening of BUIN RD 1 of c in accordance with 00 7. two. patrol widely to locate enemy pockets and vacated areas. 24 inf bn. will follow tracks of enemy prime mover to locate direction and place of mov. 57/60 inf bn will. One. patrol fwd to MIVO FORD and river line between 112336 and log crossing 111345. two. patrol SOUTH along river line to 103313 to locate crossings and destroy enemy parties. three. patrol NORTH along WEST bank of MIVO to 37 grid line and EAST of log crossing 111345. 58/59 inf bn. one. patrol to locate jap 6 div HQ. two. conc coys less A coy in coy localities WEST of MOBIAI FORD all infm

If liable to be intercepted or fall into enemy hands this message must be sent IN CIPHER	Originator's Instructions  IMPORTANT	THI  Time cleared
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N D ANDERSON Lt  
Maj

MESSAGE FORM

FROM 15 inf bde TOO July 041820L

TO 57/60 inf bn

INFO 24 inf bn 58/59 inf bn 29 inf bde 3 div

COPIES Comd BM SC file (3) war diary (2)

GS482 CONFIDENTIAL. op instr 12. infm. special propaganda leaflets have been dropped on enemy occupied areas advising those who wish to surrender to make for the coast and proceed WEST to the mouth of the HARI RIVER. in view of above a def locality is est at MAMAGOTA to receive enemy who decide to surrender. plan. one pl 57/60 inf bn will occupy a def locality at MAMAGOTA on 4 jul and carry out the following tasks. tasks. one. maint an alert watch for enemy approach and make every effort to obtain surrender of these personnel consistent with safety own tps. two. accomodate and gd enemy personnel who surrender. three. post and despatch such security patrols as considered necessary. four. take early action for despatch of prisoners to HQ 3 div under advice this HQ and DAPM 3 div. adm. issued separately. intercomm. LT is direct to HQ 3 div. WT link by WS 208 to HQ 57/60 inf bn will be est and call times arranged by unit all infm

If liable to be intercepted or fall into enemy hands, this message must be sent IN CIPHER	Originator's Instructions	THI  Time cleared
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H G ROBSON Maj



# 15 AUST INF BDE OPERATIONS 13 APR - 30 JUN



## LEGEND

- 24 AUST INF BN
- 57'60 AUST INF BN
- 58'59 AUST INF BN
- ENEMY POSNS
- DIVERSIONARY MOVES

