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**16 Infantry Brigade**  
**January - May 1945**

SECRET

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16 AUST INF BDE REPORT ON OPERATIONS

Period 23 Jan 45 to 8 May 45.

ADVANCE FROM THE LINE ILAP - MALIN - ABAU TO THE  
LINE OF THE HAWAIN RIVER.

- Part I Record of Events
- Part II Lessons from Operations
- Part III Equipment and Weapons.

## PART I : RECORD OF EVENTS

### INTRODUCTION

1. This report covers the operations as carried out by 16 Aust Inf Bde Group in the coastal advance towards WEWAK from the line ABOAMA - ILAP - MALIN - ABAU to the line of the HAWAIN RIVER during the period 24 Jan 45 - 8 May 45. The advance which covered a distance of 36 miles, traversed the coastal track and the high ground to the SOUTH generally as far inland as the line ABOAMA - ALBIS - WONGINARA - AUTOGI - PAROM.

2. The operations commenced with the relief of 19 Aust Inf Bde and were completed when the same brigade took over at the HAWAIN RIVER. The phases covered during the period were as follows :-

- PHASE 1. RELIEF OF 19 AUST INF BDE AND INITIAL OPERATIONS. Period 23 Jan - 10 Feb.
- PHASE 2. ADVANCE TO ANUMB RIVER. Period 11 Feb - 13 Mar.
- PHASE 3. CAPTURE OF BUT AND DAGUA. Period 14 Mar - 24 Mar.
- PHASE 4. INLAND OPS FROM ANUMB RIVER TO DAGUA. Period 25 Mar - 13 Apr.
- PHASE 5. CAPTURE KARAWOP, BOIKEN AND HAWAIN. Period 14 Apr - 8 May 45.

3. The terrain confined the main advance to the narrow coastal plain between the base of the coastal ranges and the shore. It necessitated at all times extensive and vigorous patrolling into the high ground to locate the enemy or report the area as clear. Having located the enemy it then required the employment of an adequate force supported by heavy weapons to destroy him before continuing the advance.

4. Apart from few small straggling parties, the enemy showed himself to be a well organized body with a fanatical determination to hold his positions at all costs. In most cases he was well clothed and well equipped and appeared to have an adequate supply of rations. However, there were instances where he had been existing entirely on sak sak and as a result of our advance, had been disorganized. Generally, his morale was of a high standard but under such circumstances it was very low.

5. The nature of the country presented many difficulties and necessitated major engineering tasks to be undertaken. The coastal tract, timbered with light scrub skin to secondary growth and with some patches of sago swamps, provided very poor roads. Tracks existed either along the beach or immediately behind and were either of a loose sandy surface or of a thick clay soil which soon became a quagmire. The rivers, like most streams draining rain forest country, were subject to violent flooding and brought down a large quantity of driftwood for which reason low level bridging could only be of a temporary nature. Many small streams flooding out into the coastal plain also provided problems in the constructions of an L of C. In most cases quick development of the L of C made it temporarily passable but traffic soon cut them up to

such an extent as to become completely impassable and here was involved the major engineering tasks. Only foot traffic could traverse the ranges. These rose quickly up to anything from 1000 to 2000 feet and had very steep northern faces with narrow razor backed ridges.

PHASE 1. RELIEF OF 19 AUST INF BDE AND INITIAL OPERATIONS.

1. The relief of 19 Aust Inf Bde was to be effected NOT before 23 Jan 45 and the following role was given to the brigade :

(a) Area of responsibility : ILAP V636211 - MALIN V637240 - DANMAP RIVER - DANIMOL RIVER - BABIENG V407355 all inclusive.

(b) Tasks

(i) If not secured by 19 Aust Inf Bde prior to relief secure the line ILAP - MALIN - ABOAMA.

(ii) When the above line was secured to prevent enemy movement westward of it.

(iii) Harass the enemy by offensive patrolling forward to the ANUMB RIVER and destroy him where found.

(iv) Maintain a standing patrol at WALUM V5719.

(c) Inter-brigade boundary:

Incl to 16 Aust Inf Bde - junction ANUMB RIVER and HELIMAP Creek V770183 - GIN IMA V684167 - line of SUAP Creek and ATUB RIVER to V584180 thence west along grid 18 to AMUK RIVER V380180 - exclusive NALU V320207.

2. As from the time of assuming command the following troops were in support or under command :

In Support : RAA 6 Aust Div less one fd regt  
RAE 6 Aust Div less two fd coys.

Under Command : C Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt less three tps  
2/3 Aust MG Bn less two coys  
Two secs 2/2 Aust Tpt Pl  
2/3 Aust Tpt Pl  
2/21 Aust Sup Dep Pl  
2/22 Aust Sup Dep Pl  
2/23 Aust Sup Dep Pl  
2/7 Aust Fd Amb  
110 Aust Bde Wksp  
110 Aust Bde Ord Fd Pk  
Det 6 Aust Div Sal Unit  
Det AACS.

2/6 Aust Cav (Cdo) Regt remained under command until 310800K and thereafter 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn only under command.

3. The following were the groupings and dispositions of the brigade as originally planned.

(a) HQ 16 Aust Inf Bde Group

Troops : HQ 16 Aust Inf Bde  
Sig Sec 16 Aust Inf Bde  
10 Pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt  
2/45 Aust LAD.

In Support : HQ RAA 6 Aust Div  
HQ RAE 6 Aust Div  
2/2 Aust Fd Coy.

Under Command : 2/6 Aust Cav (Cdo) Regt less 2/9  
Aust Cdo Sqn.  
C Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt less three  
tps.  
Det 2/4 Aust Pigeon Sec  
2/1 Aust Tpt Pl  
One Sec 2/2 Aust Tpt Pl  
One Sec 2/3 Aust Tpt Pl  
2/21 Aust Sup Dep Pl  
2/22 Aust Sup Dep Pl  
2/23 Aust Sup Dep Pl  
2/7 Aust Fd Amb  
110 Aust Bde Wksp  
110 Aust Bde Ord Fd Pk  
Det 6 Aust Div Sal Unit  
Det AACS.

Area : SUAIN V5331.

(b) 2/1 Aust Inf Bn Group

Troops : 2/1 Aust Inf Bn

In Support : 2/3 Aust Fd Regt

Under Command : A Coy 2/3 Aust MG Bn.

Area : ABAU V659287 - NIMBUN Creek junction  
V655280 - creek junction V648281 - SOUTH of NIAP  
POINT V636296 - NIAP POINT V636300. Small  
detachments on DOGRETO SPUR and ABAU HILL V6528.

(c) 2/2 Aust Inf Bn Group

Troops : 2/2 Aust Inf Bn

Under Command : 2/3 Aust MG Bn less three coys.

Area : MATAPAU V6230 - LUAIN V5531 - FORK  
V5529.

(d) 2/3 Aust Inf Bn Group

Troops : 2/3 Aust Inf Bn

In Support : 2/2 Aust Fd Regt

Under Command : 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn.

Area : WALUM V579190 - ILAP V635211 - BEND  
V633223 - MALIN V637240 - ARIUAI SADDLE V6427 -  
IDAIKABUL V5725.

4. Details of the relief of 19 Aust Inf Bde were as follows :

(a) Advance parties departed from AITAPE on 20 Jan.

(b) 2/1 Aust Inf Bn departed from AITAPE on 23 Jan and completed the relief of 2/11 Aust Inf Bn on 24 Jan.

(c) 2/3 Aust Inf Bn departed from AITAPE on 24 Jan and completed the relief of 2/8 Aust Inf Bn on 28 Jan.

(d) HQ 16 Aust Inf Bde moved from AITAPE on 27 Jan and assumed command at 1100 hours on 29 Jan.

(e) 2/2 Aust Inf Bn mov from AITAPE was delayed as a result of weather conditions on the L of C and it was NOT until 8 Feb that mov was completed. 2/4 Aust Inf Bn had been in reserve and had moved prior to the arrival of 2/2 Aust Inf Bn.

5. 19 Aust Inf Bde had secured the line ILAP - MALIN - ABAU at the time of relief and consequently the brigade took over this line. However, restrictions had been placed on the brigade's activities inasmuch that patrolling was to be limited to that required to make secure the line.

6. On the night 27/28 Jan exceptionally heavy rains seriously disrupted all Ls of C, making them impassable for many days. The DANMAP River commenced to rise at 1800 hours and by 2100 hours had risen 12 to 15 feet. In places the river changed its course completely, thus creating small islands which were later covered by raging torrents. At the mouth the rush of water washed out a gap of approximately 1600 feet, completely destroying the partly constructed bridge. In the early stage the rising threatened troops located in its vicinity - HQ and HQ Coy 2/3 Aust Inf Bn at V637246 and one troop 2/10 Aust Cdo Sqn and two platoons 2/3 Aust MG Bn at the FORK V5529. Attempts were made to evacuate troops and equipment by rope across the water in the case of those on islands and by moving to higher ground in the case of those on the bank. The speed and extent of the rise made this impossible with the result that troops and equipment were completely washed away, even that equipment which had been tied to trees. Many troops spent up to 7 hours in the water hanging on to trees and eventually reached safety when the water subsided.

7. Casualties as a result of the flood were as follows :

2/3 Aust Inf Bn	1 Dead	6 Missing
2/2 Aust Fd Regt		1 Missing
2/10 Aust Cdo Sqn	2 Dead	2 Missing.

For the following three days numerous patrols operated along the banks from the mouth to MALIN with the task of locating bodies and casualties but apart from finding one unidentifiable body, included in above figures, to no avail.

8. Arrangements were made for air dropping at MALIN of all essential items of equipment and clothing to replace that lost by 2/3 Aust Inf Bn. This was effected on 29 Jan.

Considerable damage had been done to signal communications, necessitating in many instances the laying and rebuilding of complete lines.

9. The delay in the arrival of 2/2 Aust Inf Bn in the area, caused by the disruption of the Ls of C, necessitated a re-grouping in the rear areas. 2/3 Aust MG Bn less A B and D Coys reverted to command HQ 16 Aust Inf Bde on 29 Feb and became responsible for the def of the DANMAP RIVER from exclusive IDAIKABUL to inclusive the mouth and for the area in the brigade

sector WEST of the DANMAP RIVER and WEST of rear boundary of 2/3 Aust Inf Bn. All units, sub units and detachments up to the rear boundaries of forward battalions were organized into groups and made responsible for the defence of specific areas, thus achieving protection for installations.

Enemy Information

10. At the time of relief the enemy situation was briefly as follows. The Jap force in the coastal sector (from the coast to inclusive ABOAMA) was the AOZU Detachment commanded by Major General AOZU. Captured Prisoners of War, documents and maps had indicated that this force was organized with 237 Regt, 41 Div as a basic element. To this regiment had been added from time to time many other units and parts of units with typical Jap disregard for system and uniformity. The main additional units comprising this force were

- MOKO Raiding Unit (organized by 18 Army)
- 2 Bn (and probably 3 Bn) 115 Regt 51 Div
- 3 Bn, 239 Regt
- FUKADA Coy, 20 Div
- 9 Debarkation Unit
- Two Machine Cannon Coys.

11. The AOZU Detachment was organized into 5 distinct groups or units.

- (a) The FUZI Sector Unit : responsible for the coast from ABAU to the ANUMB RIVER and probably also NAMBUT HILL.
- (b) The AKASAKA Sector Unit : responsible originally for the high ground in the area MALIN to the EAST - area LONG RIDGE - CRUTOM HILL.
- (c) The MIZUHO Sector Unit : responsible for ABOAMA area.
- (d) The FUZI Agricultural Unit : responsible for gardening and supply duties SOWOM area.
- (e) The AOKATSU Sector Unit : responsible for the HQ of the AOZU Detachment at AROHEMI and the surrounding high ground.

12. The estimated strength of the detachment as shown in the AOZU Ration State interpreted on 28 Feb 45 as at 25 Jan was as follows :

Coastal area	237 Inf Regt	70	)	170
(FUZI Sector)	41 Div Med Unit	30		
	2 Fd Hosp	30		
	FUKADA Coy	40		
AKASAKA Sector	3 Bn 237 Regt	20	)	445
	18 Army MOKO Raiding Unit	120		
	3 Bn 239 Regt	75		
	3 Fd Hosp	30		
	2 Bn 115 Regt	100		
	TAMABASI Bn (probably 3 Bn 115 Regt)	100		
Area SOWOM	FUZI Agricultural Unit including 9 Debarkation Unit and Water Purifying Unit.		)	75
AOKATSU Sector (Area AROHEMI)	Part HQ 41 Div	20	)	80
	HQ 237 Regt	30		
	18 Army Sigs	30		
Total strength		770.		

13. In the coastal area, following patrol clashes with 19 Aust Inf Bde, the enemy had withdrawn from positions on DOGRETO SPUR and ABAU V6528. Further patrol clashes had occurred in areas approximately 1000 yards EAST of ABAU after which patrols had made no contact with as far EAST as WANK Creek V6928.

14. In the MALIN area the enemy was reported to have been patrolling on the ABOAMA 684175 - ILAP track, on the headwaters of SILITA Creek and westward in the ASPAS - ARAMAP RIVER area.

15. Subsequent documents captured outlined the enemy's intention. His original force was to be reinforced by the MOKO Raiding Unit and a battalion of 115 Regt, as shown already included in the AOZU Detachment, and the intention then became to adopt an offensive and push our forces WEST of the DANMAP RIVER, thus upsetting our plans.

Initial Operations. 27 Jan - 10 Feb

16. The brigade group now having occupied the line ILAP - MALIN - ABAU with dispositions as shown on trace attached as Appendix E commenced systematic patrolling with the object of covering the entire brigade sector up to the forward limits of patrolling, the line of MAMBUT Creek - UNA Creek - Creek junction V685224.

Coastal Sector

17. 2/1 Aust Inf Bn activities centred around the coastal track in vicinity of Y Creek and McNEILLS Creek and the north west end of NAMBUT HILL. Eleven platoon patrols and numerous sector patrols operated against enemy positions located at Y Creek and McNEILLS Creek and as a result 19 enemy were killed with own casualties 2 killed and 6 wounded.

18. A platoon patrol base was established on north west end of NAMBUT HILL at HAYDONS KNOLL and patrols operated freely along NAMBUT HILL to as far EAST as 800 feature and along NIMBUN Creek until the night 29/30 Jan when the enemy, estimated strength of 30, attempted an infiltration attack on 2 Platoon holding the base at the time. The attack lasted for 5 hours and was repulsed, the enemy withdrawing to positions on JAP KNOLL 200 yards EAST. 7 enemy were killed and own casualties 2 killed as a result of the action.

19. During this action Lt J B HAYDON played a prominent part and was an inspiration to his platoon by his cool courage and example. He organized the fight, directed activities, fearlessly exposing himself in doing so and personally delivered reserve ammunition and grenades to the forward pits. On one occasion he went forward to a point where the attack appeared likely to penetrate and personally participated in the fire fight. Following this, several platoon attacks were made frontally against the enemy's position, these being supported by artillery and mortar concentrations and, though 13 enemy were killed, the position could not be captured.

20. On 4 Feb, A Coy attacked NAMBUT HILL from a point 1000 yards south east along NIMBUN Creek with the object of moving in on the enemy's positions from the rear. The attack was supported by artillery concentrations and was also to be supported by an air strike which had to be cancelled because of weather conditions. The attack was unsuccessful as the ridge attacked, known as KENDALLS KNOLL, proved to be strongly held by the enemy and any further attempts would only result in heavy casualties.



21. 17 Platoon in support of A Company action advanced from HAYDONS KNOLL and almost penetrated the position but were again forced to withdraw. In the action the platoon commander was seriously wounded and Lt A D B MURRAY, the mortar Observation Post officer accompanying the platoon assumed command. Lt MURRAY showed great coolness and courage by first of all bringing out Lt McNEILL the platoon commander, after another soldier had been killed in endeavouring to do so, and then reorganizing the platoon and conducting an orderly withdrawal under extremely difficult circumstances. At the same time he effectively directed mortar fire on the enemy positions only 40 yards forward. 9 enemy had been killed during the two actions.

22. Following this, air strikes and artillery concentrations were instituted. On 5 Feb the saddle WEST of 800 feature was bombed and on 6 and 7 Feb successful air strikes within 170 yards of our positions were made on JAP KNOLL, following which 17 Pl, supported by 18 Pl captured JAP KNOLL and exploited to GOTTS KNOLL 150 yards south east. The enemy had suffered 4 killed and 7 freshly killed were also found, presumably as a result of bombing and artillery concentrations, and had withdrawn to BUNKERS KNOLL 200 yards south east of GOTTS KNOLL. On 10 Feb an air strike was carried out on BUNKERS KNOLL but failed to dislodge the enemy from their positions. Contact patrols subsequently killed 5 enemy for own casualties one killed.

23. In this period 58 air sorties were carried out on JAP KNOLL and BUNKERS KNOLL and 12 on McNEILLS Creek at V677286. Targets in all cases were indicated by 3 inch mortar smoke and infantry endeavoured to indicate own forward positions by firing green verey lights but these were NOT on any occasion observed by the aircraft. Bombing was extremely accurate. The closely bombed nature of NAMBUT HILL rendered tactical reconnaissance of this feature impossible.

#### MALIN Sector

24. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn established a patrol base at V666249 to patrol to the EAST and NORTH. A very successful encounter took place on 1 Feb on the high ground between the headwaters of the MIMA and CROTOM Creeks, the feature at V683252 which became known as CORYS SPUR. A two platoon patrol operating in the area killed 3 enemy of a force of 5 dug in on the crest of a spur. Following this an enemy force, approximate strength 40 were encountered in prepared positions extending along a narrow razor backed ridge. Surprise was achieved by killing a sentry, allowing the forward scout to locate the enemy defences and the attack to be launched undetected; one platoon being forward. Pte J W PERRY, who had been scouting continuously for two hours over dangerous ground, was responsible for this by killing the sentry silently with a machete. The outer perimeter was overrun before the enemy could effectively employ his weapons. The second platoon was committed when heavy fire developed from positions in depth but the enemy, however, was unable to cope with the assault. Six LMGs were captured, quantities of food consisting of rice, tinned meats, currie, coffee and tea were found. Valuable maps and documents were also procured. Casualties were enemy 33 killed, own 1 killed 7 wounded.

25. In this action Lt G E CORY, Lt S P WEIR and Sgt B V GOOLEY played prominent roles and showed exceptional courage. Lt CORY who was in command of the force, personally directed operations and went into the assault with the leading elements. His sound tactical appreciation, daring and resourcefulness was mainly responsible for its success. Lt WEIR who was in command of a platoon and though shot through the shoulder in the initial stage, led his men into the concentrated fire of the enemy successfully capturing his sector. Leaping into an LMG post he destroyed the gunner and effectively turned the LMG on to the enemy, following which he led a spirited charge, at the same time firing burst after burst into the enemy. Sgt GOOLEY assumed command of his platoon after his platoon commander had been seriously wounded and rallying his men he vigorously assaulted the enemy's left flank in the face of intense fire from 3 enemy LMGs. One gun was silenced following which he destroyed the remaining two gun crews and captured the guns. This resulted in the rapid withdrawal of remnants of the enemy force.

26. The success of this action could only be attributed to the advantage achieved by surprise, the vigor with which the attack was forced home and the effective use of platoon weapons in covering the assault. Had surprise not been achieved the terrain would have made the task impossible without adequate support.

27. On the same day ABOAMA V6827 was occupied by a troop of 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn without opposition, this area having been given as an additional brigade responsibility. A Dropping Zone was established on the track midway between ILAP and ABOAMA.

28. Activity which followed was confined mainly to patrol clashes. On 5 Feb a patrol of 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn engaged 6 enemy at V685185, killing 4 and wounding 2 without casualties to own troops. The enemy were in good condition and well clad. Further contacts were made at V672241 and V697203, resulting in 5 enemy being killed.

29. A two platoon patrol of 2/3 Aust Inf Bn operating in the high ground in vicinity of CORYS SPUR located on 9 Feb an enemy position at V681254. The enemy which had previously been engaged by a smaller party were attacked, complete surprise being achieved. Again, the position was captured and two LMGs, one Bren Gun, packs and equipment were taken. 5 enemy were killed and own casualty was one.

Capt G W JENNIS was responsible for this action and by seizing the initiative had completely routed the enemy.

Following this a patrol base of two platoons was established by 2/3 Aust Inf Bn in the area and subsequent patrolling reported the area as clear.

30. Casualty Figures 25 Jan - 10 Feb 45.

Unit	OWN		ENEMY	
	KIA	WIA	Killed	PW
2/1 Inf Bn	8	15	52	-
2/2 Inf Bn	"	"	"	"
2/3 Inf Bn	8	16	41	"
2/3 MG Bn	"	"	"	"
2/9 Cdo Sqn	"	2	19	"
RAA	"	2	1	"
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>"</b>

PHASE 2. ADVANCE TO ANUMB RIVER 11 FEB - 14 MAR.

1. At this stage the restrictions imposed confining the brigade's activities to the present line were lifted by the issue of 6 Aust Div Operation Instruction 6 which gave the intention of the Division as being to capture in succession BUT, DAGUA, WEWAK.
2. In order to establish a forward base at DOGRETO BAY V6429 which up to the present had only been used as a temporary measure for supply by landing craft until the AIRAPE L of C by road was constructed, 16 Aust Inf Bde were given the tasks of capturing in succession
  - (a) line of WANK Creek;
  - (b) line of ANUMB RIVER.
3. The line WALUM - ABOAMA - MALIN - ABAU was still to be held. Additional troops allotted were the remainder of 2/3 Aust MG Bn which came under command on 15 Feb. HQ RAA 6 Aust Div and 2/3 Aust Fd Regt reverted from being in support and 2/2 Aust Fd Regt came under command.
4. The brigade's immediate intention was to secure the general line all inclusive WOLHUK Creek - UNA Creek - MAMBU Creek.
5. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn less 4 Pl with in support one bty 2/2 Aust Fd Regt were given the task of securing the general line WOLHUK Creek - UNA Creek - and were responsible for the right sector.
6. 2/1 Aust Inf Bn with under command one tp C Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt and in support one bty 2/2 Aust Fd Regt and one pl 2/1 Aust Fd Coy as required for co-operation with tanks were given the task of securing the general line MAMBU HILL at V680265 - MAMBU Creek and responsible for the left sector.
7. 2/3 Aust MG Bn with under command 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn and in support one bty 2/2 Aust Fd Regt were given the following tasks :
  - (a) Prevent enemy infiltration WEST or NORTH of general line WALUM - ILAP - MALIN - exclusive NIAP 2 V646891.
  - (b) Protection of beach maintenance area, DOGRETO BAY.
  - (c) Prevent enemy movement on lateral route through ABOAMA area.
8. 2/2 Aust Inf Bn with in support C Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt less four tps were to carry out role of reserve and move forward into area HAYDONS ENOLL V68281 - ABAU - NIAP 2 - junction NIMBUN and ARAGUNAM Creeks at V654879 progressively as evacuation of area by 2/1 Aust Inf Bn permitted. Task was also to assist in the development of routes forward.
9. The rate of advance was governed by the following factors :
  - (a) Facilities for supply.
  - (b) Necessity for development of tracks ABAU - ARUIAI Saddle - MALIN, SE along NIMBUN Creek and coastal track which involved considerable bridging.

(c) The relief of 2/3 Aust Inf Bn of present tasks by 2/3 Aust MG Bn.

10. Air dropping, owing to shortage of aircraft and heavy commitments in the SOUTH, was limited and the maximum number of native carriers made available was 600.

11. The advance commenced with the capture of NAMBUT HILL followed by the capture of ROCKY FORESHORE by 2/1 Aust Inf Bn and the occupation of positions on LONG RIDGE in the area between the headwaters of NIMBUN and CROTOM Creeks by 2/3 Aust Inf Bn, following the relief by 2/3 Aust MG Bn.

#### Capture of NAMBUT HILL

12. On 11 Feb B Coy 2/1 Aust Inf Bn supported by an air strike of 11 BEAUFORTS with artillery and mortar concentrations carried out an outflanking move around the enemy's positions at McNEILLS Creek V677286 on the coast and attacked from the SE. The position was captured but the main force of the enemy had withdrawn, presumably as a result of the bombing. Enemy casualties were 4 killed and our casualties were 3 killed and 2 wounded. A platoon patrol exploiting EAST for 300 yards to ARCOL Creek V683285 located further enemy but it was considered that no further advance along the coast could be undertaken until NAMBUT HILL was cleared of the enemy. B Coy held their position at McNEILLS Creek and contact was maintained with the enemy at ARCOL Creek by patrols.

13. Patrolling from the coast indicated that by moving a force from McNEILLS Creek area via Y Spur to 800 Feature, NAMBUT HILL could be secured. On 16 Feb C Coy 2/1 Aust Inf Bn moved via Y Spur and gained the 800 Feature with complete surprise. Exploitation 400 yards north west along the feature established enemy positions on KENDALLS KNOLL. 5 enemy were killed with own casualties 2 killed and 2 wounded as a result of this encounter. C Coy then consolidated on 800 Feature and at dusk were counter attacked from the EAST without effect, 2 enemy being killed. Patrolling north west along NAMBUT HILL on the next day determined the enemy had withdrawn from his positions on BUNKER and KENDALL KNOLLS during the night. Patrols made contact with D Coy occupying positions on the north west end of the HILL, 1 enemy being killed and 6 fresh graves located. The area of BUNKERS KNOLL proved to be a narrow razor backed ridge 20 yards by 40 yards consisting of 18 enemy pits of which 6 had received direct hits with bombs or shells. The remainder of the area was pitted with craters.

14. Further exploitation by C Coy north east from 800 Feature down a steep razor back saddle, known as BURRELLS SPUR, on 17 Feb established a strong enemy position. In the encounter which followed 8 enemy were killed for own casualties 4 killed and 4 wounded. Intense automatic fire was experienced. Here WO II R E HALL and Cpl R D GRAHAM showed outstanding courage and determination by first extricating wounded and then together with L/Cpl MOULD in storming their way upwards along a narrow ridge in a frontal assault against the enemy, being responsible for killing the 8 enemy. L/Cpl MOULD was killed and HALL, though wounded together with GRAHAM when still under fire brought out further wounded.

15. On the following day an air strike of 14 BEAUFORTS was carried out against this enemy locality at V681273. This strike being within 150 yards of our forward troops was entirely successful, forcing the enemy to withdraw and leaving a total of 14 dead. The position was occupied upon which 22 foxholes were counted. This allowed C Coy to exploit

down BURRELLS SPUR to the coast. No further enemy were contacted and NAMBUT HILL had now been cleared, allowing the coastal advance to continue.

16. In this period the air played an extremely important role in the operations. Targets covered were BUNKERS KNOLL 29 sorties and BURRELLS SPUR 14 sorties. Very close air support had been carried out without casualties to own troops. An excellent coverage of all targets was revealed on occupation. A total of 145,000 lbs of bombs had been dropped in the areas and it was undoubted that the air support together with the outflanking moves of 2/1 Aust Inf Bn were responsible for the evacuation of enemy from NAMBUT HILL.

#### Advance to SELAMIN Creek

17. Following the capture of NAMBUT HILL A Coy moved through B Coy positions at McNEILLS Creek and occupied positions on ARCOL Creek, the enemy having withdrawn. The remainder of 2/1 Aust Inf Bn less C Coy occupied positions to the WEST of A Coy. On 18 Feb A Coy forced an enemy listening post on PAUL CREEK to withdraw and occupied the WEST bank of the creek, and then on 19 Feb 8 Pl of A Coy infiltrated through the enemy's position on the southwest slopes of the PIMPLE at ROCKY FORESHORE V690284, occupying the high ground of the PIMPLE. The enemy inflicted casualties 2 killed and 4 wounded on a ration party endeavouring to supply 8 Pl, this indicating the platoon was cut off. 9 Pl moved forward to contact the enemy and B Coy carried out an outflanking move to the SOUTH, occupying the saddle between BURRELL SPUR and the PIMPLE. However, 9 Pl attacking frontally with mortar and artillery support, forced the enemy to withdraw, thus contacting the isolated platoon. Water and rations had been dropped by Wirraway and eased the situation.

18. The advance continued on the occupation of ROCKY FORESHORE, 2/1 Aust Inf Bn capturing in succession the line of NAMBUT Creek by A Coy, WANK Creek by B Coy, BALAM Creek and SELAMIN Creek by D Coy. C Coy, relieved by 2/2 Aust Inf Bn on 800 Feature, moved to McNEILLS Creek and then with B Coy moved to BALAM Creek area.

19. Local patrols cleared the company areas, only very minor enemy opposition being encountered. Subsequent reconnaissance of ROCKY FORESHORE area disclosed that this had been an enemy dump area and contained 14 JUKIS, a lathe, lighting plant, many stacks of ammunition, 26 unserviceable motor transports and quantities of tools and equipment. By 25 Feb 2/1 Aust Inf Bn had consolidated its positions in BALAM and SELAMIN Creek areas.

#### Occupation of LONG RIDGE by 2/3 Aust Inf Bn

20. In the MALIN Sector 2/3 Aust MG Bn commenced the relief of 2/3 Aust Inf Bn on 16 Feb, C and D Coys of 2/3 Aust MG Bn having now arrived in the area SUAIN, and by 21 Feb, with the exception of WALUM and ABOAMA, had taken over the south east sector, allowing 2/3 Aust Inf Bn to move forward to positions on LONG RIDGE in the area of high ground between the headwaters of the NIMBUN Creek and MIMA Creek. Positions were occupied by 21 Feb and without opposition.

21. The original intention was to place 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn under command 2/3 Aust MG Bn and assist in carrying out the tasks in the south east sector. This did not eventuate and 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn remained under command 2/3 Aust Inf Bn, concentrating first at MALIN and then moving forward into 2/3 Aust Inf Bn positions on LONG RIDGE.

Role of 2/2 Aust Inf Bn

22. Up to this stage 2/2 Aust Inf Bn had remained in reserve, moving into the ABAU area on 19 Feb. Its primary role was the construction of various roads and tracks in the area, in particular the foot track to ARIUAI Saddle on L of C from ABAU to MALIN and a jeep road to the head of the NIMBUN Creek. In addition, extensive patrolling in rear areas was carried out. D Coy trained at MATAPAU in co-operation with tanks and engineers.

Patrolling to ANUMB RIVER

23. To be effective as from 22 Feb, the forward limits of patrolling were now extended to inclusive the EAST bank of ANUMB RIVER.

24. On 23 Feb 2/1 Aust Inf Bn commenced patrolling the ANUMB RIVER, covering the area SOUTH to the inter-battalion boundary and by the following day reported the WEST bank of the ANUMB RIVER from V734282 to V734289 and along the coast to the mouth as being clear of the enemy. On 25 Feb patrols also reported the area SELAMIN and WARABEN Creeks clear.

25. The ANUMB RIVER was crossed at a point 300 yards SOUTH of the mouth by 16 Pl 2/1 Aust Inf Bn on 26 Feb. On approaching the SOWOM Village area an enemy gun, considered to be a 75 mm, fired 5 rounds. This was engaged by 300 rounds of artillery, following which the patrol outflanked the position and made further contact, killing 2 enemy before withdrawing under cover of smoke. Another crossing was also made the same day by 17 Pl in the area of GERMAN ROAD. On the next day after an air strike by 9 BEAUFORTS on the gun position, 14 Pl moved into the SOWOM Village area and attacked an enemy position killing 4 without casualties. A further patrol reconnoitred the old GERMAN ROAD to the north east of the ANUMB RIVER without incident. At this stage 2/1 Aust Inf Bn became reserve and was occupied in reorganising, road construction and resting.

Re-grouping and tasks

26. The appreciation as at 25 Feb was that the offensive action of our patrols had caused the enemy to withdraw from his positions WEST of the ANUMB RIVER leaving only small isolated posts in the mountain area, and it was further appreciated that it was unlikely serious opposition would be encountered WEST of the NINAHAU RIVER.

27. Heavy rains had caused severe damage to the road from DOGRETO BAY to WANK Creek, necessitating it being closed to traffic until construction was completed. The pause imposed by the necessity for the improvement of the L of C was to be utilized to re-group and ascertain the enemy situation forward to the NINAHAU RIVER. Accordingly 16 Aust Inf Bde Operation Instruction 2 was issued for re-grouping and allotment of tasks.

28. The brigade area of responsibility was divided into the mountain sector and the coastal sector with the inter-sector boundary inclusive to mountain sector line of NIMBUN Creek - UNA Creek - SELAMIN Creek to V710264 thence EAST to V800264.

29. Groupings and tasks were as follows :-

Mountain Sector.

(a) 2/3 Aust MG Bn less A and D Coys with under command 2/9 Aust Bde Sqn. Tasks were to clear area forward to and inclusive ANUMB RIVER, to maintain posts at WALUM, ABOAMA and MALIN and to patrol forward to vertical grid 79.

**Coastal Sector**

(b) 2/2 Aust Inf Bn disposed EAST of ANUMB RIVER to inclusive track and river junction V737286 and Village V742296 to prevent enemy penetration across ANUMB and patrol forward to inclusive SIMBI Creek along the coastal area and later to inclusive NINAHAU RIVER.

(c) 2/3 Aust Inf Bn disposed in coastal area between excluding both ANUMB RIVER and SELAMIN Creek and to patrol SOUTH of exclusive track and river junction V737286 and line running due EAST therefrom forward to inclusive FLOOD CHANNEL V7627 and V7628 thence to inclusive NINAHAU RIVER.

30. The following troops were to remain in reserve :

(a) 2/1 Aust Inf Bn area between inclusive SELAMIN Creek and excluding WANK Creek with counter attack role in either sector.

(b) A and D Coy 2/3 Aust MG Bn  
A Coy at WANK Creek with task of protection of beachhead and inclusive all NAMBUT Creek - HILL 800 V677270.  
D Coy at MATAPAU.

(c) C Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt less three tps  
To be located in area 2/1 Aust Inf Bn.

31. 1 Bty 2/1 Aust Fd Regt was to move forward to area WEST of mouth of ANUMB RIVER and until such time as it was in position, patrolling was necessarily limited to the line of SIMBI Creek.

Mountain Sector

32. Preparatory to 2/3 Aust Inf Bn's movement to the coastal area, the mountain sector force commenced concentrating in the area of the headwaters of the MIMA Creek in order to effect the relief of the battalion. In the meantime 2/3 Aust Inf Bn continued patrolling towards the ANUMB RIVER with the object of clearing the sector of enemy prior to handing over to 2/3 Aust MG Bn. In the period 24 Feb to 1 Mar several patrol clashes occurred in the areas WOLHUK Creek, the high ground EAST of URAGUM Creek MIKEM Creek - AROHEMI V745245 - APIBILU V726221. In practically each case, casualties were inflicted on the enemy including two officers being killed, the patrols suffering but slightly. Maps and documents were also captured.

33. Lt A E McLEOD distinguished himself on 26 Feb when his platoon patrol proceeding to the ANUMB RIVER encountered a dug in enemy position astride a track. The leading scout had been killed. Lt McLEOD's quick appreciation of the situation, his coolness in probing the enemy's defences allowing him to locate exact positions and his judicious use of artillery support was instrumental in the capture of the area without further loss of life. In this period of patrolling Sgt R REESE also played a prominent part as an acting platoon commander by engaging and destroying small pockets of enemy.

34. The mountain force, 2/3 Aust MG Bn less two coys with under command 2/9 Aust Gdo Sqn effected the relief of 2/3 Aust Inf Bn on 2 Mar at which date 2/3 Aust Inf Bn commenced its movement to the coast and on the following day the battalion was concentrated in the area between SELAMIN Creek and ANUMB RIVER.

Advance to EAST of ANUMB RIVER mouth

35. 2/2 Aust Inf Bn moved from its rear positions and concentrated in the general area on old GERMAN ROAD forward of WANK Creek on 27 Feb and by 1 Mar had occupied the SOWOM VILLAGE area with A Coy disposed on the old GERMAN ROAD, taking over as forward battalion from 2/1 Aust Inf Bn. Patrols operated towards SIMBI Creek on 2 Mar and a successful attack, supported by artillery, was carried out by 10 Pl against enemy positions at the mouth of the SIMBI Creek. The position was cleared, killing 5 enemy without loss to own troops. Sgt F J HANSEN was mainly responsible for the success of this action. After killing two of the enemy, he stood erect to draw fire and locate other enemy positions. Having achieved this and supported by the platoon, he disposed of the remainder. 15 Pl were, however, ambushed on the old GERMAN ROAD short of SIMBI FLOOD CHANNEL, during which 4 enemy and 4 own troops were killed. Following this, a standing patrol was established on EAST bank of the Creek and B Coy moved to the WEST bank with later the remainder of the battalion concentrating in this area.

36. 2/2 and 2/3 Aust Inf Bns continued with active patrolling in the sectors allotted up until 11 Mar. A few enemy stragglers were killed and the area was reported clear.

Capture of AROHEMI

37. In the mountain sector, advance commenced on 3 Mar when C Coy 2/5 Aust MG Bn cleared TOOTH feature V7224, the intention being to move the entire force to area AROHEMI V7422, in order to ease the supply situation by being based on a suitable Dropping Zone and also to allow further coastal advance to be continued. The advance on AROHEMI commenced on 4 ~~Apr~~ <sup>Mar</sup> by a force consisting of 2/9 Aust Gde Sqn less one tp with under command C Coy less one pl, one pl C Coy and one tp Cav being engaged in carrying stores and equipment and one pl C Coy remaining to hold the TOOTH feature. 5 enemy were killed before MIKOM Creek was reached. Strong opposition was encountered at the NORTH end of AROHEMI Village, the enemy being well dug in with all approaches covered, following which an attack was launched which, however, was unsuccessful. Troops withdrew to V742248 for night 4/5 Mar.

38. A Co-ordinated attack by 2/9 Aust Gde Sqn less two tps was arranged for 5 Mar with artillery concentrations between 0900K and 0930K and an air strike between 0900 and 0920K. It was impossible at that stage to pin point positions and the arrangements were for the aircraft to bomb on the MPI of artillery concentrations. Prior to H hr the artillery, owing to faulty concentrations were unable to complete registration and while the aircraft were airborne information was received that the strike had been cancelled owing to weather conditions. Six BEAUFORTS NOT on frequency were NOT notified of the cancellation and bombed without artillery indication, as a result of which bombs fell amongst our own troops and caused 15 casualties.

39. Capt R F RASON 2/2 Aust Pd Regt HQ with the force when carrying out registration within 50 yards of the enemy's position, after having been advised of the cancellation of the strike showed conspicuous bravery by holding his position and endeavouring to bring down artillery fire to indicate the target, despite the fact his signaller and 11 of his escort were either killed or wounded.

40. In view of the condition of troops after the bombing it was decided to delay the attack until the next day. Meanwhile HQ 2/3 Aust MG Bn and two platoons of C Coy moved to V742248.



41. One tp Cav and one pl plus one sec C Coy supported by artillery concentrations attacked on 6 Mar. The crest of the objective was reached but the enemy were still in commanding positions on the reverse slope and exploitation to the flanks established the enemy to be in extensive positions and of strength 60/70. The force consolidated within 10 yards of the enemy. The attack was made under considerable difficulties due to the dense nature of the jungle and the undergrowth, steepness of the spurs leading to the enemy positions and heavy rain. A fire fight continued with attempts to get round the enemy flanks but without success. The positions were held on night 6/7 Mar

42. The next day one pl 2/3 Aust MG Bn exploited on right flank and one sec of Cav on the left as a result of which the enemy were forced to retire and the village area was secured. Strong opposition was again encountered when one pl C Coy patrolled towards south east of village, the patrol withdrawing to allow artillery to engage the position. Following artillery concentrations a composite force of two pls 2/3 Aust MG Bn and one sec Cav attacked. This was inconclusive and due to the lateness of the hour, the attack was postponed. Further contact was made by a patrol on 8 Mar and the enemy positions were engaged with artillery concentrations, but, in view of the strength and nature of the enemy positions, the intention was not to attack until the positions could be softened up with as much supporting fire as possible and further strength available.

43. D Coy 2/3 Aust MG Bn reverted to command of its parent unit on 8 Mar and arrived at AROHEMI the same day, thus reinforcing the force. On 9 Mar following a successful air strike and artillery concentrations, C Coy attacked and captured the enemy positions. A further pocket of resistance was destroyed 100 yards to the EAST and the AROHEMI area was now cleared of enemy. A counter attack that night was repulsed.

44. Active patrolling commenced the next day with the policy of clearing all lines of approach to AROHEMI. This was effective as small parties of the enemy were encountered on all tracks EAST and destroyed, and valuable documents captured before the enemy had time to concentrate and re-group.

45. Casualties as a result of the action fought between 4 and 10 Feb were enemy 35 killed and own 9 killed and 9 wounded, and by 12 Mar all areas immediately forward of AROHEMI were reported clear.

#### Re-grouping at AROHEMI

46. Authority was received to withdraw security posts at ABOAMA, WALUM and MALIN and B Coy 2/3 Aust MG Bn, responsible for this area, moved to AROHEMI arriving on 14 Mar. A Coy reverted to command and arrived at AROHEMI on 13 Mar, thus concentrating 2/3 Aust MG Bn in its entirety in the area of AROHEMI.

47. 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn reverted to command HQ 16 Aust Inf Bde and moved to WANK Creek on 14 Mar, preparatory to moving to AITAPE, the object being to relieve the squadron for a rest. The Squadron's task was now to protect the area of WANK Creek.

48. 2/3 Aust MG Bn casualties for the period 2 Mar - 12 Mar were as follows :

Own	8 Killed	18 Wounded
Enemy	44 Killed.	

Completion of Phase 2

49. This phase was completed with patrolling by 2/2 and 2/3 Aust Inf Bns to the NINAHAU RIVER and the commencement of patrolling forward of the ANUMB RIVER by 2/3 Aust MG Bn. 2/2 Aust Inf Bn cleared the area along the coastal track as far EAST as BAI V8128, killing 8 enemy in their activities. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn operating immediately inland, cleared to the NINAHAU without incident.

50. In this period heavy rains had seriously disrupted the L of C along the coast from DOGRIETO BAY. The road forward to WANK Creek became completely impassable, despite all efforts made by 2/1 Aust Fd Coy. All necessary bridges had been constructed but the lack of mechanical equipment so handicapped the Engineers that the road had to be temporarily abandoned. Supply then became entirely dependent on landing craft operating into WANK Creek area, which owing to heavy surf was not a reliable method. The road forward to the ANUMB RIVER from WANK Creek was fair but heavy traffic soon began to cut this up. The crossing of the ANUMB RIVER became another major engineering task and as it proved because of flooding, the construction of a bridge was not feasible. An improvised raft of 44 gallon drums and planking dragged across by personnel was the only means of ferrying stores and supplies across the river.

51. Reconnaissance of the track from SIMBI Creek to BAI indicated the same conditions existed and that the construction of a reliable L of C by road would be a long and arduous affair.

52. Attached as Appendix F are the dispositions of the brigade group as at 13 Mar 45.

53. Casualty Figures Phase 2. 11 Feb - 13 Mar.

Unit	Own		Enemy	PW
	KIA	WIA	Killed	
2/1 Aust Inf Bn	10	16	61	2
2/2 Aust Inf Bn	5	3	32	-
2/3 Aust Inf Bn	4	10	26	1
2/3 Aust MG Bn	8	18	45	-
2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn	4	2	"	-
RAA	"	2	3	-
ANGAU	"	"	3	"
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TOTAL	31	51	170	3
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PHASE 3. CAPTURE OF BUT AND DAGUA

PERIOD 14 MAR TO 24 MAR

Enemy Information

1. The enemy situation as revealed by captured documents and native reports was known at this stage to be as follows :

(a) At 15 Mar the strength of the AOZU Detachment, allowing for known battle casualties and a reasonable attrition rate over the whole period was estimated at 250 troops. In view of these heavy casualties and the forced withdrawal to BUT area, it was considered probable that the AOZU Detachment had ceased to exist as a separate identity and had come under command of the BUT Sector Unit.

(b) 3 Bn 239 Regt of strength 73 on 27 Feb as a result of the action of 2/3 Aust MG Bn in the area ARCHEMI was considered as now being non effective.

(c) HQ 237 Regt and remnants of 3 Bn 115 Regt, 3 Bn 237 Regt and 3 Bn 239 Regt of probable strength about 100 had been identified by captured map of 5 Mar as being disposed on the high ground between ANUMB and NINAHAU RIVERS.

(d) BUT Sector Operation Order 239 of 17 Feb identified 80 Inf Regt with control of the sector, with strength as at 15 Feb estimated at 240. 4 Pd Hosp of 75 and 35 Pd Machine Cannon Coy of 14 were other identifications associated with the BUT Sector Unit. The Operation Order further disclosed the withdrawal of the AOZU Detachment to MUGULUWELA V815248 was anticipated.

(e) No estimate of strength of BUT Sector Unit could really be made. Native reports indicated that there were only a few small parties of enemy on the LOANIM HILLS between NINAHAU RIVER and coast forward to WULILUA Creek. Natives also reported BUT as being clear but Tactical Reconnaissance had recently observed Motor Transport wheel marks and dumps and it was evident some enemy were in the area.

Appreciation

2. The object of operations at this stage was primarily to capture BUT. Because of the limited progress it was possible to achieve in the construction of a road L of C between DOGRIMO BAY and ANUMB RIVER and the route difficulties already disclosed by reconnaissance forward to BAI, it had to be accepted that an advance to BUT is dependent on maintenance by road or short hops by LCM as sea conditions permitted would take several months. The choice of action was then between two courses :

(a) Restricting activities to patrolling for a month until an adequate land L of C was constructed up to forward battalion and then advancing to BUT as L of C was extended (estimated time one further month).

(b) Making a dash to BUT independent of a land L of C in sufficient strength to cover the establishment of a Field Maintenance Centre, remainder of brigade group then to move to BUT, personnel mainly by march route, heavy equipment and vehicles by LCM.

3. If course (a) were adopted, the enemy would have ample time to organize and possibly reinforce his defences. On the other hand, he could completely evacuate as our threat slowly developed. This, however, is unlikely as in a captured document he referred to the coming operation at BUT in April.

4. If course (b) was adopted and succeeded, both L of C and time difficulties would be overcome. However, if it failed, a force could not be maintained forward unless by landing craft at BUT, we would be left with no alternative but to withdraw to our present L of C.

5. The decision, therefore, rested on the probability of getting to BUT without encountering opposition capable of causing serious delay.

#### Plan

6. Plan decided upon was to send a strong fighting patrol to BUT to ascertain the probability of getting into BUT and reinforce it quickly if it was able to get there.

7. The immediate action to be taken was as follows :  
One coy 2/2 Aust Inf Bn to proceed to BUT on 15 Mar as a strong fighting patrol with the task :

(a) determining enemy opposition between BAI and BUT and whether the patrol can deal with it quickly;

(b) determining if BUT area was clear and if NOT could action by remainder of 2/2 Aust Inf Bn on 16 Mar be certain to clear it;

(c) determine any evidence of guns covering BUT anchorage.

If the patrol could NOT deal with opposition quickly or if it was considered 2/2 Aust Inf Bn could NOT clear BUT area, the patrol was to return.

8. If the approach to the area of BUT anchorage was reasonably clear the subsequent action would be as follows :

2/2 Aust Inf Bn

(a) Move to BUT on 16 Mar.

(b) Select, mark and cover beach landing area and make preparations to receive LCMs.

2/3 Aust Inf Bn if BUT is secured

(a) begin concentrating at KAUK 17 Mar;

(b) clear area between exclusive NINAHAU RIVER and coast forward to SMAIN.

2/3 Aust MG Bn in any case

(a) continue present task of clearing area SOUTH of inclusive NINAHAU RIVER EAST to V88 grid line;

(b) maintain a post, strength one platoon, in ANUMB RIVER, DUMIB and MIKEM Creek area to prevent enemy approaching coast along these routes

2/1 Aust Inf Bn

- (a) remain present position in reserve;
- (b) be prepared to move to BUT, personnel and light equipment by march route.

C Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt

remains present location.

2/2 Aust Fd Regt

- (a) continue to support 2/3 Aust MG Bn;
- (b) support 2/3 Aust Inf Bn when it begins operating;
- (c) be prepared to dispatch one troop 52 Bty on LCMS to BUT, NOT before 17 Mar.

2/1 and 2/14 Aust Fd Coys  
to continue present tasks.

2/1 Aust Fd Amb

will be prepared to dispatch ADS by LCMS to BUT NOT before 17 Mar.

#### Brigade Tasks

9. 6 Aust Div Operation Instruction 3 of 14 Mar, concerning the advance, was issued accordingly, the essential points of which were as follows :

(a) Tasks : Capture the line of BUT RIVER and unless otherwise ordered exploit immediately to the line HILL 500 at V923247 - Feature V923238 - MAGAHEN V925229 - Creek from V923223 to Feature V907211.

Establish patrol base as far EAST of HALIKAMOK RIVER as is necessary to prevent fire from the beach to be directed at landing craft discharging at BUT.

Deny the enemy the use of the track leading inland from V837237 and the protection during development of BUT and BUT AIRDROME.

(b) Southern limit of responsibility : Grid V20.

(c) Patrolling at discretion.

(d) Changes in command

- (i) 2/1 Aust Fd Coy under command as from 152000X.
- (ii) Following troops revert to divisional command as from 152000X

- 2/3 Aust Tpt Pl
- 2/22 Aust Sup Dep Pl
- 2/23 Aust Sup Dep Pl
- 2/7 Aust Fd Amb
- 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn.

(e) Additional troops in support  
HQ RAE 6 Aust Div  
2/8 Aust Fd Coy  
Mech Eqpt Pl.

Capture of BUT JETTY

10. The operation commenced on 14 Mar when B Coy 2/2 Aust Inf Bn moved to BAI and killed 2 enemy in the area. On continuing the advance next day B Coy encountered stubborn resistance WEST of ULBAN at V835286 and attempts to outflank the enemy failed, B Coy withdrawing into a defensive position for the night. Meanwhile the remainder of the battalion had moved up and was disposed about BAI and UGTAN. 5 enemy had been killed with own casualties 2 killed and 2 wounded as a result of the day's encounter.

11. On 16 Mar, following artillery concentrations, B Coy attacked on a two platoon front and captured the enemy position, a decisive action, having used artillery and WP 77 grenades with good effect. Apart from 6 enemy who threw away their weapons and ran the remaining 10 were killed in their positions.

12. In the action, the left forward platoon had been held up astride the coastal track fifteen yards in front of the position which consisted of four bunkers and a number of covered foxholes. L/Cpl S B A STUBBS from the right section worked his way forward and directed the fire of the section into the slits of the two bunkers. Then, covered by the fire of his section, he rushed the bunkers throwing grenades into each and killing 4 enemy. He killed 3 more enemy with his Owen gun and finally moved forward on to the track and covered the consolidation of his platoon on the objective. His outstanding bravery was instrumental in allowing the advance to be continued and undoubtedly saved the lives of many of his comrades.

13. A Coy then moved through B Coy to continue the advance. Towards evening enemy guns opened up on the column in the area of MANIB Creek and at the same time a 20 mm QF AA gun opened on leading elements of A Coy from the south east. 40 shells fell amongst the troops but the fire was very erratic and only inflicted very minor casualties.

14. On the night 16/17 the battalion moved in under cover of darkness and occupied positions on the eastern end of BUT DROME. The advance continued the next day and by midday A Coy had secured BUT JETTY V877263, killing 2 enemy in its advance. The company area was shelled without effect by a 75 mm gun located in BUT PLANTATION. By night the remainder of the battalion was disposed around the BUT JETTY, occupying a beachhead

15. Air droppings with 60% recovery were made that day and as this was taking place an AA gun opened up from the hills SOUTH of the strip but was silenced by artillery fire. Two enemy artillery pieces, sited to the EAST, shelled the battalion area that night and the next morning. Patrols on 18 Mar operating in the foothills and along the coast located three 75 mm guns and spiked them.

16. Further air droppings were carried out with 90% recovery while Boomerangs strafed the area of the AA guns and 75 mm guns, located now to the WEST of DAGUA.

17. B Tp 1 Bty 2/2 Aust Fd Regt had been moved forward from the ANUMB to KAUK to support the advance of 2/2 Aust Inf Bn. Owing to river crossings, special rafts had to be constructed to move guns forward and ammunition had to be manhandled. By 1200 hrs on 17 Mar the guns were in position at V790296 and could support 2/2 Aust Inf Bn.

Movement of 2/3 Aust Inf Bn to KAUK

18. Following the advance of 2/2 Aust Inf Bn on 16 Mar, 2/3 Aust Inf Bn less A and C Coys was established at KAUK, A Coy moving up on 17 Mar. C Coy, who had been placed under command 2/2 Aust Inf Bn with the task of carrying supplies and line forward, reverted to command on 18 Mar, thus allowing 2/3 Aust Inf Bn to concentrate EAST and WEST of the mouth of the NINAHAU RIVER. Immediate patrolling along L of C to 2/2 Aust Inf Bn to V864276 reported the area as clear. By this, LOANIM Villages were also reported clear, a native police patrol having killed 6 enemy there on 16 Mar and 2/3 Aust Inf Bn patrols killed 2 on 16 Mar.

Consolidation of BUT

19. The following instructions were issued on 17 Mar :

(a) On 18 Mar 2/1 Aust Inf Bn will begin moving to BUT to arrive on 19 Mar.

(b) On 18 Mar 2/2 Aust Inf Bn will begin clearing the area eastwards of present location to ensure the enemy gun positions cannot fire on BUT beach and as soon as practicable will clear the coastal strip forward to bend in coastline at V944255.

(c) On arrival in area, 2/1 Aust Inf Bn will take over responsibility for coastal area WEST of inclusive BUT RIVER and will ensure enemy guns cannot fire on BUT beach.

(d) It is essential that immunity of BUT beach from enemy gun fire be established as soon as possible to permit maintenance and build up of force by LCM.

(e) Until this is practicable, 2/1 Aust Inf Bn will be maintained from KAUK by its own resources and 2/2 Aust Inf Bn will be maintained by air dropping.

(f) 2/3 Aust Inf Bn and 2/3 Aust MG Bn will continue with present tasks.

(g) On arrival Lt Col. A CULLEN, 2/1 Aust Inf Bn, on 19 Mar at BUT, all units in BUT area will come under his command until arrival of Commander 16 Aust Inf Bde at BUT.

Initial Patrolling BUT area

20. Accordingly, 2/1 Aust Inf Bn moved to the area of BUT JETTY and 2/2 Aust Inf Bn moved to position EAST of BUT RIVER. 2/2 Aust Inf Bn patrols had cleared the coast to SMAIN and operated to the HALIMAKOK RIVER and WEST of the DAGUA airstrip. Patrols from B and D Coys 2/1 Aust Inf Bn operated in the hills immediately SOUTH of BUT DROME and in the period 19 Mar to 24 Mar made many local contacts, killing 26 enemy including one officer for own casualties 3 wounded.

21. In the rear areas 2/3 Aust Inf Bn patrolling WEST of MARABUS made contact at V825256. B Coy occupied MARABUS V8326 on 20 Mar to continue with the task of patrolling and clearing the area.

Capture of DAGUA STRIP

22. At this stage the following instructions were issued :

(a) 2/2 Aust Inf Bn will capture DAGUA DROME with limit of exploitation WEST bank of DAGUA LAGOON.

(b) 2/3 Aust Inf Bn will continue present task with two companies, provide small detachments at KAUK and ULBAN, concentrate remainder of battalion EAST of BUT RIVER in area vacated by 2/2 Aust Inf Bn; keep L of C in rear 2/2 Aust Inf Bn open and clear high ground SOUTH of L of C.

(c) 2/1 Aust Inf Bn and 2/3 Aust MG Bn will continue with present tasks.

23. 2/2 Aust Inf Bn advanced to DAGUA DROME and secured the area on 21 Mar, only minor opposition being encountered, resulting in two enemy being killed. The 300 feature was cleared from V944246 to V953242 and the coast road to DAGUA LAGOON. There was evidence of an enemy force, estimated strength 50/70 having camped at V938249 on the previous night but apparently had hurriedly evacuated SOUTH leaving food and rifles. 2/2 Aust Inf Bn was now located between the WEST end of DROME and the HALAKIMOK RIVER.

24. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn moved from KAUK PLANTATION area to BUT RIVER area and had concentrated by 24 Mar, B Coy having been moved from MARABUS. Dispositions extended along the coast from BUT RIVER to V90 grid.

Completion Phase 3

25. Up to the present, apart from activities of 2/5 Aust MG Bn in the area between ANUMB and NINAHAU RIVERS, operations had been confined to the rapid coastal advance only clearing the high ground a short distance inland in order to gain immediate security.

26. Attached as Appendix G are the dispositions of the brigade group as at 22 Mar.

27. Casualty Figures. Phase 3. Period 14 Mar - 24 Mar

Unit	OWN		ENEMY	
	KIA	WIA	Killed	PW
2/1 Aust Inf Bn		3	22	3
2/2 Aust Inf Bn	5	25	111	1
2/3 Aust Inf Bn	2	10	35	4
2/3 Aust MG Bn	7	11	40	0
RAA	-	-	8	1
ANGAU	-	-	24	0
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TOTALS	14	49	230	9



PHASE 4. INLAND OPERATIONS FROM ANUMB TO DAGUA.

PERIOD 25 MAR - 13 APR.

Enemy Information

1. At this period captured documents and interrogation of Prisoners of War gave some indication of the enemy's activities and intentions.
2. It had been previously determined AOZU HQ had evacuated AROHEMI and moved to ROAN (MUGULUWELA). The remnants of the detachment were also believed to have evacuated to this general area with stragglers still in the area between ANUMB and NINAHAU RIVERS. Subsequent information confirmed this. AOZU HQ had moved to SEIHO MOUNTAIN V807242 whilst HQ 237 Regt was located on the EAST bank of NINAHAU RIVER approximately opposite MUGULUWELA. The strength of the AOZU Detachment was considered now to be at 200 and the apparent intention was to make an attempt to hold the line approximately from MUGULUWELA to BIWAM.
3. The defence of the coastal area within the BUT sector unit had been the responsibility of 2 Bn 80 Inf Regt and 21 Airfield Bn supplemented by 80 Inf Regt QP Unit. The strength following the action of 2/2 Aust Inf Bn in its advance along the coast and it was apparent the strength had withdrawn to the high ground surrounding BUT.
4. It appeared that 80 Inf Regt less 2 Bn was defending the mountainous area from SHISSO MOUNTAIN V8426 EAST and south east along MANIB Creek and upper NINAHAU RIVER to BUT RIVER. This would give the enemy control of the arterial tracks MUGULUWELA - NINAHAU RIVER - HALIKAMOK RIVER - DAGUA - YAMIL.
5. The estimated strength of 20 Inf Regt less 2 Bn was 150 and probable that other small detachments had been added to this number. The total enemy strength remaining in the BUT area was, therefore, estimated at a maximum of 400.

Area MUGULUWELA 2/3 Aust MG Bn

6. While 2/2 Aust Inf Bn were carrying out their advance as far forward as DAGUA, 2/3 Aust MG Bn operated in the area of MUGULUWELA. The initial task given to 2/3 Aust MG Bn was to patrol forward to the NINAHAU RIVER to limit of vertical grid 80 with the object of first reconnoitring for enemy positions, track and Dropping Zones for later supply and second to clear the enemy from this area with the subsequent role of clearing the NINAHAU Valley.
7. On 18 Mar, a 2 day patrol operated to the NINAHAU RIVER and a second patrol in the high ground at V777257, where the enemy was located in strong defensive positions. Casualties suffered were 3 killed, 4 wounded, with 2 enemy killed as a result of the encounter. On the following day the first patrol killed 5 enemy out of a party of 9 on MAN Creek and then moved in behind the enemy positions at V777257, thus causing the enemy to evacuate his positions. The area was later occupied without opposition.
8. The advance towards MUGULUWELA commenced on 18 Mar when A Coy 2/3 Aust MG Bn established a Dropping Zone at V789267. D Coy captured and occupied position V787257 and B Coy established a base at junction WAHSP - NINAHAU Rivers on 19 Mar. After clearing the area and killing 4 enemy, 7 and 8 Pl pushed on towards MUGULUWELA, 7 Pl moving along NINAHAU into MUGULUWELA.

and so encircling an enemy position which had pinned 8 Pl down 500 yards to the WEST. Patrolling on 21 and 22 Mar cleared the area, a total of 20 enemy being killed in B Coys actions.

9. Subsequent to this, A Coy passed through B Coy to secure the track V837238 and encountered strong opposition on a creek 1000 yards EAST of MUGULUWELA, an action lasting 8 hours in which 9 enemy were killed before the position was cleared. In the meantime, D Coy had moved to BIWAM V7923 and cleared the area.

10. A Coy now patrolled forward and occupied a position in vicinity V825245 and then after a slight encounter, occupied the MARABUS - ALBIS track at the river crossing. Bn HQ with D Coy then moved to MARABUS, leaving one pl C Coy to hold the base at junction WAHEP - NINAHAU. In the ensuing period active patrolling in the area MARABUS - MUGULUWELA - ALBIS track and river crossing was carried out. By 30 Mar the area between V85 vertical grid and V20 lateral was cleared, ALBIS V846200 having been patrolled as a result of which 5 enemy were killed. The battalion, less A Coy at junction ALBIS track and NINAHAU crossing and C Coy at MARABUS, then concentrated in the area of ULBAN on the coast and continued with its task of keeping the area allotted clear until 13 Apr, when the battalion took over responsibilities of the patrol bases in high ground SOUTH of BUT and DAGUA.

11. In the period 13 Apr - 5 Mar, 2/3 Aust MG Bn casualties were as follows :

Own	8 Killed	13 Wounded.
Enemy	61 Killed.	

BUT inland operations -2/1 Aust Inf Bn

12. As from 24 Mar, 2/1 Aust Inf Bn's task became to clear the high ground SOUTH of BUT between the headquarters of the BUT RIVER - HALIKAMOK Creek - NINAHAU RIVER. The area allotted extended from the coast SOUTH to lateral grid V20 and between vertical grids V922 and V850.

13. 2/8 Aust Inf Bn, preparatory to the concentration of 19 Aust Inf Bde in the BUT area, arrived at BUT on 25 Mar, completing their movement on 27 Mar. This battalion came under operational command of the brigade for the purpose of defence of BUT HARBOUR. All units within the area were placed under command 2/8 Aust Inf Bn for the purpose of local defence. 2/1 Aust Inf Bn was relieved of this task and in the period moved to positions EAST of BUT RIVER, vacated by 2/8 Aust Inf Bn.

14. 2/1 Aust Inf Bn commenced its task on 24 Mar. When C Coy moved via BUT RIVER and across the mountains to NINAHAU RIVER V868253 to establish a patrol base, but, owing to a number of encounters which took place en route, the base was NOT established until 29 Mar. The Coy when proceeding WEST along the narrow razor back ridge of the high ground immediately SOUTH of the BUT RIVER, contacted enemy position on a knoll which dominated the track. This proved to be the first of several strongly dug in positions encountered on a series of knolls, extending WEST to the 1500 feature V868242 and thence further to the 1800 feature. In the first encounter EAST of 1500 feature a platoon attack supported by artillery and mortar concentrations forced the enemy to withdraw, killing 7, following which another attack with support captured an enemy position 70 yards to the WEST, killing a further 3. Enemy positions on 1500 feature and

1860 feature were cleared in succession and 6 enemy were killed forcing the remnants to withdraw. C Coy then occupied its patrol base, a further 4 enemy being killed en route. By 1 Apr the area allotted to C Coy was reported as clear.

15. A Coy occupied a patrol base on the HALIKAMOK RIVER at V901254 and patrols operated along the river in the period 27 - 31 Mar. Two patrol clashes occurred on 28 Mar, in each case the enemy withdrawing as the fire fight developed after small casualties had been inflicted. The following day, patrols operated in the same area without contact. A platoon patrol to SUBURUMAN, which consisted of a group of nine two storied huts with numerous lean-tos, located enemy in the village and these, as the attack developed, hastily withdrew, suffering casualties 4 killed. Then on 1 Apr a further platoon patrol cleared the area EAST along the MABAM RIVER to the MAGAHEN VILLAGE, occupied by 2/2 Aust Inf Bn.

16. The area had now been cleared of any organized resistance and consequently A and C Coys were withdrawn to the battalion position EAST of BUT RIVER, outposts being established by platoons of HQ Coy on the HALIKAMOK Creek fork, the NINAHAU RIVER SOUTH of 1500 feature and the headwaters of BUT RIVER. These outposts were maintained during the period 1 Apr - 14 Apr and local patrols killed 5 enemy including 1 major, 1 captain, 1 lieutenant.

17. Native police boys and local Kanakas, 9 of which had been attached to A and C Coys, provided valuable assistance, as guides by locating enemy positions, and with their knowledge of the terrain.

#### DAGUA Inland Operations. 2/2 and 2/3 Aust Inf Bn

18. In the period following the occupation of DAGUA DROME by 2/2 Aust Inf Bn, some of the bitterest actions of the campaign were fought. These operations mainly concerned the clearing of the DAGUA - WONGINARA track, WONGINARA MISSION area and along the MABAM RIVER.

#### Tasks

19. The tasks given to battalions in this period were as follows :

(a) 2/2 Aust Inf Bn : Initially to clear the DAGUA DROME area and the foothills to the SOUTH and then to destroy the enemy positions located in the TOKOKU PASS.

(b) 2/3 Aust Inf Bn :

(1) To outflank the enemy positions in the PASS by occupying an area astride the track leading SOUTH from TOKOKU PASS and thus cutting the enemy L. of C.

(ii) To destroy enemy in general area river junctions V943215 - MABAM RIVER to W014177 - HAMSUK - YALAMINUNI.

52 Bty 2/2 Aust Fd Regt were in support of these operations.

#### Enemy Information

20. Information gained from orders and maps captured in the period of action indicated that 79 Regt were opposing 2/2 and 2/3 Aust Inf Bn with dispositions as follows :

(a) One battalion main force from knoll V958214 EAST to track and covering track SOUTH to river.

(b) One battalion main force about river 600 yards EAST of crossing V958202.

(c) Probably one battalion on track towards WONGINARA MISSION with Regt HQ 300 yds WEST of battalion.

(d) Div HQ 500 yards up MABAM RIVER from junction V974197.

21. Subsequent to this ASA Div Staff Telegram 322 of 27 Mar to 18 Army C of S gave the statement of the fighting strength and order of battle of 20 Div as at 26 Mar to be as follows :

AOZU Force

HQ AOZU Force	29
KASAI Bn (3 Bn 237 Regt)	9
AOKI Bn (3 Bn 115 Regt)	38
IDE Force (80 Regt) HQ	30
ABE Bn (2 Bn 80 Regt)	31
59 Water Duty Coy	30
NARA Force (237 Regt) HQ	12
MORINAGA Bn (3 Bn 239 Regt)	30
KOSHIMA Bn	33
Former AOZU Sup personnel	15
	<hr/>
	257 Total

HAYASHIDA Force

HAYASHIDA (79 Regt) HQ	20
ITO Bn (2 Bn 115 Regt)	50
KAMEZAWA (21 Airfield Bn)	48
BANAK Garrison Unit	12
MIYASAKI Bn (1 Bn 79 Regt)	18
UNO Arty Unit (26 Fd Arty Regt)	20
OBATA Bn (part 26 Fd Arty Regt)	50
FUJIZAWA Raiding Unit	25
	<hr/>
	253 Total

Total Div Strength 510.  
Front line troops approximately 300 men.  
Physical condition poor.

22. In the operations which ensued approximately 230 enemy were killed in the sector and as a result 20 Div had, therefore, suffered as a fighting force.

23. Further documents indicated that the remnants of 20 Div after 2/2 and 2/3 Aust Inf Bns' activities withdrew SOUTH into the general area bounded by YAMINI - MEIWANGO - WIHUN - LIWO.

2/2 Aust Inf Bn action : TOKOKU PASS

24. Continuing with its task of clearing the DAGUA area, 2/2 Aust Inf Bn on 22 Mar patrolled into the MAGAHEN Village area and SOUTH along the WONGINARA MISSION area, D Coy having been given the latter task.

25. D Coy advanced SOUTH along the WONGINARA MISSION track and made several contacts with the enemy. In one action 20 enemy in dug in positions were engaged and it was here that Lt D V GOLDSMITH displayed brilliant leadership and courage. His section commanders were early casualties, after which Lt GOLDSMITH directed and personally led his two forward sections in a prompt and vigorous attack. His platoon killed 13 enemy and the remaining 7 fled in disorder, abandoning weapons, equipment and documents. This action secured the base for further operations along the track.

26. On the same day D Coy again encountered strong enemy positions further along the track at V962223, sustaining a number of casualties and consequently withdrew to the more suitable base captured previously, leaving a standing patrol forward along the track.

27. Following this on 23 Mar A Coy occupied the track junction at V942236 and D Coy were to attack along the axis of the track while other patrols operated on the flanks. D Coy patrols again met with heavy fire and were forced to withdraw.

28. 11 Pl operating in the foothills on 24 Mar encountered enemy preparing to dig in on the 1410 feature V945219 and supported by artillery fire, successfully attacked the enemy positions, killing 14 enemy. The platoon then consolidated on the feature. Pte A WEBB, when the platoon had been held by automatic fire from an enemy weapon pit and the four leading men wounded, showed great courage by advancing quickly forward and killing two enemy occupying the pit. His subsequent action of bringing fire to bear on two other enemy weapon pits allowed the remainder of his section to gain a foothold on top of the feature without further casualties. This led to the capture of the feature.

29. In view of the situation with D Coy on the track, the intention was then to maintain pressure in this area, send a patrol on to KAUREMARAK HILL to overlook the road and attack with A Coy, via 1410 feature EAST along the ridge to the track, thence turn NORTH to link up with D Coy.

30. A Coy in its advance met heavy opposition on CHOWNE KNOLL V957214 and it was not until two platoon attacks had been made, culminating in a bayonet charge, that the position was taken.

31. When the leading platoon came under heavy fire from concealed enemy MGs, sited on a small rise dominating the approach, one member of the platoon was killed and 9 others including the platoon commander were wounded. The enemy continued to inflict casualties on our troops from his position of vantage. Lt A CHOWNE, whose platoon was in reserve, noted this and without hesitation rushed the enemy's positions. Running up the steep narrow track, he hurled grenades, knocking out two enemy LMGs. Then calling on his men to follow him and firing his sub machine gun from the hip, he charged into the enemy's defensive positions. Although he was hit twice in the chest, the impetus of his charge carried him 50 yards forward under intense machine gun and rifle fire. Lt CHOWNE accounted for two more enemy before he was killed standing over 3 foxholes. His self sacrifice resulted in the capture of the strongly held position.

32. Pte R F McCLELLAND also set a high standard of personal bravery in this action. In the initial stages he moved with his Bren gun to the centre of the track where in full view of the enemy he stood and fired his gun from the hip while

casualties were being extricated. In the subsequent attack the McCLELLAND advancing under fire provided effective support.

33. A Coy consolidated its position for the night 25/26 Mar and on the following day, 14 Pl, who had moved up into A Coy's area, attacked further enemy positions located to the EAST in the area V959214 but without success.

34. This was now determined to be the main enemy positions holding the track and subsequent actions proved the position to consist of a series of isolated knolls linked by narrow razor backed ridges, covering an area of approximately 300 yards in depth. All approaches were strongly defended, the approaches being either along the ridges or up steep ascents on the sides. The vital ground appeared to be JAP KNOLL, with LOW KNOLL to the EAST.

35. Following an air strike and artillery and mortar concentrations on 27 Mar, A Coy attacked the enemy positions but the attack was unsuccessful and the company was forced to withdraw to its previous position. B Coy now relieved A Coy and an extensive harassing programme by artillery and mortar was arranged for the night. From 27 Mar - 2 Apr was a period of reconnaissance and sniping activities by both B and D Coys. Air strikes were made daily between 30 Mar and 2 Apr with little success owing to the nature of the terrain and the difficulty of bombing a razor backed ridge. Artillery and mortar concentrations as harassing tasks both by day and night were accurate and effective.

36. On 2 Apr B Coy, supported by an air strike and by artillery concentrations, attacked and captured JAP KNOLL and consolidated its position. Lt E N PARK on the day previous had infiltrated the enemy position, climbing an almost vertical cliff and approaching to within 10 yards of the enemy. He worked his way through the enemy foxholes, taking the whole day for the task. He then returned and formulated the plan for the attack. In the attack he personally led two platoons, taking his men one by one up the sixty feet of cliff to a forming up place on the top. The two platoons with Lt PARK at the head charged in a bayonet assault.

37. As the attack progressed the enemy's defensive fire increased in intensity and it seemed the effort to dislodge him, again may prove unsuccessful. At this juncture, Sgt M FINLAYSON dashed to the front of his platoon and overran the forward pits, killing two enemy. Though wounded he continued to lead his men and was the first to reach the main objective where he killed another enemy.

38. As a result of this action, 29 enemy were killed in their foxholes and its success was only ensured by Lt PARK's outstanding leadership and complete disregard for his own safety and by the personal example of courage set by Sgt FINLAYSON.

39. On the next day, A Coy which had relieved B Coy, supported by further artillery concentrations attacked LOW KNOLL, a further enemy position to the EAST, in an effort to cut the WONGINARA track at V963214. The attack failed in face of determined defence by the enemy. A 75 mm gun which had previously engaged D Coy's position, however, was captured. A Coy remained on JAP KNOLL, carrying out local reconnaissance until contact was made with 2/3 Aust Inf Bn patrols moving up on the WEST of the track on 5 Apr. On 6 Apr A Coy completed its task and linked up with D Coy at the foot of the PASS, the road now being cleared.

Capt M DERBYSHIRE, Coy Comd, planned and executed the final attack which ended in the capture of TOKOKU MOUNTAIN PASS and the annihilation of the remnants of the enemy force still holding the road from DAGUA to WONGINARA.

40. 2 Pl took over from A Coy, which moved to the coast at V972252 and picqueted the features captured until D Coy established standing patrols covering the road through TOKOKU PASS

41. 2/2 Aust Inf Bn casualty figures for the action in TOKOKU PASS area in the period 22 Mar - 6 Apr were as follows :

Enemy	:	Killed 133	PW 1
Own		Killed 16	Wounded 55.

2/3 Aust Inf Bn's action - WONGINARA MISSION area

42. While 2/2 Aust Inf Bn were engaged with the TOKOKU PASS action, 2/3 Aust Inf Bn commenced its task, moving from positions EAST of BUT RIVER to a bivouac area on road bend NORTH of 1410 feature at V942235 for night 27/28 Mar, and then on the following day carried out its movement over the mountains to seize its objective, area track and river junction at V957201 SOUTH of TOKOKU PASS. After passing through 1410 feature small delaying pockets of enemy were encountered en route. In each case an immediate attack at once disposed of the enemy, 9 being killed. A and D Coys consolidated on the objective for the night 28/29 Mar with the remainder of the battalion disposed to the WEST.

43. D Coy when moving NORTH to TOKOKU PASS positions on 29 Mar were fired on by enemy snipers from well concealed positions on the dominating ground at 963209. D Coy then occupied positions at 961208. To gain its position, it was necessary for D Coy to probe forward and deploy, thus dispersing enemy snipers. Though holding pressure was maintained and the Coy continuously probed forward, making slight advances. Enemy LMG and HMG sited in depth were encountered. Casualties had been inflicted on the enemy.

44. At one stage in D Coy's advance, 10 enemy armed with an LMG attacked the rear of the company from the left flank. L/Sgt R C TIGHE, without orders, immediately swung his section and led them in a counter attack through intense close range enemy small arms fire. This resulted in six of the enemy being killed and the capture of the LMG. L/Sgt TIGHE's quick and decisive handling of the situation and his gallant example, saved the company severe casualties and contributed largely towards the subsequent successful attack.

45. Previous to this, the advance of D Coy had been temporarily halted when enemy positions on the high ground SOUTH of WONGINARA track and MABAM RIVER crossing were encountered. D Coy had bypassed these positions and it then became the task of A Coy to clear them. Cpl J H KERFOOT was mainly responsible for the eventual capture of the position. Placing his Bren gun in a position to engage the enemy and with three men of his section he dashed across the river bed swept by enemy fire. The Owen gunner became a casualty but notwithstanding this Cpl KERFOOT pressed home the attack and destroyed an enemy post, thus enabling the rest of his platoon to successfully attack and consolidate on the key position.

46. It was now apparent the enemy was holding the high ground to the EAST of the track with main positions at V963209, extending to the north east, besides his positions on the WEST of the track. The task of containing the enemy from the SOUTH of the PASS was given to D Coy but due to extensive artillery and mortar concentrations, together with the air strikes being carried out against the enemy positions opposite 2/2 Aust Inf Bn, no movement NORTH of V21 grid was allowed until 4 Apr.

47. On 4 Apr D Coy carried out an encircling move to the EAST and NORTH and secured the high ground to the north east of the enemy defences located at V965212, despite opposition from dug in defences. On the following day A Coy proceeded via the same route, joined D Coy, and the force successfully attacked the enemy positions. The success of this attack was mainly due to accurate artillery concentrations, achieved by the action of Lt G A MARTIN, 2/2 Aust Fd Regt FOO attached. Lt MARTIN accompanied by an Owen gunner crawled forward and occupied a slit trench a few yards from the enemy, the forward troops having been withdrawn for safety reasons. Notwithstanding fire from enemy snipers and the nature of the terrain and realizing he was in the target area, Lt MARTIN completed ranging even though effective rounds fell within a few yards of his position. Following this, he fired 350 rounds into the area, completely devastating the enemy's defences. The infantry, assaulting as soon as the fire lifted, caught the enemy re-occupying their positions up the sides of the ridge.

48. The position, extending for 500 yards and consisting of 30 weapon pits with overhead cover was captured without casualties to our own troops. The artillery fire had been so accurate that the entire ridge was pock-marked by shells and in certain cases, direct hits had been scored on the pits. This attack ended all organized resistance in this area. A Coy patrols contacted 2/2 Aust Inf Bn at V963214 the same day.

49. While operations to the NORTH were being effected, the battalion continued with its task of clearing the area to the SOUTH. Information from native refugees indicated the location of the enemy HQ of 20 Div under Major General NAKAI to be EAST of WONGINARA MISSION at V976183. A force comprising B and C Coys moved out on 2 Apr with the object of destroying the enemy HQ. Native guides led the force to the area by a well concealed route and indicated approaches, position of the enemy sentries and location of defences. The leading platoon, advancing undetected to within 10 yards of the enemy, deployed and assaulted successfully, gaining complete surprise.

50. In the attack, one platoon came under well aimed machine gun and rifle fire and the platoon commander was killed. Cpl A S KENTWELL in command of the forward section, immediately crossed a narrow mountain track and opening fire killed the enemy machine gunner and then, calling on his section to follow, he rushed the position, the momentum of his rapid assault overwhelming the enemy. Cpl KENTWELL's outstanding bravery greatly contributed to the success of the operation. Further contributing factors to the success were the actions of Lt J COPEMAN who had been in command of the leading platoon and successfully manouevred it into position 10 yards from the enemy's defences, following which he stormed the position, and Cpl A M SHAW who, on observing Lt COPEMAN's flank was exposed to an enemy LMG post, assaulted and destroyed the post.

51. Of an estimated strength of 40 enemy, 28 were killed but it could NOT be ascertained if Major General NAKAI had been killed, although the dead included three captains and two lieutenants. It was assumed he had escaped. Our casualties were 2 killed and 2 wounded.



52. The force consolidated its position and established a patrol base 400 yards to the EAST. The task of the force then became to clear the battalion sector SOUTH of grid 17 and was carried out on 3 and 4 Apr by organizing two patrols, each of two platoons and combing the area. Only isolated enemy were found in the MABAM Valley and WONGINARA areas but resulted in killing 17 enemy with own casualties 1 killed and 1 wounded.

53. Following this, B and C Coys returned to the battalion area creek and track junction between WONGINARA MISSION and the PASS and A Coy on 7 Apr moved down the MABAM RIVER establishing ambush positions on river and track junctions in vicinity W004174, the object being to cut off the withdrawal of any enemy from the area of AUTOGI. Only 2 enemy were seen and these were killed. D Coy operated in this area until 12 Apr.

54. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn casualty figures for the actions outlined in the period 27 Mar - 8 Apr were as follows :-

Enemy	:	Killed 85	PW 1
Own	:	Killed 12	Wounded 15.

Concentration of Brigade Group between DAGUA and BUT RIVER.

55. To permit concentration 19 Aust Inf Bde Group and certain divisional troops in BUT area, 6 Aust Div requested the brigade to concentrate all units of 16 Aust Inf Bde Gp EAST of BUT RIVER by 16 Apr, excepting 2/8 Aust Inf Bn, MDS 2/1 Aust Fd Amb and 2/3 Aust MG Bn.

56. Since the area inland from DAGUA was now comparatively clear, the intention was to concentrate 2/2 and 2/3 Aust Inf Bn on the DAGUA DROME, 2/1 Aust Inf Bn to remain in its present position EAST of the BUT RIVER, and move other supporting arms forward; leaving security posts on the strategic points in the hills.

57. The following orders were issued on 7 Apr :

(a) Enemy attempting to approach BUT - DAGUA area will be destroyed.

(b) Inter-unit boundaries from 7080600K between 2/2 and 2/3 Aust Inf Bn inclusive to 2/3 Aust Inf Bn DAGUA AIRDROME at V967250 - SPUR V966230 - KAUREMERAK HILL - SPUR V985203 - MABAM RIVER; between 2/1 and 2/3 Aust MG Bn vertical grid V35.

(c) Limit of patrolling without reference to this HQ  
KOFI - KUMUDU - AMAGAP - AMOIA - BUGA BIHEIM -  
ALBIS - AROHEMI - ANUMB RIVER.

(d) Patrol bases will be maintained at :

DAGUA - TOKOKU PASS - MABAM RIVER at V958202 and  
V945215 - MAGAHEM Villages - HALIKAMOK RIVER - at  
V900234 - NINAHAU RIVER at V868233 and at V835236.

58. Accordingly, 2/2 Aust Inf Bn moved to the EAST end of DAGUA STRIP and 2/3 Aust Inf Bn concentrated on the WEST of the strip, commencing on 9 Apr when Bn HQ, B and C Coys moved in from the hills. By 12 Apr, 2/3 Aust Inf Bn had concentrated in DAGUA positions, leaving one platoon D Coy and one platoon A Coy in area creek junction V9520.

59. C Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt less three troops who had remained in the area of DOGRETO BAY because of the difficulty of moving tanks forward by road and landing craft NOT being available, and further because the nature of the terrain did NOT favour the use of tanks, eventually moved forward by LCTs into BUT and concentrated with the brigade in the area forward of SMAIN.

60. 2/2 Aust Fd Regt, less 52 Bty already in position at DAGUA, moved from BUT DROME and concentrated in bivouac areas at SMAIN.

61. Further concentration of the brigade group was allowed when 2/3 Aust MG Bn were given the task of the responsibility of the patrol bases in the high ground SOUTH of DAGUA and BUT and in MARABUS area. By 13 Apr B Coy 2/3 Aust MG Bn had established platoon patrol bases on NINAHAU V869231 HALIKAMOK V888233 MAGAHEN Villages and D Coy platoon bases at TOKOKU PASS V965218, track SOUTH 1410 feature V945215 and at creek junctions V958200.

62. On 14 Apr 2/3 Aust MG Bn reverted to command of 6 Aust Div and the responsibility for BUT area passed to 19 Aust Inf Bde, 2/8 Aust Inf Bn also reverting to command 19 Aust Inf Bde.

2/2 Aust Inf Bn Patrolling.

63. 2/2 Aust Inf Bn patrol boundary included AUTOGI, WALANDUUM, KWANGEN and reconnaissance patrolling in the period 31 Mar - 3 Apr was carried out to determine the extent of enemy opposition in the area. Enemy parties were located at AUTOGI and WALANDUUM and artillery registration shoots were implemented. On 7 Apr, C Coy established a patrol base SOUTH of BANAK at W033233 and in the period 8 Apr - 12 Apr, C Coy completed the task of clearing these villages.

64. Patrols had also operated as far EAST as KOFI, reporting the coastal area as clear. D Coy was established forward of DAGUA at W031239 to allow 2/1 Aust Fd Coy to carry out road construction tasks.

Dispositions

65. Attached as Appendix H are the dispositions of brigade group as at 13 Apr.

Casualty Figures.

66. Casualty figures for Phase 4, period 25 Mar - 13 Apr. are as follows :

Unit	OWN		ENEMY	
	KIA	WIA	Killed	PW
2/1 Aust Inf Bn	3	4	30	2
2/2 Aust Inf Bn	16	49	106	4
2/3 Aust Inf Bn	10	13	99	1
2/8 Aust Inf Bn			1	2
2/3 Aust MG Bn	1	2	23	-
RAA			4	3
ANGAU			33	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>12</b>

PHASE 5. CAPTURE KARAWOP, BOIKEN AND HAWAIN

Period 14 Apr - 8 May

Enemy Information

1. At this stage very little information was to hand as regards enemy dispositions and strengths in KARAWOP, BOIKEN and HAWAIN. The only information available was that supplied by the observation of a single prisoner who moved recently from WEWAK to KARAWOP and who stated there were only small patrols on the coast forward.
2. 48 Field Construction Unit had been identified and this was assumed to be a small coastal guard detachment which had attempted to defend the AUTOGI - KUMUDU - KARAWOP area but had withdrawn EAST in the face of our advance.
3. Subsequently, documents dated Sep 44 were captured and these, though very old, had confirmed the composition of the BUT and DAGUA sectors and it was assumed that the BOIKEN Sector Unit as detailed was substantially the same. A Ration states dated 26 Mar also gave some indication of the composition BOIKEN Sector Garrison Unit, as it was termed, and from these documents it appeared the area of responsibility of the Garrison Unit was BOIKEN - KOANUMBO, RANIMBOA - CAPE PUS.
4. The composition of the force was considered to be as follows :

	<u>Strength</u>
Unit HQ	-
3 Bn 66 Regt	100
21 Lt Trench Mortar Unit	70
Mtn Arty Unit	?
29 Machine Cannon Unit	20
37 Machine Cannon Unit	20
48 Rd Constr Unit	100
	<hr/>
	310
	<hr/>

5. It was assumed that the garrison on the islands of TARAWAI, KARASAU and YUO had been withdrawn for the close defence of the BOIKEN area. Further documents captured indicated that 18 Army Command Post was located at one stage near MOKIN MOUNTAIN and this had been a communication centre with main WT centres in RANIMBOA and BANAK areas.

Task

6. The early intention had been to maintain the momentum of the advance by carrying out a reconnaissance in force to KARAWOP and if there was no serious opposition met, to secure the area with one battalion. However, subsequent developments proved that the destruction of the enemy in WONGINARA MISSION was of more importance than an advance to KARAWOP. This had now been achieved and the brigade was concentrated and ready for further advance.

7. 6 Aust Div 004 gave the brigade's task as being to capture in succession KARAWOP, BOIKEN and HAWAIN but there was to be no move to first objective before 20 Mar. 2/3 Aust MG Bn were given the responsibility of the BUT-DAGUA Garrison up to WOO grid, relieving the brigade of any commitments in this area.

1. April  
92.

8. The order of battle for this phase comprised the following units :

HQ 16 Aust Inf Bde  
Sig Sec 16 Aust Inf Bde  
10 Pl 2/1 Aust Gd Regt  
2/45 Aust LAD  
2/1 Aust Inf Bn  
2/2 Aust Inf Bn  
2/3 Aust Inf Bn  
C Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt less three tps  
2/7 Aust Cdo Sqn  
2/2 Aust Fd Regt  
1 Bty 2/1 Aust Tk A Regt  
2/1 Aust Fd Coy  
Sec 2/4 Aust Tpt Pl  
Sec 2/6 Aust Tpt Pl  
2/25 Aust Sup Dep Pl  
2/1 Aust Fd Amb  
110 Aust Bde Wksp  
110 Aust Bde Ord Fd Pk.

#### Capture of KARAWOP

9. Permission was granted to secure KARAWOP prior to 20 Apr. Accordingly, on 13 Apr, a patrol from 2/2 Aust Inf Bn carried out a recon to the vicinity of WISLING. The patrol when returning was fired on by an enemy mortar but suffered no casualties, indicating the presence of enemy, but not in any great strength.
10. On the following day, 2/1 Aust Inf Bn who had been given the task of securing KARAWOP - WISLING, concentrated in a position 1000 yards WEST of BANAK at W027237. The main advance commenced on the 15 Apr when B Coy moved via the coastal track with the intention of occupying KARAWOP VILLAGE. On reaching the WEST edge of KARAWOP PLANTATION, B Coy came under fire from an enemy mortar located EAST of the features in the PLANTATION and suffered casualties 5 killed and 4 wounded. Patrols pushed forward to locate the mortar but were unsuccessful though 2 enemy were killed.
11. Meanwhile, D Coy, who had been given the task of clearing the foothills SOUTH of KARAWOP, moved to spur in square W0723 without encountering any enemy and on the next day continued along the line of the foothills when contact was made with an enemy JUKI MG position at W073212. Following artillery support, the position was captured. Pte H W BARTHOLOMEW showed outstanding bravery and initiative here when, stepping into the open and firing his Bren gun from the hip, he stormed the enemy gun position, killing the gunner and forcing the remnants to withdraw. Then, out of ammunition himself, he manned the JUKI and turned it on the retreating enemy, killing one and wounding another. Own casualties for the action were one killed and two wounded.
12. A Coy then moved to the SOUTH of the PLANTATION and advanced NORTH to KARAWOP Village, occupying it without opposition, although one enemy was killed en route. Following this, B Coy moved through and occupied WISLING. D Coy occupied a position on KARAWOP Creek 500 yards SOUTH of A Coy and on 17 Apr the remainder of the battalion occupied KARAWOP. An outpost was established at W103231.
13. D Coy patrols encountered 6 enemy SOUTH along KARAWOP Creek, attacked and killed 3, the remainder withdrawing, following which the area was thoroughly patrolled and 7 further enemy were killed. AP mines were encountered causing casualties of one killed and one wounded.

14. By this time, 2/7 Aust Cdo Sqn had arrived in the area and come under command, moving into positions in area of BANAK vacated by 2/1 Aust Inf Bn. The squadron was to take over the task of making secure the L of C and right flank forward to KARAWOP PLANTATION.

15. While KARAWOP was in the process of being occupied, natives reported a party of enemy with LMGs in the area of OLD KUMUDU W043205 and C Coy 2/2 Aust Inf Bn moved out on 17 Apr with the object of clearing the area. This task was completed by the next day when 4 enemy were killed at OLD KUMUDU and HARIMBOIA W041203 was cleared where one further enemy was killed.

16. On 17 Apr, the following instructions were issued :

(a) 2/1 Aust Inf Bn in process of occupying KARAWOP area.

(b) 2/1 Aust Inf Bn will prevent enemy approaching beyond general line WISLING - junction creek W093216 - crest line W077217 - track 073221.

(c) 2/7 Aust Cdo Sqn from time notified later will prevent enemy approaching beyond general line track W073221 - KUMUDU - KWANGEN - hill W000215.

(d) Until further orders limit of patrolling coast track W104231 - creek running SOUTH from W103230 - SUIK W071213 - KUMUDU old location - AMAGAP - KOTAI W013194 - AUTOGI.

(e) inter-unit boundaries between 2/1 Aust Inf Bn and 2/7 Aust Cdo Sqn inclusive 2/1 Aust Inf Bn creek running SOUTH from W071237 to headwater - line to headwater creek W071216 - then downstream along creek; between 2/7 Aust Cdo Sqn and garrison BUT - DAGUA vertical grid W000.

(f) Remaining units 16 Aust Inf Bde Gp will concentrate area KARAWOP as ordered later.

(g) Anti-personnel mines tape measure type activated 25 lbs laid EAST KOFI. 2/1 Aust Fd Coy will clear existing tracks and mark CLEAR. All personnel moving off cleared tracks will clear route by inspection and probing and mark "CLEARED". Mines located will be immediately reported to this HQ.

(h) As advance progresses, possibility of enemy amphibious operation against localities and L of C increases and all plans will include adequate provision to counter such operations.

(j) Enemy has shelled and/or mortared KARAWOP area and it can be expected that there will be a steep increase in such action from weapons on mainland and islands. To avoid surprise and unseemly urgency when subjected to action of enemy heavy weapons, provision weapon pits concealment personnel and vehicles and pits for protection of vehicle engines will be given high priority.

(k) 'Bde HQ remains present location.

#### Concentration at KARAWOP

17. Commencing on 21 Apr, the remaining major units of the brigade group concentrated at KARAWOP. By 22 Apr, 2/2 Aust Fd Regt, less one troop at BANAK, moved to gun positions in the PLANTATION area, 4 Bty being allotted to beach defence,

and C Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt less three troops had moved to W084240. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn moved to the general area W080239 on 23 Apr and 2/2 Aust Inf Bn to general area W075239 on 24 Apr. . . . .  
Brigade Headquarters was established at CAPE KARAWOP.

Advance to HAWAIN RIVER

18. Following receipt of orders from 6 Aust Div to continue with the operations, verbal orders were issued and confirmed by 16 Aust Inf Bde 003, the intention being to capture the mouth of the HAWAIN RIVER. The operation was to be carried out in three phases.

(a) First Phase : 2/1 Aust Inf Bn with in support  
2/2 Aust Fd Regt commencing on 25 Apr to capture HILL 1800 W103213 (MOKIN MOUNTAIN) with exploitation EAST and south east to edge of BOIKEN PLANTATION. Also to be responsible for the defence of area KARAWOP.

(b) Second Phase : 2/3 Aust Inf Bn with in support  
C Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt less three tps  
2/2 Aust Fd Regt  
One pl 2/1 Aust Fd Coy

commencing 25 Apr to clear coastal area inclusive intermediate feature between exclusive MOKIN MOUNTAIN and coast to general line KURAPIA - HILL at W122201 with limit of exploitation south east to general line KALIMBOA - ridges at W139195 and W137189; also responsible for defence BOIKEN area.

(c) Third Phase : 2/2 Aust Inf Bn with in support

C Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt less three tps  
2/2 Aust Fd Regt  
One Pl 2/1 Aust Fd Coy  
Remainder of 2/1 Aust Fd Coy with  
assault bridges

commencing as order<sup>ed</sup> by Brigade Headquarters to continue advance from exploitation achieved by second phase forward to HAWAIN RIVER and establish a bridge-head to cover bridging construction across HAWAIN RIVER. No exploitation. Also responsible for defence of KALIMBOA - HAWAIN area.

Patrolling activities 2/7 Aust Cdo Sqn

19. 2/7 Aust Cdo Sqn task commenced on 20 Apr and during the period of the advance to HAWAIN RIVER extensive patrol activities were carried out in the areas between vertical grids 00 and 07 as far SOUTH as WANPEA and AUTOGI. On 21 Apr B Tp established a patrol base on the creek junction at 037217 and operated in the area KUMUDU, KWENGEN, AMAGAP. In the ensuing period, patrols operated to OLD KUMUDU, WANPEA, AUTOGI, WALANDUUM and in the high ground WEST of KWANGEN and EAST of NEW KUMUDU. AP mines were encountered in the area of AMAGAP and a WT station and signal dump was found in square W0522. In this period 5 enemy were killed without loss to own troops.

Phase 1. 2/1 Aust Inf Bn's action

20. 2/1 Aust Inf Bn occupied the 1800 feature MOKIN MOUNTAIN on 25 Apr without opposition. Previous to this, native patrols had reported the feature to be occupied and 15 Pl had reconnoitred the approaches from the SOUTH. The occupation was carried out by D Coy, attacking from the SOUTH supported by artillery concentrations and an air strike, while 12 Pl as a diversion, carried out a feint attack from the NORTH. On the next day when exploitation took place, 5 enemy were killed and a mortar captured on the south east slopes of the feature.

21. Patrolling then continued with minor contacts and what was considered to be an old 18 Army Command Post was found located SOUTH of MOKIN MOUNTAIN.

Phase 2. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn's action

22. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn preparatory to commencing their operation, concentrated in the area EAST of WISLING, establishing patrol bases on the coast WEST of the PLANTATION and on the north east spur of MOKIN MOUNTAIN, feature 1800. The coastal patrol located enemy of unknown strength dug in forward of their base.

23. On 25 Apr, A Coy supported by tanks attacked the located enemy positions, killing two and forcing the remainder to withdraw. The company then cleared the coastal area through BOIKEN and south east to KENGEM. D Coy moved to the patrol base on the north east spur of 1800 feature while the remainder of the battalion remained in positions in the vicinity of BOIKEN Creek and WEST of the PLANTATION. That night C Coy at the mouth of the BOIKEN Creek were mortared without effect. The mortar location was considered to be on the high ground SOUTH of the PLANTATION.

24. On the following day, A Coy exploited EAST, establishing itself at CHOLIAL with one platoon at KALIMBOA. A small enemy position was encountered dug in at CHOLIAL. Intense fire from the tanks supporting the company, killed two and caused the remainder to flee in disorder. An enemy 37 mm Tk A gun after firing two rounds at 70 yards blew up at the breach. D Coy then moved through the PLANTATION WEST of BOIKEN Creek to the SOUTH edge while B Coy advanced SOUTH via the PLANTATION EAST of BOIKEN Creek and occupied YUNGO, the remainder of the battalion occupying positions around BOIKEN.

25. Following this, on 27 Apr D Coy cleared located enemy positions SOUTH along BOIKEN Creek at W12204 and B Coy cleared in succession, the features south east from YUNGO. The knoll at W137188 was reported to be held in strength. An attack by two platoons of B Coy, supported by artillery concentrations on 28 Apr succeeded in clearing the feature.

26. B Coy then occupied the high ground extending from W122200 to W137197, with platoon localities on each of the knolls. Subsequent enemy were located on feature W124187 but withdrew following artillery concentrations.

27. This now completed the immediate task of 2/3 Aust Inf Bn, BOIKEN having been occupied and exploitation to the line KALIMBOA - ridges at W139195 and W137189 was also completed.

Phase 5. 2/2 Aust Inf Bn's action

28. While 2/3 Aust Inf Bn were occupied in clearing their sector, phase 5 was commenced on 27 Apr. 2/2 Aust Inf Bn in anticipation, had moved from KARAWOP to areas WEST of BOIKEN vacated by 2/3 Aust Inf Bn on the day previous.

29. In a rapid advance along the coast, 2/2 Aust Inf Bn established a bridge-head over the HAWAIN RIVER and had practically completed its initial task by the night. The forward elements of D Coy reached the river by 0910 hours, D Coy having proceeded from KALIMBOA as advance guard with one troop of tanks and a detachment of engineers in support. Other than one 37 mm gun observed on the EAST bank and neutralized by the tanks, no contact was made.

30. Following a reconnaissance of the river mouth by the engineers, a river crossing with assault boats was effected by C Coy, 70 yards SOUTH of the mouth, tanks supporting the crossing by providing covering fire on the left flank along the coastal track. The crossing was unopposed and C Coy consolidated on the EAST bank, establishing a standing patrol forward at W188202, where one enemy was killed. There was evidence to indicate that 25 others had recently occupied the area at W188202, but these apparently had withdrawn on our approach.

31. While the bridge-head was being established, B Coy moved SOUTH along PAROM Creek and occupied PAROM, killing 5 enemy in the area. B Coy also established a standing patrol on the 800 feature at W146189 and killed a further 5 enemy 200 yards WEST of the feature.

32. The battalion dispositions were then as follows; Bn HQ at HAWAIN, A Coy WELUBI, B Coy PAROM, C Coy EAST bank of the HAWAIN RIVER, D Coy WEST bank of river, 5 Pl 800 feature at W147188.

33. On the following day the construction of a motor transport bridge across the HAWAIN RIVER was completed by 2/1 Aust Pd Coy - and local patrolling SOUTH of the bridge-head cleared the banks of the HAWAIN RIVER, 5 enemy being killed as a result.

#### Defense of Brigade Sector

34. At this stage, 19 Aust Inf Bde began concentrating in the BOIKEN area with the intention of relieving the brigade and continuing the advance forward from HAWAIN RIVER. The initial task of 19 Aust Inf Bde to commence on 3 May was to destroy enemy at CAPE WOM - YARABOS W2410 and to clear KANIMBOA W1612.

35. The following changes in command were to be effected :

(a) Additional troops coming under command 16 Aust Inf Bde

One bty less one tp 2/3 Aust Pd Regt  
Two tps 2/1 Aust Tk A Regt.

(b) Troops reverting from command 16 Aust Inf Bde

(i) 2/7 Aust Cdo Sqn to comd 19 Aust Inf Bde as from 1200 hrs 3 May.

(ii) C Sqn 2/4 Aust Armd Regt less three troops to comd 19 Aust Inf Bde as from 1200 hrs 1 May.

(iii) 2/2 Aust Pd Regt less one tp to comd RAA 6 Aust Div when landing elements 19 Aust Inf Bde cross HAWAIN RIVER.

(iv) One tp 2/2 Aust Pd Regt to comd RAA 6 Aust Div on arrival one bty less one tp 2/3 Aust Pd Regt.

(v) 2/1 Aust Pd Coy to comd RAA 6 Aust Div 0700 hrs 30 Apr.



(vi) 110 Aust Bde Wksp to comd 6 Aust Div as from 0800 hrs 1 May.

(vii) Det ATIS to command 19 Aust Inf Bde as from 1200 hrs 2 May.

(viii) RAAF Air Sp Party to comd 19 Aust Inf Bde as from 1200 hrs 2 May.

36. The task allotted to 16 Aust Inf Bde was to defend the coastal area from inclusive mouth of HAWAIN RIVER WEST to 00 grid, with area of responsibility all inclusive mouth of HAWAIN RIVER - track W173160 to river crossing - PARINGA RIVER - RANIMBOA W1612 - NUMIKIM W1314 - thence NORTH to 15 northing grid - WEST to 00 grid - NORTH to coast.

37. Inter-battalion boundaries were then given as follows :

(a) Between 2/1 Aust Inf Bn and 2/3 Aust Inf Bn all inclusive to 2/1 Aust Inf Bn - creek W102231 SOUTH along creek thence WEST slopes of feature 1800 thence south west through reentrant and saddle 0919 thence SOUTH from W090194 along creek;

(b) between 2/3 Aust Inf Bn and 2/2 Aust Inf Bn all inclusive to 2/2 Aust Inf Bn - creek at W146205 SOUTH along creek thence to saddle W142190 thence along creek from W142187 to W130174 thence SOUTH along W13 grid.

with unit tasks;

(a) 2/1 Aust Inf Bn will

(i) prevent any enemy penetration NORTH through the line of high ground from W000215 - KWANGEN - KUMUDU - feature W082213 EAST to inter-battalion boundary;

(ii) carry out coastal defence KARAWOP area;

(iii) patrol forward to line of brigade responsibility.

(b) 2/2 Aust Inf Bn will

(i) prevent any enemy penetration NORTH and WEST through feature 800 W1418 - PAROM W163180 - EAST to HAWAIN RIVER - NORTH along HAWAIN RIVER;

(ii) carry out coastal defence of sector allotted;

(iii) relieve 2/8 Aust Inf Bn at RANIMBOA W1612 when captured but will NOT operate SOUTH of PAROM towards RANIMBOA until this occurs. Time of taking over responsibility of RANIMBOA will be notified by this HQ;

(iv) patrol forward initially to SW track through PAROM NUMBATUI and on taking over responsibility of RANIMBOA to line of brigade responsibility.

(c) 2/3 Aust Inf Bn will

(i) prevent any enemy penetration through the line of high ground feature 1800 - feature W125195 - feature W147188;

(ii) carry out coastal def within sector allotted;

(iii) patrol forward to line of brigade responsibility.

38. Each battalion was to maintain one company in reserve, free of all responsibilities, to be made available as brigade reserve if required. Reserve companies were not to be committed without prior reference to brigade headquarters.

#### KOANUMBO Action

39. While 19 Aust Inf Bde were concentrating and taking over the advance, units continued with clearing of their sectors. 2/3 Aust Inf Bn patrolling SOUTH along BOIKEN Creek towards KOANUMBO determined enemy to be in strength in this area. First contact was made on 29 Apr by a patrol from D Coy, consisting of one section, 2 police boys and 4 native guides, under Lt F J HODDINOTT. 15 enemy were observed to be digging in on spur W109188 and consequently, C Coy less one platoon proceeded to the area with the object of destroying located enemy.

40. Lt HODDINOTT showed exceptional initiative by carrying out a complete reconnaissance of the enemy positions and determined that the enemy were dug in astride a narrow razor backed feature, carrying dense matted secondary growth with sides so steep as to render it impracticable to approach from a flank.

41. C Coy, supported by artillery, attacked the positions on 30 Apr. After advancing 50 yards the forward elements came under fire from a JUKI MMG, 3 LMGs and rifles and, since the narrowness of the ridge precluded further deployment, the advance was held up. C Coy then contained the enemy <sup>by holding</sup> astride the ridge and probing to the flanks and on the same day was reinforced by the remaining platoon of C Coy and a platoon of D Coy.

42. A further attack, supported by concentrations of artillery, was carried out on 1 May. It was found that the artillery concentrations had forced the enemy to withdraw to a position on top of a shelf on the ridge astride the track junction at W109185. Following an assault with one platoon forward, the position was captured, two enemy dead being found and a JUKI MMG procured. Own casualties to this stage were 4 killed and 5 wounded.

43. The force consolidated its positions and on exploitation located further enemy positions approximately 100 yards down a spur to the EAST, but no attack was launched due to the late hour. That night the enemy approximate strength of 15, with LMGs, rifles and grenades, probed our defences, attempting to infiltrate for a period of two hours.

44. The located enemy positions on the spur were attacked and captured the next day. The attack was carried out by arming the forward section with 3 Bren LMGs and 4 OSMGs with an infantry flame thrower, man pack, following. The secondary growth was so dense as to preclude vision for more than 10 yards. The forward section, advancing and firing on the move, encountered heavy LMG fire from dug in positions with overhead cover at 110185 and here the flame thrower was brought into action. Although the density of the undergrowth limited its range to 20 yards, the effect of the weapon, combined with the continued advance and fire, caused the enemy to wildly withdraw over the precipitous sides. In this attack, one 81 mm mortar with ammunition, sited to fire on BOIKEN PLANTATION, and 1 OSMG were captured. Casualties were enemy one killed and own 1 killed, 3 wounded.

45. From the positions captured and the extent of the digging completed, all of which had been done in the previous two days, it was estimated that approximately 50 enemy were opposing. The enemy were equipped with one 81 mm mortar, one JUKI MMG, 5 LMGs, 1 OSMG, besides rifles. They carried no packs but only a waterproof raincoat, groundsheet, mess gear and arms. All clothes, boots and weapons were new and in excellent condition.

46. The last position captured proved to be the key to the area, being on high ground and protecting the enemy L of C to the EAST and SOUTH. Further patrolling revealed that the only enemy remaining in the area was a force of approximately 15 on the EAST slopes of 2400 feature, who had withdrawn from positions on track junction NORTH of KOANUMBO on 3 May.

47. On 4 May, while A Coy relieved the force which had been operating, an air strike with heavy artillery concentrations was carried out against the enemy on the 2400 feature. This forced a further withdrawal up the slopes and further artillery concentrations, in a complete withdrawal.

48. A Coy occupied KOANUMBO with one platoon, following which patrolling SOUTH to 1600 feature and to the WEST reported the area as clear, while small isolated positions located on the track EAST from KOANUMBO were cleared.

49. With the capture of KOANUMBO, considered to be the site of an enemy HQ, subsequent reconnaissance determined a total of 28 enemy had been killed in the area. This is a result of the series of actions fought over the period.

Additional responsibilities 2/1 and 2/2 Aust Inf Bn

50. 2/1 Aust Inf Bn on 3 May took over the responsibilities of 2/7 Aust Cdo Sqn who on the same date reverted to command of 19 Aust Inf Bde and moved to the concentration area at BOIKEN. The battalion was re-disposed with B Coy holding the outpost positions in the WEST sector and C Coy in the EAST sector of the battalion area of responsibility. A Coy was held as brigade reserve in area of KARAWOP and D Coy as battalion reserve on KARAWOP Creek. 2/1 Aust Inf Bn then carried out long range patrolling with small reconnaissance patrols to which natives were attached. No contacts were made and the area was considered to be clear.

51. 2/2 Aust Inf Bn up to 8 May continued with normal patrolling at which date the responsibility of RANIMBOA was taken over, 2/8 Aust Inf Bn having completed their task. The limit of patrolling for 2/2 Aust Inf Bn was then extended to the area RANIMBOA - NUMIKIM, the battalion NOT requiring to place a force in the area as originally planned, but merely to ensure the area remained clear by patrolling.

Dispositions

52. Attached as Appendix J are the dispositions of the brigade group as at 8 May.

Casualty Figures

53. Casualty figures for Phase 5. Period 13 Apr - 8 May were as follows :

Unit	OWN		ENEMY	
	KIA	WIA	Killed	PW
2/1 Aust Inf Bn	5	11	16	-
2/2 Aust Inf Bn	2	1	20	-
2/3 Aust Inf Bn	7	16	35	3
2/7 Aust Cdo Sqn	-	-	7	-
RAA	-	-	3	-
ANGAU	-	-	7	-
	<u>14</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>3</u>

CONCLUSION

54. Though operations of clearing the unit areas of minor opposition continued, the brigade task was virtually completed when 19 Aust Inf Bde took over the advance on 3 May, 2/8 Aust Inf Bn pushing SOUTH to RANIMBOA and 2/4 Aust Inf Bn pushing forward along the coast to CAPE WOM.

55. The following is the text of a memo received from Major-General J S STEVENS, GOC 6 Aust Div, showing appreciation for the operations carried out by the brigade over the period:

"I send to you and your Brigade Group my sincere thanks for the grand work you have done during the past three months. Your rapid drive along the coast from ABAU to the HAWAIN RIVER was a splendid achievement, carried out courageously and efficiently. The successful completion of that task makes it possible now to secure our final objective, WEWAK, in the very near future, thus denying the enemy his last physical contact with the outside world.

2. You and all ranks under your command can look with great pride on your share in the operations of 6 Australian Division against the Japanese in the ATTAPE - WEWAK area."

TOTAL CASUALTY FIGURES. PERIOD 23 JAN - 8 MAY 45.

Unit	OWN		ENEMY	
	KIA	WIA	Killed	PW
2/1 Aust Inf Bn	26	49	181	7
2/2 Aust Inf Bn	28	78	269	5
2/3 Aust Inf Bn	31	65	236	9
2/8 Aust Inf Bn	-	-	1	2
2/3 Aust MG Bn	16	31	108	-
2/7 Aust Cdo Sqn	-	-	7	-
2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn	4	4	19	-
RAA	-	4	19	4
ANGAU	-	-	57	-
Unallotted	-	-	12	-
	<u>105</u>	<u>231</u>	<u>909</u>	<u>27</u>

LIST OF APPENDICES TO 16 AUST INF BDE REPORT  
ON OPERATIONS PART I

- Appx A Summary of operations carried out by ANGAU.
- Appx B Summary of operations 2/1 Aust Fd Coy.
- Appx C Administrative report on operations 16 Aust Inf Bde adv from ABAU to HAWAIN RIVER. (~~Issued under separate cover~~)
- Appx D Map showing 16 Aust Inf Bde advance - main thrusts - areas patrolled by units from line ILAP - MALIN - ABAU to HAWAIN RIVER, with Annexure A - Sequence of Main Events.
- Appx E Trace showing dispositions, -inter-battalion boundaries -patrol limits as at 28 Jan 45. (Commencement Phase 1).
- Appx F Trace showing dispositions - inter-battalion boundaries - patrol limits as at 13 Mar 45. (Completion of Phase 2)
- Appx G Trace showing dispositions - inter-battalion boundaries - patrol limits as at 22 Mar 45. (Completion Phase 3)
- Appx H Trace showing dispositions - inter-battalion boundaries as at 13 Apr 45. (End of Phase 4)
- Appx J Trace showing dispositions -- inter-battalion boundaries as at 8 May. (Completion of Phase 5)

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT BY ANGAU

1. The first opportunity of operating natives under brigade direction occurred on 9 Mar when a detachment of ANGAU consisting of Lt BIRRELL, 4 police boys and 20 natives were attached to the brigade. Up to this date, ANGAU had been operating independently and some reports from the ABOAMA area had been received. The following is a summary of ANGAU's activities during the period of attachment to the brigade.
2. The first patrol, consisting of a police boy and 2 natives, with the task of obtaining information of the enemy in MUGULUWELA area operated on 10 and 11 Mar. The information gained, which subsequently proved reliable, was as follows:
  - (a) ten enemy with one twin barrel MG located at V804257;
  - (b) ten to twenty enemy around MUGULUWELA Village and one twin barrel MG located in the village. During the day, portion of the strength manned defences on southern slopes of spur V815245 while the remainder worked sak sak along the NINAHAU River. All enemy returned to sleep in the village;
  - (c) a standing patrol strength 5 was located at V801248.
3. On 15 Mar Lt BIRRELL with 2 police boys and 8 natives commenced reconnaissance in LOANIN Village area V8027. 8 enemy were contacted at V798273, 6 of which were killed and one LMG captured, the patrol then returning.
4. The first attachment to a unit was made on 16 Mar when WO II GODWIN with 8 police boys and 25 natives operated with 2/3 Aust MG Bn with the task of providing assistance in the clearing of the MUGULUWELA area. The natives were employed as scouts operating forward to gain enemy information and then to guide own troops to the located enemy positions. The employment of natives in this manner undoubtedly saved many lives.
5. On 26 Mar, 2 police boys and 10 natives were attached to 2/1 Aust Inf Bn to provide assistance in clearing high ground SOUTH of BUT bounded by vertical grids V850 and V922. The battalion detached 1 police boy and 5 natives to each coy operating in the area. Here the natives were used independently of the infantry. Odd stragglers were killed by them but if the enemy appeared in strength the company was informed and a patrol guided to the located enemy position.
6. WO II GODWIN and natives were withdrawn from 2/3 Aust MG Bn on 29 Mar and attached to 2/3 Aust Inf Bn for operations in the WONGINARA MISSION area. The natives were employed to entice unfriendly natives in the employ of the enemy over to our cause, this being very successful as 250 refugees were recovered in 7 days. Again they were used in the role of guides and scouts and small reconnaissance patrols to locate and guide a force to enemy positions in the area. As a result of their reconnaissance and guiding a very successful action took place when HQ 20 Div were attacked. The natives had located the enemy HQ area and by the use of well concealed kanaka pads were able to guide two companies to within 100 yards of the enemy. They further indicated the position of his sentries and defences.

7. On 1 Apr one police boy and 5 natives were attached to 2/2 Aust Inf Bn for the purpose of guiding a patrol to investigate other native reports of enemy concentrations in the village of AUTOGI and WALANDUUM. These natives after guiding the patrol to within 200 yards of enemy positions carried out a reconnaissance and reported 20/30 enemy with 20 armed natives to be in occupation. On this information the patrol withdrew, not being strong enough to deal with such strength. Following this native boys operated with C Coy 2/2 Aust Inf Bn into the area KWANGEN - AMAGAP - WALANDUUM - AUTOGI. They gave considerable assistance to the company and besides the casualties inflicted by our own troops, they were responsible for killing 6 enemy.
8. WO II GODWIN and his party were then withdrawn from 2/3 Aust Inf Bn and attached to 2/1 Aust Inf Bn on 12 Apr. Their task was to assist the battalion in its advance to KARAWOP. On this occasion the natives who had been allotted to companies were used as scouts but operated too close to own troops. When the troops came under fire the natives withdrew to rear areas. After this they were allowed to operate on their own and prior to an attack on the 1800 feature (MOKIN MOUNTAIN) a recce patrol of one police boy and three natives reported several standing patrols on the main approaches to the feature. In the attack, the natives guided D Coy 2/1 Aust Inf Bn to the best approach and though the standing patrol were not contacted there was evidence that small numbers of the enemy had been in the area.
9. On 26 Apr, WO II GODWIN and party were again attached to 2/3 Aust Inf Bn, this time with the task of assisting in clearing the BOIKEN area and SOUTH to KOANUMBO. The natives here were employed on small reconnaissance patrols consisting of an officer, 2/3 ORs and 4/5 natives and would operate for three days, gaining information of enemy strength, positions and L of C. This reconnaissance gave an accurate picture of the enemy positions and it was considered that own casualties were greatly reduced by these patrol activities, especially when these patrols operated in the rear and forced the enemy to vacate good positions because of the fact that he was unable to assess the strength of the force behind his positions.
10. Natives were to be withdrawn and attached to 19 Aust Inf Bde on 7 May but in view of the extensive area of responsibility of the brigade at this stage, 5 police boys and 26 natives were retained for the purpose of carrying out long range patrolling. WO II GODWIN, the remaining natives and 10 WEWAK boys reverted to command 19 Aust Inf Bn. The allotment of the 5 police boys and 26 natives was as follows :
- |                 |               |                |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 2/1 Aust Inf Bn | 2 police boys | and 12 natives |
| 2/2 Aust Inf Bn | 1 police boy  | and 6 natives  |
| 2/3 Aust Inf Bn | 2 police boys | and 8 natives. |
11. These natives then carried out small deep patrols throughout the battalions area of responsibility and ensured a maximum number of troops could be rested.
12. Lt BIRRELL who was in charge of the administration of refugees organized six patrols to contact refugees from the AMAGAP - KWANGEN - AUTOGI areas, the first of these leaving DAGUA on 23 Mar. These patrols were most successful in bringing in approximately 1000 refugees. Some of these had come from AMOIA - HAMSUK area and useful information was obtained. Over the entire period over 2000 refugees passed through the two staging camps, located at western end of BUT DROME and WEST of BUT RIVER, established by Lt BIRRELL.

13. During the period 15 Mar to 10 May the police boys and natives accounted for 57 enemy killed, their own losses being one police boy and two natives killed and 5 natives wounded.



SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS : 2/1 AUST FD COY

GENERAL

1. Coy arrived MATAPAU 2 area early in Phase 2 on 14 Feb and were placed in support of 16 Aust Inf Bde. Main task was to build an L of C from DOGRETO BAY forward as the brigade advanced. Weather had been fine for several weeks prior to this and continued so for a few days during which a stretch of road was completed from NIMBUM Creek to ABAU and subsequently withstood the most inclement weather. However the road from DOGRETO BAY to NIMBUM Creek formed by 2/2 Aust Fd Coy whilst excellent in dry weather, soon became a major problem after the rains set in and eventually became completely impassable even to D.8 Tractors but fortunately this was not until the brigade had moved out. The road forward from ABAU to WANK Creek likewise became a major engineer task beyond our resources, 453' of heavy bridging capable of taking tanks was constructed in 13 days throughout this sector but the road itself continually failed under continual rains. However, all vital vehicles managed to get through and it was of some value. Lack of mechanical equipment was largely the cause. Only two Angle-dozers (which broke down continually) and damaged drawn grader were available. These were withdrawn on the Coy moving to the ANUMB RIVER area. Throughout this valuable infantry and artillery working parties were generously made available and did excellent in clearing a 60 feet wide track through the dense rain forest. During the first period of three weeks over 30 inches of rain fell and made the clay soil in this area a hopeless bog. Shortly after the move of the brigade to the ANUMB RIVER area the DOGRETO BAY - WANK Creek sector was abandoned as beyond the available resources of the Divisional Engineers.
2. The close of Phase 2 found the Coy employed on bridging the ANUMB RIVER (300 ft wide up to 9 ft deep and flowing extremely fast). Further rains resulted in a Tidal flood of the river and swept away 150 ft of piled piers. This project was abandoned and eventually sufficient F.B.E. equipment was obtained to install a ferry capable of taking loaded 6 x 6 GMC Trucks. Previous to this, stores and vehicles had been moved across the river on improvised drum rafts built by engineers and infantry. The lack of equipment bridging and mechanical plant proved a great handicap during this Phase. Fortunately the NINAHAU RIVER proved fordable after banks had been cut down and the road from ANUMB to BUT proved sufficient to take the brigade traffic with the assistance of tractors. No mechanical plant was available, 120 ft of F.B.E. was used but was insufficient to bridge the SIMBI and work a ferry on the ANUMB RIVER simultaneously. On assembly of the brigade group at BUT the L of C sector WANK Creek - BUT was closed and the Coy moved to BUT - DAGUA sector during period 21 - 27 Apr 45.
3. During Phase 3 and Phase 4 the Coy was employed on establishing the L of C from BUT to DAGUA along the coast and from road junction near DAGUA  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles SOUTH to the inland coastal range. During this Phase one Bull-dozer was available for a short time and was used to widen approx half mile of the track. Several bridges were built during this Phase. At this stage approximately 80 tons of equipment bridging arrived for this Coy for use in the advance and proved invaluable. Great care was taken to establish and man a model bridge park and all bridging was assembled in complete units and carefully checked.

Line and wireless communication were established to the bridging park. It was then possible to move a complete bridge out of the park in less than half an hour. The Coy was now released of all commitments WEST of and including DAGUA and was free to concentrate on the advance. In addition three angle-dozers came in close support and the road to KARAWOP was cleared and widened immediately in rear of the forward infantry company during the advance. Less than two hours after capture of KARAWOP Creek a stiffened 84 ft S.B.G. class 24 was completed and the road opened to the forward company. During the advance from DAGUA Japanese type 93 anti-personnel mines were discovered fitted with a new type 25 lbs pressure assembly. Hereafter one platoon accompanied forward infantry in the advance. During the previous four weeks an additional 420 ft of class 24 bridging was built. From 19 Apr to 25 Apr the Coy assembled in the KARAWOP area and the equipment bridging park was re-established alongside Coy HQ. Again all care was taken to lay the Park out. Engineer reconnaissance party accompanied infantry patrol to BOIKEN and gained sufficient information to plan bridge requirements. In order to obtain a clear start the Engineers were permitted to work on the road to the forward platoon post.

4. For the advance to the HAWAIN, one platoon less one section was detailed to support forward infantry in clearing mines, one section plus Bull-dozer and tractor to clear path for tanks, one Platoon erecting equipment bridging and the remaining platoon in the bridge park for rapid loading. Nine mines were successfully located and equipment bridge laid. At the WEST end of the BOIKEN PLANTATION the tanks were brought up along the beach to clear enemy snipers holding up the advance. A beach exit was cut by the dozer and the tanks debouched on to the existing track. However, frequent obstacles necessitated the dozer frequently being called to clear the track ahead of the tanks across the plantation. Next morning on arrival at the HAWAIN RIVER an Engineer Officer crossed the river at several places extending from the mouth to the remains of the Japanese bridge. He was covered by the tanks and infantry from the WEST bank. The EAST bank being reported clear, folding boats were brought up (that had been held on a semi-trailer in the forward company area) and the infantry were ferried across the river dry-shod. By mid-afternoon a 100 ft P.B.E class 9 bridge was erected across the HAWAIN, one 40 ft P.B.E across KENGEN Creek, 48 ft S.B.G. across KITTEN Creek, 64 ft S.B.G. across KING Creek and 84 ft S.B.G. across SILK Creek. By mid-day a stiffened 64 ft S.B.G. (2 girder) class 24 bridge was erected across the HAWAIN to take the tanks. All engineer tasks during phase 5 were swiftly executed, the bridging equipment proving ample, and mechanical equipment enabling the road to be opened immediately in rear of the advancing infantry. The company then proceeded on its usual role of maintaining and improving the L of C.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT ON OPERATIONS

PHASE 1 - RELIEF OF 19 AUST INF BDE  
AND INITIAL OPERATIONS

1. The administrative set up at time of taking over from 19 Aust Inf Bde at SUAIN was as follows: -

(a) Supplies

(i) DID 2/22 Aust Sup Dep Pl                      BABIANG  
    BBF 2/23 Aust Sup Dep Pl                      SUAIN  
    BIP 2/21 Aust Sup Dep Pl                      ROCKY PT

(ii) Rations were broken in detail at each Sup Dep Pl and issued as follows: -

DID - For units WEST of NEWSITE.  
BBF - For units including NEWSITE, EAST to DANMAP RIVER except MALIN area.  
BIP - For units EAST of DANMAP.

(iii) Feeding strengths were approximately as follows: -

DID - 600 whites  
BBF - 2500 whites 500 natives  
BIP - 2700 whites.

(iv) The following reserves were maintained in Sup Dep Pls: -

DID - 30000 whites 4000 natives  
BBF - Nil  
BIP - 5000 whites

(v) Maintenance was supplied under arrangements 6 Aust Div in following manner: -

Daily by road to BBF sufficient rations to maintain whole force.

Maintenance from BBF to BIP by transport under Bde arrangements.

(vi) All rations were delivered by AASC transport, from Gen Tpt Pls under command, direct from Sup Dep Pl to units.

(vii) In case of 2/3 Aust Inf Bn, rations were delivered to E echelon at LUAIN where they were broken into native carrier loads to be carried forward next day by natives, until 29 Jan 45.

(viii) 2/3 Aust Inf Bn and 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn were supplied from DZs at MALIN, ABOAMA and WALUM, commencing 29 Jan 45.

(b) Ammunition

(1) Ammunition Points were established at DID BABIANG and BIP at LAZY CREEK.

(ii) Ammunition was not available at BBF SUAIN.

- (iii) Method of unit replenishment was for units to draw from ammunition points. At times it was possible to deliver ammunition to inf bns by transport from Gen Tpt Pl.
- (iv) Method of resupply was that 6 Aust Div delivered to ammunition points from time to time the amount of ammunition expended by unit. These figures were obtained from daily returns of ammunition expended.

(c) POL

- (i) Petrol points were established at all Sup Dep Pls.
- (ii) Supplies were normally drawn by units requiring supplies at any period, stocks were made available.
- (iii) Resupply to petrol points was made under 6 Aust Div arrangements and was based on issues.
- (iv) 14 days reserve of POL was held by all petrol points.

(d) Natives

- (i) At time of taking over from 19 Aust Inf Bde the strength of natives attached was approximately 520 of which approximately 400 were available daily after allowing for sick and rest days.
- (ii) Initially all these natives were engaged in moving up stores of 2/3 Aust Inf Bn to MALIN and returning 2/8 Aust Inf Bn stores to LUAIN, also carrying rations to force at IDAKAIBUL.
- (iii) Natives engaged in carrying rations to IDAKAIBUL were retained there on arrival until approximately 1600 hrs to await any stretcher cases being evacuated from MALIN area.
- (iv) After completion of change over between 2/3 Aust Inf Bn and 2/8 Aust Inf Bn, 220 natives were allotted to 2/3 Aust Inf Bn for collection of air droppings on DZ and carrying of rations, ammunition and stores to sub units of the Bn.
- (v) A further allotment of 40 natives was made to 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn for collection of air droppings on ABOAMA DZ and distribution to sub units.
- (vi) At WALUM 16 natives were stationed under control of 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn for clearing of DZ and evacuation of casualties if necessary.
- (vii) Natives were also sent forward each day from LUAIN to MALIN with such items as fresh bread, canteen stores, equipment and back loaded either stretcher cases or parachutes.

(e) DZs

- (i) The following DZs were in operation: -

MALIN  
ABOAMA  
WALUM

(ii) At each DZ an AASC detachment handled all supplies etc dropped, arranging collection, storing and distribution.

(f) Medical

- (i) ADS - SUAIN with surgical team from 2/11 AGH attached.
- (ii) MDS - NEWSITE
- (iii) Medical Aid Post - IDAKAIEUL
- (iv) SB Detachment - DANMAP RIVER.

(g) Postal

FPO - HQ 16 Aust Inf Bde.

(h) Pay

Det 6 Aust Div FCO - SUAIN.

(j) Canteen

Det AACCS - SUAIN.

(k) Salvage

Det 6 Aust Div Salvage Unit - SUAIN.

(l) AEME

2/45 Aust LAD - ROCKY POINT  
110 Aust Bde Wksp - SUAIN.

2. This system, although only in operation for a few days, worked very satisfactorily until the flooding of DANMAP RIVER on night 27/28 Jan 45 and the washing out of bridges between AITAPE and BABIANG on the L of C.

3. The flooding meant resupply by 6 Aust Div could not be made, resupply from Sup Dep Pl at LAZY CREEK could not be made from BBP. Casualties on EAST of DANMAP could not be evacuated to ADS for three days until river subsided and casualties could be carried across river by natives. This meant all casualties had to be held at unit RAPS.

4. As result of floods considerable amount of equipment, weapons and clothing was lost or destroyed, this called for urgent replacement which was effected, mostly within 24 hours by air droppings at MALIN and SUAIN.

5. LANDING OF CRAFT AT DOGRETO BAY

- (a) As a result of a reconnaissance carried out by 2/1 Aust Inf Bn and by a naval representative, it was decided by 6 Aust Div to land an LCT at DOGRETO BAY on night of 30/31 Jan 45.
- (b) Beach was marked out, an exit constructed and a working party was supplied by 2/2 Aust Inf Bn.
- (c) This LCT carried rations, POL, ammunition, canteen supplies and postal.
- (d) LCT was beached at approximately 2145 hrs and left for return journey before 0530 hrs.

- (e) A strict blackout was observed on the beach during the night.
- (f) All ASC supplies were stacked on EASTERN end of beach with a detachment of 2/25 Aust Sup Dep Fl in charge.
- (g) All units then EAST of DANMAP were then supplied by DOGRETO BAY.
- (h) Further resupply from AITAPE was made approximately every third day.

6. MOVEMENT FORWARD OF SURGICAL TEAM ON 31 JAN 45.

- (a) At this stage it was considered that the additional medical facilities should be made EAST of DANMAP RIVER.
- (b) In view of lightness of casualties, movement of ADS was not made but surgical team was moved forward to 52 Bty 2/2 Aust Fd Regt area at MATAPAU.

PHASE 2 - ADVANCE TO ANUMB RIVER

1. PRELIMINARY MOVES

- (a) Prior to the advance commencing the following movement of units took place: -
  - (i) MDS 2/1 Aust Fd Amb established at MATAPAU.
  - (ii) ADS 2/1 Aust Fd Amb with surgical team established at MATAPAU 2.
  - (iii) 2/3 Aust MG Bn moved to area of MALIN.
  - (iv) Bde HQ moved to MATAPAU 2.
- (b) With exception of move 2/3 Aust MG Bn, all moves were normal MT moves.
- (c) Move of 2/3 Aust MG Bn to MALIN.
  - (i) The movement of troops and stores commenced on 16 Feb 45.
  - (ii) Owing to limited numbers of natives available, movement of complete bn was spread over four days.
  - (iii) On arrival MALIN area the unit was completely supplied by air droppings.

2. FORWARD MOVE FROM MALIN BY 2/3 AUST INF BN

- (a) This movement was preceded by the building up by unit of three to five days supply of rations and ammunition in forward platoon area through which the Bn would move.
- (b) On 17 Feb 45 the movement forward from MALIN commenced. All stores had to be moved by native carrier for which purpose the unit had 200 natives.
- (c) Maintenance during the move was not a problem as unit drew maintenance from forward platoon positions as they moved through.

- (d) After capture of headwaters of NIMBUN CREEK and MIMA CREEK on 21 Feb 45 maintenance of 2/3 Aust Inf Bn from air dropping at MALIN ceased and the unit was supplied by carrier train from a jeep head established along NIMBUN CREEK. The unit established a B echelon at ABAU to where rations were delivered from FMC NIAP and then delivered by unit transport to jeep head.
- (e) This method of maintenance continued until 2/3 Aust Inf Bn moved to coast.
- (f) Portion of native compound from LUAIN was moved forward to NIMBUN CREEK for this purpose.

3. FORWARD MOVE 2/1 AUST INF BN TO ANUMB RIVER 17 FEB 45.

- (a) Before moving forward to ANUMB RIVER 2/1 Aust Inf Bn established forward dumps of rations, POL and ammunition in forward company positions.
- (b) Movement of Bn stores was made by jeeps and trailers to ARCOL CREEK as bridges along track would not allow use of heavier vehicles.
- (c) On 21 Feb 45 the Bn moved forward with stores to area SELAMIN - WANK CREEK.
- (d) Although road conditions were not satisfactory, movement of stores by jeeps was carried out successfully.

4. OPENING OF FMC NIAP 20 FEB 45.

- (a) A Field Maintenance Unit was opened at NIAP under arrangement 6 Aust Div on 20 Feb 45, for maintenance of troops of this Bde.
- (b) Bulk supplies were landed by barge from AITAPE at DOGRABO BAY and then transported to NIAP.
- (c) FMC consisted of:
  - (i) DID
  - (ii) Ord Det
  - (iii) Det 6 Aust Div Postal Unit
  - (iv) Det 6 Aust Div Cash Office
  - (v) Det AACCS
  - (vi) Medical Det for evacuation of casualties by barge.
  - (vii) Administrative personnel and transport
  - (viii) Det 6 Aust Div Salvage Unit
  - (ix) Det 14 Aust Fd Bakery.
- (d) On opening of FMC, the following administrative units reverted from command: -
  - (i) Det 6 Aust Div Cash Office
  - (ii) Det AACCS
  - (iii) Det 6 Aust Div Salvage Unit
  - (iv) 2/22 Aust Sup Dep Pl
  - (v) 2/23 Aust Sup Dep Pl.
- (e) Maintenance of all troops WEST of DANMAP was taken over by 6 Aust Div.
- (f) Maintenance of troops EAST of DANMAP to MATAPAU was carried out by 2/21 Aust Sup Dep Pl until stocks were exhausted then FMC NIAP supplied maintenance.

- (g) Units EAST of and including NIAP were maintained by FMC NIAP, who delivered rations to units by transport.
- (h) Pay, postal and canteen facilities were available from units at FMC.

5. BARGE SUPPLY TO WANK CREEK

- (a) Owing to condition of road it was found impossible to supply 2/1 Aust Inf Bn from FMC.
- (b) Following reconnaissance and preparation of charts by 2/1 Aust Inf Bn an LCM landed at WANK CREEK on 22 Feb 45 with approximately four days supplies for the unit.
- (c) On 23 Feb 45 further barges were landed with supplies and also Det 2/21 Aust Sup Dep Pl for storing, recording and issuing of stores.
- (d) At this time 2/1 Aust Inf Bn were supplying working parties for unloading of barges, and so that unit would not be hindered in its operations, 100 natives were despatched to WANK CREEK as an unloading party.
- (e) The Bde TO was sent to WANK CREEK as Beachmaster, and BCO to handle any ordnance stores landed.
- (f) On 25 Feb 45 the remainder of 2/21 Aust Sup Dep Pl was landed and a fully established DID was set up to handle and issue all supplies. A reserve of approximately seven days for forces in the area was built up at the DID.
- (g) Initially no difficulty was experienced in landing barges, either LCMs or LCTs at WANK, however as time went on the seas increased and great difficulty was experienced in getting barges to beach without them being broached or damaged. In one instance considerable damage was done to an LCT by large waves crashing on the stern. To overcome this difficulty, only LCMs were then beached and only loaded with a 2½ ton vehicle of stores, so that immediately upon ramp being dropped on beach the vehicle could drive off and the craft retract. The craft would later come in and pick up empty vehicle. By this method craft would only be on beach for a maximum of two minutes and this lessened the danger of broaching. On some days however, it was not possible for stores to be landed by this method and at one time a period of six days elapsed without any landings being made. This necessitated natives, who were held at WANK CREEK for unloading, being sent to FMC NIAP to carry forward supplies.

6. MOVEMENT TO WANK CREEK OF 2/2 AUST INF BN

- (a) On 27 Feb 45 2/2 Aust Inf Bn moved to WANK CREEK area.
- (b) Method of movement was as follows: -
  - (i) Personnel - Marched.
  - (ii) Stores and Transport - By barge from DOGRETO BAY to WANK CREEK.
  - (iii) Only essential stores were moved forward on day of move and the intention was that remainder would be brought forward by barge later. However, owing to heavy commitments of barges for supplies, ammunition and essential stores, the remainder of



2/2 Aust Inf Bn stores did not reach them until after they were established in DAGUA area.

7. RELIEF OF 2/3 AUST INF BN BY 2/3 AUST MG BN

- (a) On 2 Mar 45 2/3 Aust MG Bn commenced move forward from MALIN to relieve 2/3 Aust Inf Bn.
- (b) Owing to only limited scale of natives being available for disposal of 2/3 Aust MG Bn, move was spread out over a number of days. Also a considerable amount of white labour had to be used to ferry stores forward, which was a heavy strain on the troops physically and at times a limiting factor on the number of troops available for action.
- (c) Until arrival at KIDNEY feature and TOOTH feature, the unit was still being maintained by air dropping from MALIN, but on arrival there, air dropping at MALIN and ABOAMA ceased and remaining troops of 2/3 Aust MG Bn in MALIN area were supplied from FMC DOGRETO to NIMEUN CREEK and then by native carrier via ARUIAI saddle to MALIN.
- (d) When at TOOTH feature and later at AROHEMI, 2/3 Aust MG Bn were supplied by native carrier from DID at WANK CREEK via SELAMIN and later ANUMB - DUMIB CREEK.
- (e) A DZ at AROHEMI was reconnoissanced but owing to heavy commitments of aircraft to maintain 17 Aust Inf Bde only occasional droppings were made. Generally no advice was received of the droppings and consequently on some days unit would receive supplies both by air and by carrier train.
- (f) Eventually remainder of force left MALIN and ABOAMA areas and maintenance of these points ceased but natives engaged on this task were occupied for some days in clearing out supplies, stores, parachutes etc left by 2/3 Aust Inf Bn and 2/3 Aust MG Bn, to coast.

8. MOVE TO COAST 2/3 AUST INF BN

- (a) Movement commenced on 2 Mar 45.
- (b) 300 natives were allotted to unit for move and same was completed in three days.
- (c) On arrival at coast 2/3 Aust Inf Bn were supplied by DID WANK CREEK.

9. MEDICAL

- (a) On 27 Feb 45 A Coy 2/1 Aust Fd Amb with surgical team attached were landed at WANK CREEK and established an ADS.
- (b) Stretcher bearers were operating with all units.
- (c) Evacuations from ADS were made by barge from WANK CREEK to DOGRETO BAY and then by road to MDS at MATAPAU.
- (d) On 7 Mar 45 a mobile ADS from B Coy 2/1 Aust Fd Amb with a surgeon as OC moved into mountain area and was attached to 2/3 Aust MG Bn. This ADS, which was called upon to undertake a good deal of surgery, moved on foot and with stores carried by native carriers or Field ambulance personnel.

10.

AEME

2/45 Aust LAD moved to WANK CREEK by barge and established at SELAMIN CREEK.

11.

ADVANCE TO EAST OF ANUMB RIVER

- (a) The greatest handicap on the administrative side in this advance was the ANUMB RIVER.
- (b) The only means of crossing river was by raft constructed of 44 gallon drums.
- (c) In order to overcome this difficulty an attempt was made to open a DID at SOWOM staffed by a detachment of 2/21 Aust Sup Dep Pl and resupply to be made by barge to SOWOM. On two days only were barges able to be landed at SOWOM, however, the DID was continued by ferrying rations across ANUMB RIVER in bulk and breaking into detail and issuing at DID SOWOM.

PHASE 3 - CAPTURE OF BUT AND DAGUA

1.

2/2 AUST INF BN

- (a) This unit moved forward with three days rations carried on the man and with what stores could be carried in unit jeeps and trailers.
- (b) The success of this move depended on the unit being able to capture and obtain a suitable barge point at BUT for maintenance, as supplies by road were not possible.
- (c) On 17 Mar 45 supplies and ammunition were dropped to 2/2 Aust Inf Bn, and on 19 Mar 45, LCMs were landed with supplies.
- (d) Stores of 2/2 Aust Inf Bn not possible to move initially were moved to WANK CREEK for later movement by craft to BUT.
- (e) An additional MO and stretcher bearers from 2/1 Aust Fd Amb were attached to 2/2 Aust Inf Bn for the move.

2.

2/3 AUST INF BN

- (a) On 17 Mar 45 2/3 Aust Inf Bn moved to KAUK. Troops marched and essential stores were moved by MT, slight delays occurred in ferrying ~~stores~~ across ANUMB but move was completed in the day. Remaining stores were left at WANK CREEK to come forward by barge.
- (b) 200 natives were established in a compound at KAUK to maintain 2/3 Aust Inf Bn.
- (c) Supplies were either moved by MT or native carriers to KAUK.

3.

MEDICAL

- (a) Also on 17 Mar 45, A Coy 2/1 Aust Fd Amb moved from WANK CREEK and established an ADS at KAUK.

- (b) An ADS consisting of portion of B Coy 2/1 Aust Fd Amb and part of HQ Coy took over at WANK CREEK on the same day.
- (c) On 21 Mar 45, B Coy 2/7 Aust Fd Amb moved from AITAPE to BUT by barge and established an ADS at BUT and came under command.
- (d) A Coy 2/1 Aust Fd Amb closed ADS at KAUK on 26 Mar 45 and joined ADS 2/7 Aust Fd Amb at BUT and were working simultaneously with 2/7 Aust Fd Amb.
- (e) MDS 2/1 Aust Fd Amb commenced moving from MATAPAU on 25 Mar 45 to DOGRETO BAY and then by barge to BUT. Movement was spread over three days. On 30 Mar 45, MDS was established and took over from ADS 2/7 Aust Fd Amb who reverted from command.
- (f) Evacuations from BUT were direct to AITAPE.

4.

2/1 AUST INF BN

- (a) This unit moved from ANUMB river to BUT on 18 Mar 45.
- (b) As in advance of 2/2 Aust Inf Bn, all personnel marched and only stores that could be carried in unit jeeps and trailers moved forward by road, the remainder was left at WANK CREEK for movement by barge to BUT.

5.

ESTABLISHMENT OF FMC BUT

- (a) On 21 Mar 45 an FMC was established at BUT. The organization being similar to that of FMC NIAP.
- (b) This FMC supplied all units EAST of NINAHAU River.
- (c) Difficulty was experienced in the early stages of the FMC owing to limited craft being available and the necessity of building up stocks of rations, POL and ammunition, as well as getting forward unit stores and equipment left at WANK CREEK and DOGRETO BAY.
- (d) It was necessary for brigade to advise OC FMC BUT daily, the priority of stores, ammunition or POL required to be moved forward.
- (e) From FMC BUT, units were supplied forward until the opening of a DID by 2/25 Aust Sup Depot Pl at KARAWOP.

6. The advance forward to DAGUA from BUT presented no administrative difficulties.

7.

AEME

- (a) 2/45 Aust LAD landed by barge from WANK CREEK and established initially at BUT and later moved to DAGUA.
- (b) 110 Aust Bde Wksp landed by barge from DOGRETO and established on BUT DROME.

PHASE 4 - INLAND OPERATIONS FROM ANUMB TO DAGUA.

1.

2/3 AUST MG BN

- (a) To supply this unit a new Dropping Zone was established on NINAHAU on 18 Mar 45 and dropping commenced on that date.
- (b) 220 natives were then attached to 2/3 Aust MG Bn for bringing forward of stores from AROHEMI but as unit was advancing forward a great bulk of these natives were required to carry forward supplies to troops and the clearing of AROHEMI was delayed.
- (c) On 25 Mar 45, the unit captured MARABUS and on 26 Mar 45 maintenance was supplied from FMC BUT by road to TJAKOMBELLI where 2/3 Aust MG Bn had established a B echelon that was landed at BUT by barge, and then by native carrier to MARABUS.
- (d) After the move to MARABUS, detachment B Coy 2/1 Aust Fd Amb rejoined own unit at BUT.

2.

2/1 AUST INF BN

- (a) No problem arose out of this operation.
- (b) Unit had 60 native carriers attached for supply of troops operating inland.
- (c) Stretcher bearers were attached from 2/1 Aust Fd Amb.

3.

2/2 AUST INF BN

- (a) Maintenance was normal, supplies, POL and ammunition were delivered to unit's B echelon at DAGUA and then delivered to forward positions by jeeps and native carriers.
- (b) 100 native carriers were allotted for maintenance.
- (c) Stretcher bearers attached from 2/1 Aust Fd Amb.

4.

2/3 AUST INF BN

- (a) Supplies, POL and ammunition were delivered to 2/3 Aust Inf Bn rear located at mouth of HALIKAMOK RIVER and then by jeep to jeep head, approx 1½ miles, where unit B echelon was established. From this point maintenance was by native carrier to company positions.
- (b) 200 native carriers were attached to the unit for this task.
- (c) Stretcher bearers under command of an officer were attached from 2/1 Aust Fd Amb and jeep ambulances stationed at jeep head.
- (d) Apart from road conditions between 2/3 Aust Inf Bn rear and jeep head, no difficulties were experienced in this operation administratively.

PHASE 5 - CAPTURE KARAWOP, BOIKEN AND HAWAIN

1. 2/1 AUST INF BN

- (a) Movement from BUT to BANAK took place on 14 Apr 45.
- (b) All troops and stores were moved by transport.
- (c) Following day troops advanced by foot and stores moved forward by transport.
- (d) Maintenance continued from FMC BUT until opening of DID KARAWOP on 22 Apr 45.
- (e) 30 native carriers were allotted for use by unit in supplying troops in hills.

2. 5/2 AUST INF BN

- (a) Moved by MT to KARAWOP on 24 Apr 45.
- (b) On 26 Apr 45 moved to BOIKEN area, all stores were moved by motor transport and troops marched, the advance continued and HAWAIN captured. B echelon was established at NAUGIB.
- (c) Maintenance was drawn from DID KARAWOP.
- (d) Approximately 40 - 50 natives were allotted daily to maintain troops in PAROM area.

3. 2/3 AUST INF BN

- (a) All troops and stores moved by motor transport to KARAWOP on 23 Apr 45.
- (b) On 25 Apr 45 unit advanced to BOIKEN. Stores were moved forward same day by motor transport.
- (c) Maintenance was normal, unit drew supplies from DID KARAWOP and distributed to company and platoon position by jeeps and native carriers.
- (d) Approximately 140 carriers were required daily by unit but later this number was reduced to approximately 50.

4. C SQN 2/4 AUST ARMD REGT, 2/2 AUST FD REGT, 2/1 AUST FD COY

These units were all established at KARAWOP by 24 Apr 45.

5. MEDICAL

- (a) A Coy 2/1 Aust Fd Amb with surgical team attached opened at KARAWOP on 18 Apr 45.
- (b) On 27 Apr 45, MDS moved from BUT to old KARAWOP village and opened following day.
- (c) On opening of MDS, the ADS was closed.
- (d) Evacuations from KARAWOP were initially to ADS and later on arrival of MDS to CCS at BUT.

6.

AEME

- (a) 2/45 Aust LAD established at KARAWOP on 24 Apr 45 and after capture of BOIKEN moved to that area.
- (b) 110 Aust Bde Wksp opened KARAWOP PLANTATION 27 Apr 45.

7.

NATIVES

- (a) Initially native compound was established approximately one mile EAST of BANAK.
- (b) On movement forward of units from KARAWOP, native compound was moved to WISLING.
- (c) Natives at this stage were all under Bde control and allotted to units daily as required.

GENERAL

1.

RATIONS

- (a) SWPA scale has proved most satisfactory and at all times rations have been adequate.
- (b) It is not always possible for a unit to make a quick advance and carry cooking gear, consequently no facilities are available for preparation of cooking of all items included in the scale. It is considered on these occasions units should only be issued with bully beef, biscuits, rice, tea, sugar, milk and salt. The period for which these hard rations would be consumed is usually short and it is thought that this "unbalanced ration" would not affect the health of the troops. It was not always possible to obtain this reduced scale of rations from DIDs as it is necessary for each man to have a tin of bully beef and SWPA scale does not allow for this.
- (c) The issue of bread and from time to time fresh meat and vegetables greatly improved ration position.
- (d) The FOR is a most useful and satisfactory issue, although it is not considered that it should be used for more than three days in succession without a change to other rations.

2.

MEDICAL

- (a) The stretcher bearer detachments from the Fd Amb carried out their duties at all times enthusiastically and were of great assistance to units. Many feats of heroism were shown by these stretcher bearers in attention to and getting out of casualties.
- (b) At all times an ADS or surgical team or any ADS with a surgical team attached was located as far forward as possible and undoubtedly many lives were saved by early attention.

3.

L OF C

- (a) Throughout the whole campaign the L of C has been the biggest problem. Bridges were being washed out all the time and roads were impassable due to mud.

(b) At some stages it was necessary to use tractors to tow trucks or trailers loaded with rations or ammunition from supply points to units.

4.

MALARIA

(a) At time of taking over from 19 Aust Inf Bde the average rate of malaria for the brigade group was approximately ten per week.

(b) For period 18 Feb to 18 Mar 45 only one case of malaria occurred in the brigade group, however, after this date a large increase in malaria evacuations occurred. Details are as follows: -

			<u>Bde Group</u>
(i)	Week ending	25 Mar	5
	" "	1 Apr	9
	" "	8 Apr	67
	" "	15 Apr	164
	" "	22 Apr	237
	" "	29 Apr	225
	" "	6 May	195
TOTAL			<u>902</u>

(ii) Average rate per 100 per week in Inf Bns: -

		2/1 Aust Inf Bn	2/2 Aust Inf Bn	2/3 Aust Bn
Week ending	25 Mar	.4	.3	-
" "	1 Apr	.8	-	.1
" "	8 Apr	3.4	1.7	1.5
" "	15 Apr	8.2	6.9	7.8
" "	22 Apr	11.	7.2	9.2
" "	29 Apr	9.1	9.8	10.
" "	6 May	7.4	7.3	8.5

5.

SCRUB TYPHUS

(a) Since campaign started the following number of scrub typhus cases were evacuated from the Bde Group: -

2/1 Aust Inf Bn	2
2/2 Aust Inf Bn	7
2/3 Aust Inf Bn	7
2/1 Aust Fd Amb	1
TOTAL	<u>17</u>

(b) Of these cases nine have proved fatal.

6.

SKIN DISEASES

Skin diseases accounted for a large number of evacuations, however, after the introduction of Vitamin C tablets, these evacuations have fallen off until they are practically NIL.

7.

AMMUNITION

(a) On numerous occasions igniter sets of grenades and primary and secondary charges of 3" mortar ammunition were damaged by water, and replacement of these could only be effected by cannibalizing other ammunition.

This of course creates a most unsatisfactory position and it is thought that the making available at ammunition points of these additional items should be considered.

- (b) The range of the 3" mortar can be increased by using additional secondary charges, however, no provision is made for this and again the only way it can be accomplished is by cannibalization.

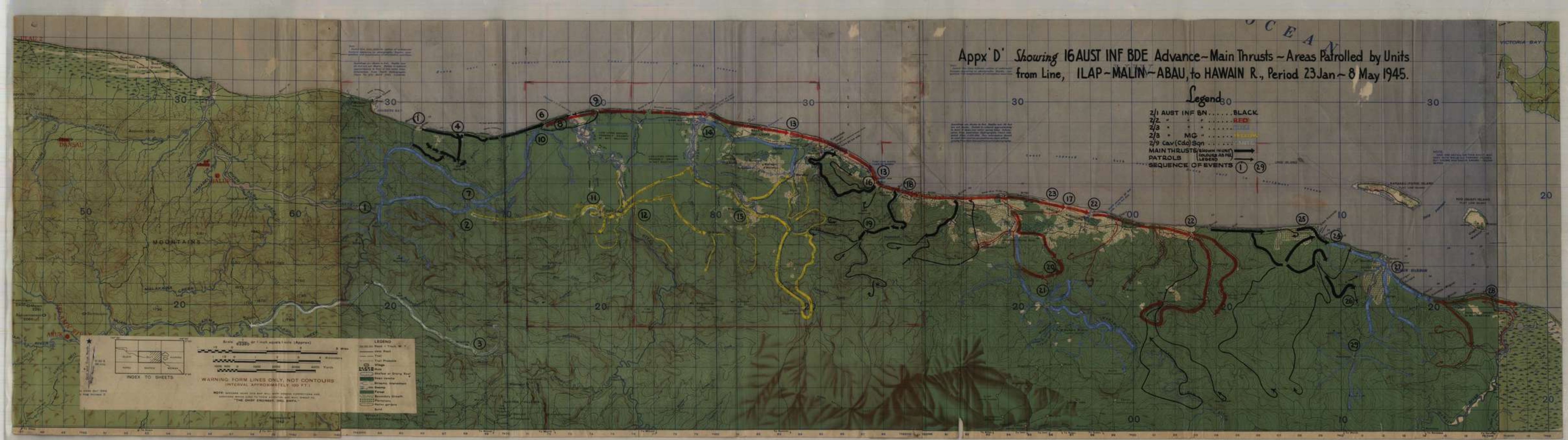


16 AUST INF BDE ADVANCE FROM LINE ILAP - MALIN - ABAU  
TO HAWAIN RIVER. PERIOD 23 JAN - 8 MAY 45.

SEQUENCE OF MAIN EVENTS

1. 23 Jan - 10 Feb : Relief of 19 Aust Inf Bde, defence of line ILAP - MALIN - ABAU - and initial patrol activities.
2. 1 Feb 45. : Attack on CORY'S SPUR by a two platoon patrol of 2/3 Aust Inf Bn.
3. 1 Feb 45. : 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn occupies ABOAMA.
4. 11 Feb 45. : 2/1 Aust Inf Bn attacks and captures enemy positions at McNEILL'S CREEK.
5. 11 Feb - 19 Feb : 2/1 Aust Inf Bn captures NAMBUT HILL.
6. 19 Feb - 23 Feb : 2/1 Aust Inf Bn advances to SELAMIN Creek, attacking and capturing ROCKY FORESHORE during advance.
7. 21 Feb - 2 Mar : 2/3 Aust Inf Bn occupies positions on LONG RIDGE and carries out patrol activities in area URAGUM Creek - MIKEM Creek - AROHEMI - APIBILU.
8. 27 Feb - 28 Feb : 2/2 Aust Inf Bn concentrates in area of WANK Creek.
9. 1 Mar - 14 Mar : 2/2 Aust Inf Bn occupies positions in area of SOWOM Villages and carries out patrol activities to NINAHAU RIVER.
10. 3 Mar - 16 Mar : 2/3 Aust Inf Bn moves to coastal area, occupies positions to WEST of mouth of ANUMB RIVER and carries out patrol activities to NINAHAU RIVER.
11. 4 Mar - 12 Mar : Mountain force 2/3 Aust MG Bn and 2/9 Aust Cdo Sqn advances to and captures AROHEMI.
12. 13 Mar - 17 Mar : 2/3 Aust MG Bn carries out initial patrol activities EAST of ANUMB RIVER.
13. 15 Mar - 17 Mar : 2/2 Aust Inf Bn advances to and captures BUT JETTY, destroys enemy positions at ULBAN en route.
14. 16 Mar - 21 Mar : 2/3 Aust Inf Bn moves to KAUK and carries out patrol activities in area MARABUS - LOANIM.
15. 17 Mar - 30 Mar : 2/3 Aust MG Bn clears area between ANUMB and NINAHAU RIVERS SOUTH from lateral grid 167 and EAST to vertical grid 854 includes MUGULUWELA area.
16. 19 Mar - 22 Mar : 2/1 Aust Inf Bn moves to BUT and is responsible for defence of BUT HARBOUR.

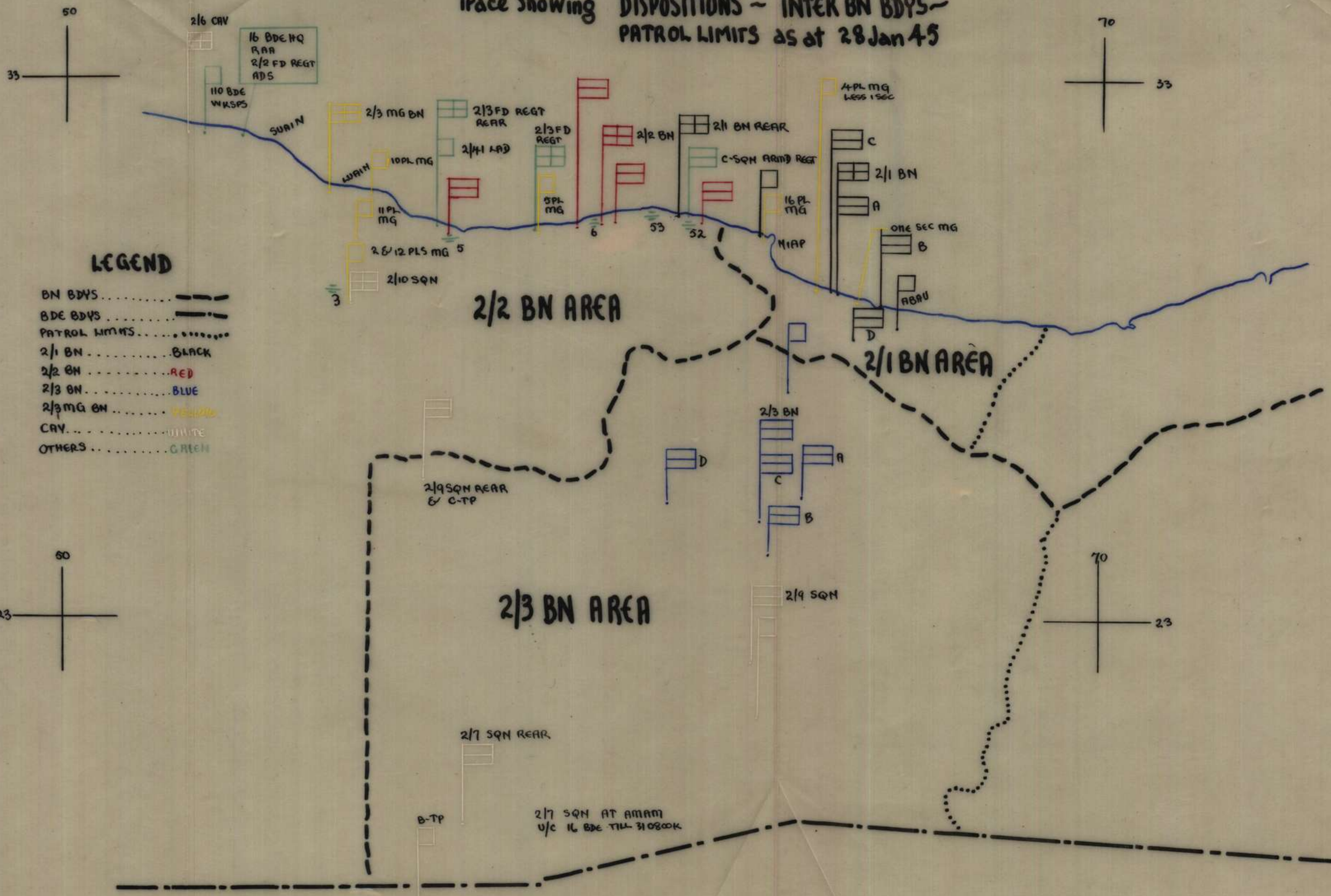
17. 21 Mar - 22 Mar : 2/2 Aust Inf Bn advances to and occupies DAGUA STRIP.
18. 21 Mar - 27 Mar : 2/3 Aust Inf Bn moves to positions EAST of BUT RIVER.
19. 23 Mar - 14 Apr : 2/1 Aust Inf Bn clears BUT inland area.
20. 23 Mar - 6 Apr : 2/2 Aust Inf Bn attacks and captures TOKOKU PASS positions.
21. 28 Mar - 9 Apr : 2/3 Aust Inf Bn clears general area of WONGINARA MISSION.
22. 7 Apr - 22 Apr : 2/2 Aust Inf Bn occupies positions on EAST end of DAGUA STRIP and carries out patrol activities EAST and south east of DAGUA.
23. 9 Apr - 21 Apr : 2/3 Aust Inf Bn concentrates on WEST end of DAGUA STRIP.
24. 14 Apr - 17 Apr : 2/1 Aust Inf Bn advances to and captures KARAWOP.
25. 21 Apr - 24 Apr : Remainder of 16 Aust Inf Bde Group concentrates in KARAWOP PLANTATION.
26. 25 Apr - 26 Apr : 2/1 Aust Inf Bn attacks and captures MOKIN MOUNTAIN 1800 feature.
27. 25 Apr - 28 Apr : 2/3 Aust Inf Bn captures BOIKEN and exploits to KALIMBOA.
28. 27 Apr - 28 Apr : 2/2 Aust Inf Bn establishes bridge-head over HAWAIN RIVER.
29. 29 Apr - 8 May : 2/3 Aust Inf Bn attacks and captures KOANUMBO positions.



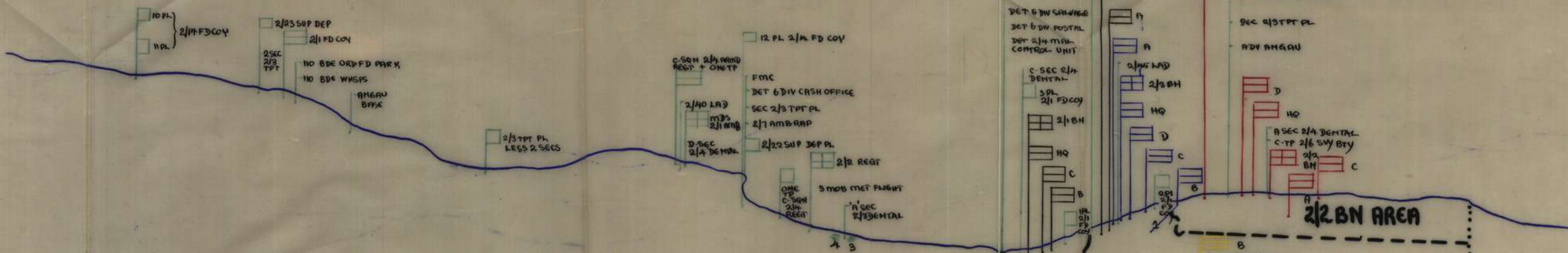
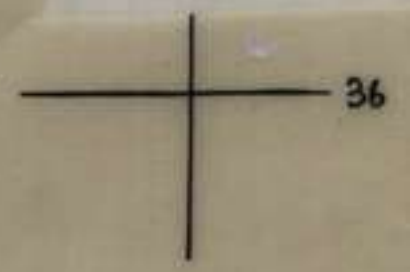
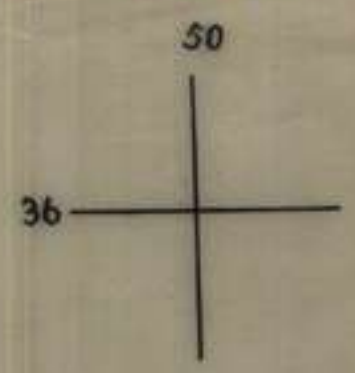
# Appx 'E' to 16 Aust Inf Bde REPORT on OPS Part 1

'E' x99A

## Trace Showing DISPOSITIONS - INTER BN BDYS - PATROL LIMITS as at 28 Jan 45

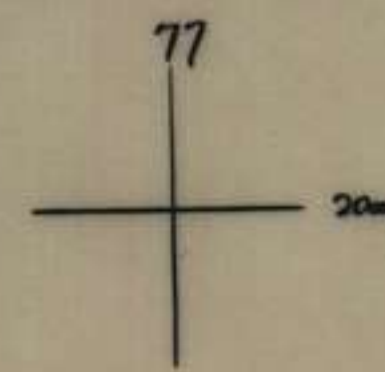
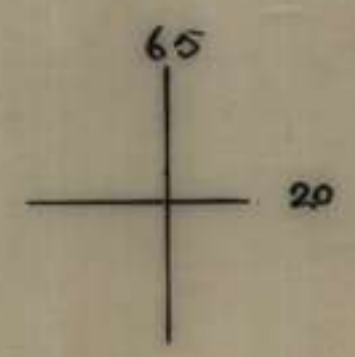
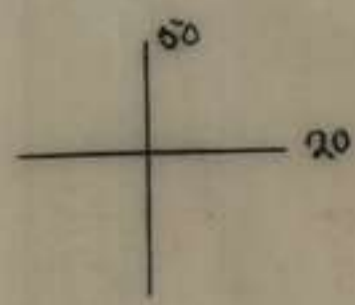


# Trace Showing DISPOSITIONS~ INTER BN BDYS~ PATROL LIMITS as at 13 Mar 45



## LEGEND

- BN BDYS ..... - - - - -
- BDE BDYS ..... - - - - -
- PATROL LIMITS ..... - - - - -
- 2/1 BN ..... BLACK
- 2/2 BN ..... RED
- 2/3 BN ..... BLUE
- 2/3 MG BN ..... YELLOW
- CAV ..... WHITE
- OTHERS ..... GREEN

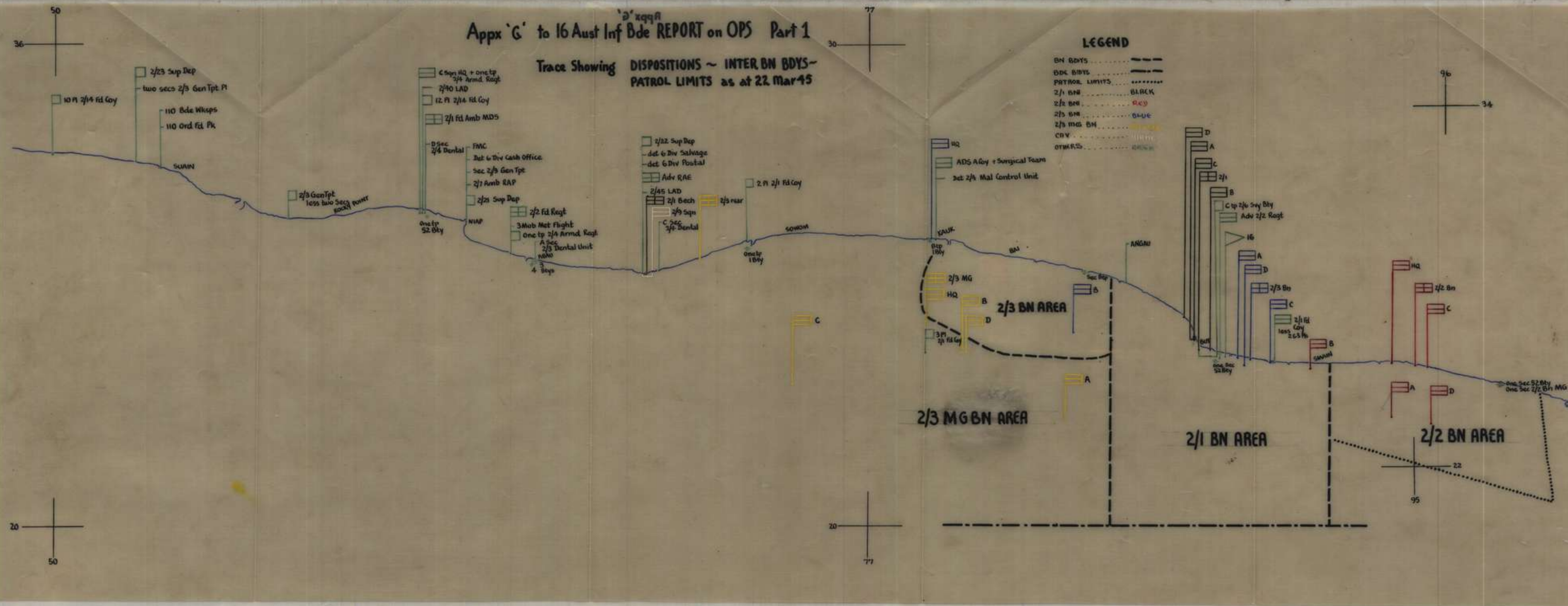


Appx 'G' to 16 Aust Inf Bde REPORT on OPS Part 1

Trace Showing DISPOSITIONS ~ INTER BN BDYS - PATROL LIMITS as at 22 Mar 45

LEGEND

- BN BDYS -----
- DDC BDYS -----
- PATROL LIMITS .....
- 2/1 BN ----- BLACK
- 2/2 BN ----- RED
- 2/3 BN ----- BLUE
- 2/3 MG BN ----- YELLOW
- CRV -----
- OTHERS -----



H xqqA

# Appx 'H' to 16 Aust Inf Bde REPORT on OPS Part 1

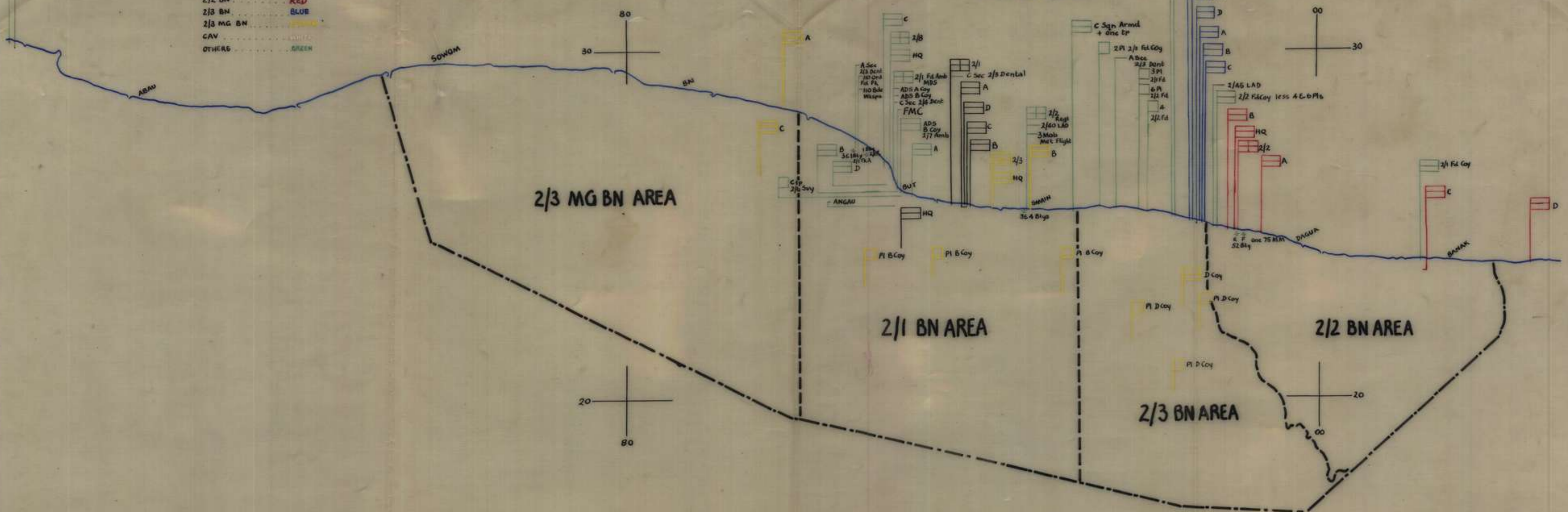
## Trace Showing DISPOSITIONS ~ INTER BN BDYS ~ as at 13 Apr 45

### LEGEND

- BN BDYS
- BDE BDYS
- PATROL LIMITS
- 2/1 BN  BLACK
- 2/2 BN  RED
- 2/3 BN  BLUE
- 2/3 MG BN
- CAV
- OTHERS  GREEN

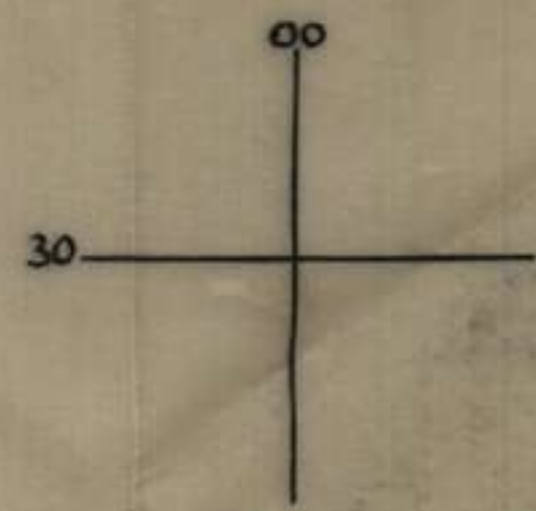
NOTE:- Inter Bn bdys shown were effective 8 Apr - 13 Apr -  
 2/3 MG Bn subsequently took over entire sector responsibility 13 Apr

- One tp 2/4 Armd Regt
- 10 L 12 Bns 2/14 Fd Coy



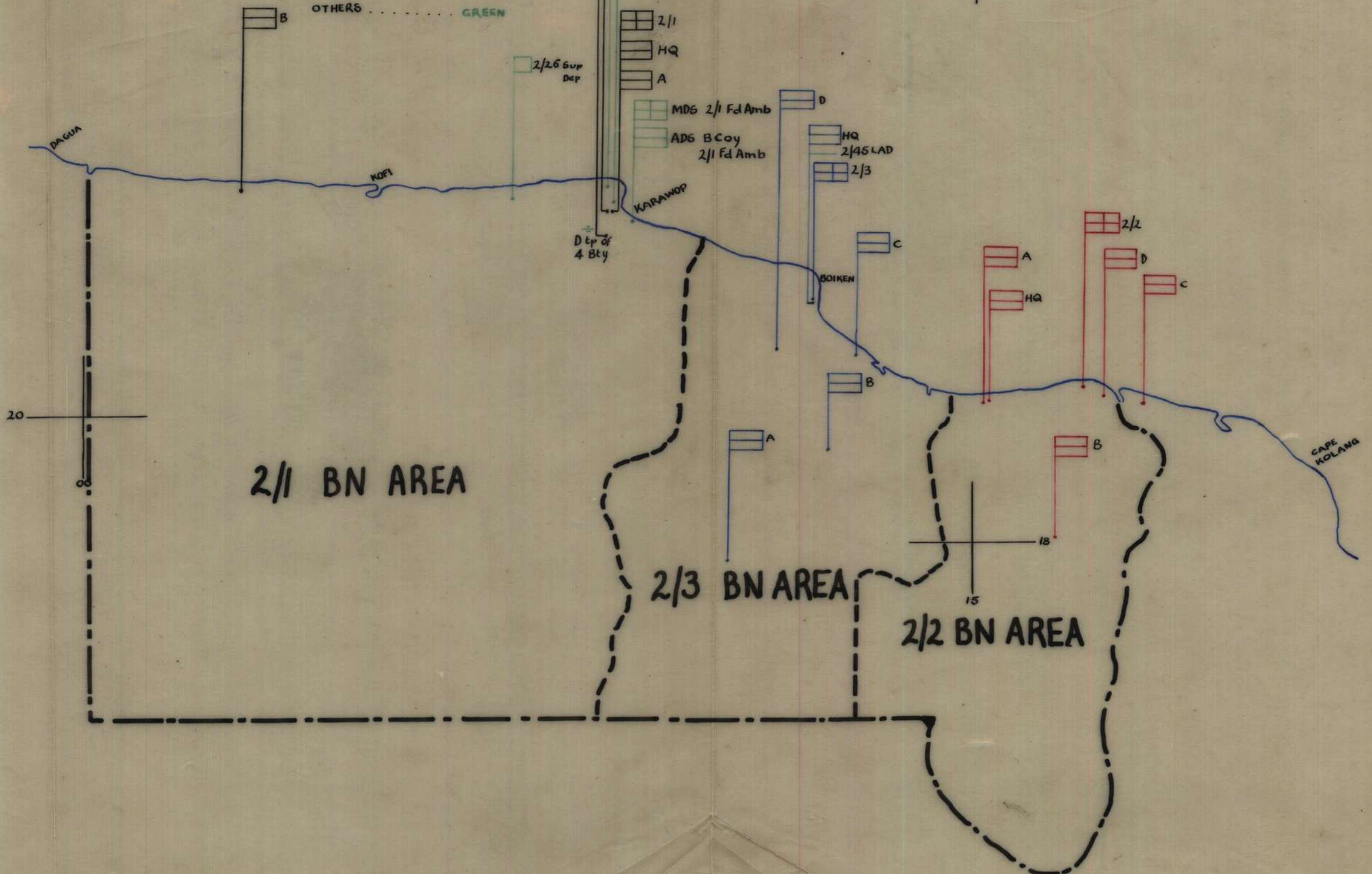
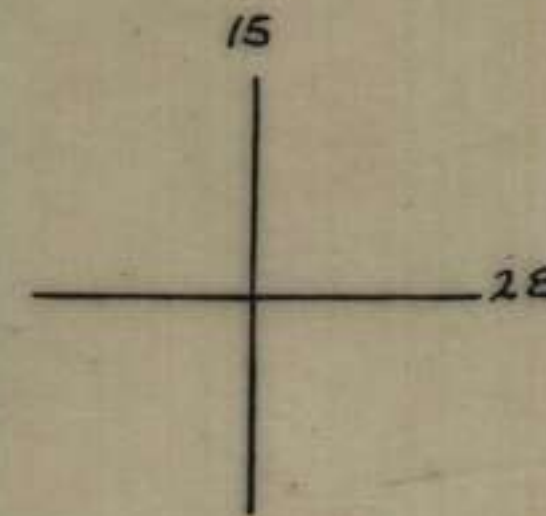
Appx "J" to 16 Aust

Trace Showing DISPOSITIONS - INTER BN BDYS -  
as at 8 May 45



LEGEND

- BN BDYS . . . . .
- BDE BDYS . . . . .
- PATROL LIMITS . . . . .
- 2/1 BN . . . . . BLACK
- 2/2 BN . . . . . RED
- 2/3 BN . . . . . BLUE
- 2/3 MG BN . . . . . YELLOW
- CAV . . . . . WHITE
- OTHERS . . . . . GREEN





PART II : LESSONS FROM OPERATIONS  
TACTICAL

INFANTRY

1. General

No new lessons, apart from the employment of natives in operations, were learnt in the campaign. The adherence to normal principles and the application of training to battle proved to be always effective. The undermentioned points, however, are considered worthy of stressing and enumerating.

2. Patrols

(a) Strengths.

The strength of a patrol is dependent on such points as the nature of the task, information of the enemy, conditions of terrain and distances to be covered and, therefore, no set standard can be laid down. However, from experience, the following can be accepted as a guide:

(i) The average strength of reconnaissance patrols was one section usually commanded by an officer, though in certain instances a strength of anything up to one platoon was used and in others, an officer with a few native police boys were effective, the latter giving greater security and mobility. Section reconnaissance patrols were found satisfactory and suitable for the normal task as they gave necessary confidence to the men and were small enough to move undetected.

(ii) A fighting patrol of strength less than one platoon is considered unpracticable. It requires a platoon or more to deal effectively with an enemy, to handle evacuation of casualties and still be capable of completing the task. Further, in the initial stage of reconnaissance of any enemy position, sufficient strength is required to form a patrol base from which to operate.

(iii) Large patrols of, say, one company are unwieldy due to lack of manoeuvrability unless a special task against a known enemy position in strength is allotted. In this case, the operation becomes more a planned company attack than a patrol.

(iv) The evacuation of casualties from a deep patrol is a difficult problem and necessitates the allotting of more troops to the task than is ever needed for actual fighting and this naturally increases the strength of a patrol beyond its normal requirement.

(b) Patrol bases.

To clear any considerable area of responsibility allotted to a unit, with the minimum amount of travelling, the establishment of forward patrol bases is necessary. Unnecessary wastage of manpower is obviated; essential ground gained is held and thus prevents enemy re-occupying. Further with these patrol bases well forward, a sector can be cleared in considerably less time than it would take operating from the defended localities.

(c) Scouts

Scouts should work widely and up to 60 yards in advance of the point section if possible; thus achieving surprise and not in any way committing the remainder of the force prematurely. The scout has a greater chance of detecting enemy without being observed himself if the section does not crowd him.

(d) Maintenance of direction

Patrolling invariably involves travelling long distances over rough country and, due to heavy canopy precluding the true representation of the shape of spurs and reentrants leading to main features, considerable difficulty in orientation is experienced. However, a careful study of maps which are reliable and air photographs, together with the intelligent use of the compass and the various methods of determining distances, overcomes these difficulties. The necessity for a high standard of training in map reading and interpretation of air photos cannot be over stressed. Intelligence personnel, due to their more specialized training, should be included in patrols wherever possible to assist in navigation.

3. Attack

(a) Surprise.

The value of surprise though always recognized, is more than ever emphasised in this type of warfare. Surprise is gained by careful reconnaissance of an enemy position, determining the location and nature of defences and the position of sentries. This can only be achieved by a knowledge of enemy action, coupled with good scouting. Then undetected deployment, the use of the least likely line of approach and a determined assault will result in the complete annihilation of the enemy.

(b) Approaches.

The most favourable approach is that which allows the attack to develop from the enemy's rear. This was generally found to be either completely open or inadequately guarded. In most cases an outflanking move which succeeded in cutting the enemy's L of C forced a withdrawal. Though such a move may involve a long and arduous operation, it was proved that the hardest approach can be, in the end, the easiest.

(c) Fire and movement.

(i) When the attack is launched and especially if surprise has been effected, the force must at once strike with every weapon and man available and at the same time movement must be maintained. It is fatal for attacking troops to go to ground. By so doing they fix their positions and become a sitting shot at short range for the enemy. Troops who remain on their feet and move quickly from tree to tree, run much less risk of becoming casualties even at point blank range. An attack which lacks aggression will only cause casualties without achieving results.

(ii) Sufficient reserve should be available to bring through when the assault has lost intensity and the fire fight begins to develop. This maintains the momentum of the attack. It has been proved that the enemy, under such circumstances, is incapable of dealing with the combination of fire power of platoon weapons and movement.

(d) Use of supporting fire

Against enemy defended localities where surprise cannot be gained or the extent of the locality necessitates support, maximum artillery and mortar concentrations, together with air strikes, should be employed. To avail the force of the maximum advantage of this support, the assault should follow immediately the concentration is completed. If the enemy has vacated his positions to avoid the concentration, which oftens occurs, a quick moving force will prevent him from re-occupying them. In such a position the enemy is most vulnerable.

4. Defence

(a) Degree of development.

(i) At no stage in the operations did it become necessary to use extensively prepared positions. In most cases, defence consisted of the occupation of a hastily prepared position and where defence was prolonged, it only required development to the stage of adequate weapon pits. Overhead cover, though sometimes used, was rarely necessary.

(ii) A common fault occurred in the clearing of fields of fire. These were, on occasions, cleared right from the weapon pits, thus destroying natural camouflage and permitting easier observation of the positions.

(b) Use of booby traps.

Booby traps proved to be unsuccessful in killing an enemy. The enemy expected these and, in certain instances, was able to render them ineffective without being observed. Their use, though not justified, may possibly give troops a greater sense of security. The enemy, however, used AP mines set at a pressure of 25 lbs with some effect. These were found laid indiscriminately on tracks.

(c) Defensive Fire Tasks

Artillery defensive fire on one occasion engaged at very short notice and this was instrumental in driving off a threatened enemy attack, thus giving troops greater faith in artillery support.

5. Knowledge of enemy military characteristics

A good knowledge of this subject is essential. Enemy actions and movement encountered can be correctly interpreted and appropriate action taken without loss of time and manpower, only when commanders are conversant with these methods.

6. Morale

The only time the soldier becomes so exhausted as to feel incapable for further action is when the officer in command succumbs to fatigue. Every officer must be prepared to go on and overcome his fatigue if he is to maintain the fighting spirit of his troops. Failure to carry this out results in troops becoming prematurely exhausted.

SIGNALS - COMMUNICATIONS

7. Line

(a) The number of earth return circuits on the narrow coastal strip resulted in much interference from induction. On such coastal strips it is necessary that brigade-battalion circuits be made metallic circuits as early as possible.

(b) Damage to lines because of engineer activities is unavoidable, even to lines laid well away from the existing tracks and built. When available a lineman must be left with engineer detachments.

(c) The practice of battalions adding phones to main brigade - battalion channel caused serious interference to telephone and fuller communications. This must be controlled and no phones teed-in without reference to brigade (WONGINARA MISSION LINE).

8. Line Communications

(a) For speedy clearance of traffic, fullerphone channels are essential to all units with signal personnel.

(b) Clearance of traffic by units over telephone channels, particularly supply units, had to be strictly controlled.

(c) Laxity in ringing off by many subscribers resulted in unnecessary delays for all subscribers and friction with operators.

(d) The practice of subscribers not following through calls they initiate, but leaving that to the operator, causes unnecessary increase in time required to complete a call and delays to other subscribers. Such calls cannot be accepted at all times, as with 20 or more lines, operator cannot comply with request to wait.

9. Wireless Communications

Lack of appreciation of the uses of Wireless Set No 22 and detachment supplied units was most noticeable. This was particularly so when on the move. The set, carried as a complete station and in a position in the column accessible to command, can be used for communications to rear, within the unit, to aircraft or artillery (e.g. 2/3 Aust MG Bn move to NINAHAU)

10. DRLS

It is impossible in these areas to give a firm DRLS time table.

11. Pigeons

(a) Birds used homed on every occasion and are valuable for use by patrols. The birds can be carried or air-dropped.

(b) The mobile loft is far too bulky for movement with a brigade.

(c) To train birds takes from four to seven days and this is too great for the time a brigade remains in one area. Two lofts are necessary, leap-frogging one another to provide a supply of trained birds.

12. Air-Ground Communications

(a) Wireless Set No 22 provided the most satisfactory communications.

(b) Wireless Set SCR 536 was used on two occasions with good results whilst aircraft were overhead. It is essential that the set in aircraft be accurately netted, preferably when plane is airborne.

(c) Air-ground Panel Code was used with mixed success. All personnel within the brigade were trained in its use but many RAAF personnel appear unable to recognise displays. Therefore it cannot be regarded as reliable.

13. WE of Personnel

(a) The inadequacy of personnel as provided on WE for both Battalion Signal Platoons and Brigade Signal Section was most noticeable in this operation.

(b) In an effort to overcome this, unit commanding officers made available additional personnel to battalion signal platoons. Their strength varied from 40 to 50 all ranks instead of 33 all ranks as provided by War Establishment.

14. Suggested WE of Personnel for Bn Signal Platoon

POSTING	WE		REASONS
	Present	Suggested	
Officers	1	1	
Sgts	1	2	To supervise Sig Office and adm of pl.
Cpls	4	4	2-Sig Office 2- Cable.
Coy Sigs (5)	15	20 )	Required to maintain line and wireless communications and to handle traffic of Bn Gp.
Sig Office Gp	5	10 )	
Control Wireless	2	3	Required when more than one wireless gp employed (Patrol Gp).
B Ech	-	1	Responsible for maintenance and care of sig eqpt at B Ech. Also evacuation of U/S equipment.
Linemen	4	8	Required for provision of line coms to bn gp and recovery of table.
Batman	1	1	
TOTALS	33	50	

15. Suggested WE of Personnel for Brigade Signal Section

POSTING	WE		REASON
	Pres-ent	Suggest-ed	
Lineman	7	11	To ensure line laid with forward coys at all times. Also that disused cable is recovered and maintained.
Oper Sig	18	23	W/T stations to be manned by 3 pers, as two, at present allowed is insufficient for 24 hour watch maintained. Increase in sig office from 3 opers to 4 which is essential for communications within a brigade group.
Mech Instr (Sigs)	2	3	For improvement of maintenance and reduction of number of evacuations. One Instr Mech could be detached to each of forward battalions.
Storeman Clerk	-	1	Checking and recording of holdings of stores, submission of returns, etc, to be done efficiently is a full time job.
Sergeants	2	2	
Corporals	4	4	
Elect Sigs	2	2	
Despatch Riders	5	5	
Driver-Mech	2	2	
Drivers	2	2	
Driver-batman	1	1	
Batman	1	1	
	46	57	

ARTILLERY      2/2 Aust Fd Regt

16. General

In artillery support the best lesson is the substantiation of standard doctrine and practices. Operations stressed the necessity for adherence to principles but at the same time a certain elasticity in interpretation was found necessary. The following points are brought to notice:

17. Application of Fire

(a) It was found unnecessary to vary any of standard target engagement procedures, but use of smoke to find line particularly and range generally is essential for safety of own troops.

(b) Mk VIII Smoke is considered unreliable.

(c) The destructive effect of HE shell fuze 231 on prepared positions is satisfactory if such can be engaged as accuracy targets. The use of this fuze is NOT recommended for area shoots with indifferent observation. General dispersal of shell fragments obtained by use HE shell fuze 117 or 119 gives a better coverage.

(d) The operations have been marked by the use of saturation concentrations of heavily defended areas with excellent results. The lesson is a good one - that HE applied by guns does save infantry lives. Even though it kills very few enemy, it reduces his defences, clears the target area of trees, scrub, etc, and leaves the enemy in a state of coma with his fighting spirit impaired.

(e) "Orienting or location" rounds have been used with success in this operation. These consisted of firing smoke very slow from one gun on the objective, or a feature in line with the objective to give the advancing troops direction.

18. Communications

It is necessary that large cable parties are available. The 22 set for a primary or alternative means of communication with FOOs is essential. The 11 WT Set is not capable of being carried on the small patrol and 108 set is outranged too quickly. Good results are obtained on small range patrols working 108 sets back to 22 rear link. This service was given on many occasions.

19. Deployment

Operations have shown the necessity for early forward deployment of guns and for temporary deployment for a specific task. This is NOT a new lesson, but in the early stages of the coastal advance, the doctrine was NOT adhered to owing to terrain difficulties and as a result forward troops were at times without artillery support when vitally necessary.

20. Counter Battery

Counter Battery was carried out on a small scale. Artillery had to instruct infantry for necessity of reports on the various details of the HSR, after first engagement by enemy guns. Counter Battery information and subsequent application of fire was very effective.

## 21. Targets

(a) Widely dispersed troop positions are the answer to the 100% zone and allows a line safety factor in almost all cases.

(b) Engagement of targets show that the 100% zone of the gun is much less than range tables show and targets can be effectively engaged from a distance which is 25% of that which is laid down for safety.

(c) Present maps do not allow the engagement of targets in support of fire plan without previous ranging or survey of targets.

(d) Targets selected for "frightening fire" to alienate natives from Japs proved to be successful.

## ENGINEERS 2/1 Aust Fd Coy

### 22. General

(a) The initial engineer plan existing up to the capture of DAGUA STRIP was one field company in support of the forward brigade. This meant that only one company had to establish an all weather L of C from the forward FMC to the forward infantry. With each advance of the brigade an ever increasing burden was thus imposed on the company, almost divorcing the forward infantry of any engineer assistance. As a consequence, the supply of the brigade was difficult.

(b) In phases 4 and 5, during the period of inland operations and advance to HAWAIN RIVER, the policy, fortunately, changed, the forward company being responsible for the establishment of a track sufficient to take initial brigade traffic only, whilst two field companies, working immediately in rear, established a permanent L of C and set the forward company free to support the forward troops. Only equipment bridging was used by the forward company, the rear companies replacing it with semi-permanent timber bridges and releasing it as soon as possible for further use by the forward company. Mechanical plant was also made available for the forward company during the latter phases and the traffic was kept moving to the forward infantry positions without difficulties. This change of allocation proved invaluable and greatly assisted the infantry in their advance.

### 23. Mechanical Equipment

(a) In the early stages of the advance to the ANUMB RIVER, only two HD.7 Angle-dozers (of which one was always under repairs) and one damaged grader was available. It was impossible to use one dozer in the gravel pit owing to its poor tracks and generally the available dozer worked alternatively in the pit and on the road formation - this resulted in very slow progress. In fact, not only was it difficult to maintain completed formation but much work was lost and had to be redone because of rain. In latter stage of the ANUMB RIVER advance and early stage of the advance to DAGUA STRIP, no mechanical plant was available and imposed a strain on the company which quickly tired the troops. In the advance to HAWAIN RIVER from DAGUA mechanical equipment was in support and freed the company, enabling it to give proper engineer assistance to the infantry.



(b) Whilst it is appreciated that all possible mechanical equipment was in support, it is recommended that at least a complete Mechanical Equipment Platoon should be in support of forward company and a Mechanical Equipment Company less one platoon engaged in L of C to the rear. For this type of terrain Mechanical Equipment should be allotted on scale of one Mechanical Equipment Company per division with no commitments in the Base Area.

#### 24. Working Parties

Infantry and artillery parties were made available and proved of great assistance. Drainage of roads is the vital factor in construction and although much can be done by mechanical equipment, for completion hand labour is essential. Field Company has not the personnel and it is recommended that, to avoid calling on infantry and artillery, Native Labour, if available, be used on the scale of 50 per mile for initial construction and 10 per mile thereafter.

#### 25. Signal Communication

(a) Continual damage was done to signal wires due to lines being laid in the vicinity of the track. Whilst it is agreed that lines can only be laid along existing tracks during the attack, these must immediately be removed and raised as high as possible in order to permit mechanical equipment to work on the track. This would require large working parties but would avoid the excessive continual repair otherwise required. Close liaison between Signal personnel and Engineers locating tracks is essential and it is recommended that lines be laid at least 20 yards off centre line and at least 12 feet off ground.

(b) The attachment of a Signaller to each dozer is recommended to locate and effect immediate repairs.

#### 26. Camp Locations

Frequently, personnel tents were erected too near the existing track and slit trenches were dug alongside. It would assist construction if all camp works were located a minimum distance of 10 yards from edge of track. This particularly refers to kitchens as water supply frequently resulted in a road block during pumping to kitchen tanks.

#### 27. Tanks

(a) Co-operation with tanks in the period of the advance to HAWAIN RIVER proved that an excellent Sapper team for support of one troop of tanks consisted of :-  
One section, one D.6 dozer (or equivalent), one R.4 tractor. Party to carry minimum of 4 axes and 2 crow bars and 50 lbs of explosives (including accessories).

(b) The crossing of the BOIKEN PLANTATION proved too difficult for the tanks unaided and, after several blocks, it was found best for the dozer to precede the tanks. This is not according to accepted principles but apparently the noise of the dozer resulted in the snipers leaving the area. This indicated that tanks are unable to proceed over obstacles, such as fallen trees, bomb craters, beach cliffs and river banks, unless preceded by a dozer.

#### 28. Traffic Control

(a) Initial movement forward of brigade transport must be carefully regulated in conjunction with Engineer plan. Thus, in the advance to KARAWOP, numerous B echelon

vehicles (including ACF Jeeps) followed immediately in rear of the dozers and blocked the tracks for a distance of 300 yards on arrival at KARAWOP CREEK which required bridging. A loss of two hours occurred in getting the bridging equipment to the site.

(b) Repaired enemy motor transport proved a severe handicap causing frequent traffic blocks due to breakdown and lack of power invariably at bottle-neck points such as sand strips and temporary bridges.

(c) Provost detachments regulating traffic around mechanical equipment saved hours of working by avoiding frequent hold up of plant.

(d) For poor sector of road, traffic was despatched in convoys from both ends and proved successful.

## 29. Patrols

(a) No opportunity should be missed of engineers gaining early information of the terrain forward of the foremost defended localities. Co-operation here is essential and vital. All infantry officers down to platoon commanders should appreciate the assistance this is to the Sappers. Small engineer reconnaissance parties should accompany all patrols forward. These parties would not hamper movement of the infantry and would be stationed where the patrol leader desired. Such a policy would overcome the present difficulty of planning the engineer tasks with scanty information based on air photos and maps produced sometime before the operations.

## ANGAU - EMPLOYMENT OF NATIVES

### 30. Methods of employment

In a campaign of this nature the assistance which can be given by natives can be of great value provided natives are employed in roles they are capable of carrying out. From experience gained it is considered there are three main methods of employing natives and these can be summarized as follows :

(a) As guides and scouts in close co-operation with troops.

In this role natives should be allowed to work independently of own troops. They must not be used as a forward scout in the military sense of the word and it is desirable wherever possible, to send the natives out at least one hour ahead of the troops. This enables own troops to advance quickly with comparative safety. Should the natives determine enemy locations, they will return with the information and consequently will be prepared to guide the force to the enemy positions. Though the platoon commander may have little or no idea of the natives route, surprise can be achieved by this method if the approach, as indicated, by the native is adopted. The native, with his knowledge of the terrain, is in the best position to determine this.

(b) As deep reconnaissance patrols in the rear of enemy lines.

By this method much needless long range patrolling can be obviated. This type of patrol is invaluable for locating enemy position and strength and determining the enemy's L of C. Enemy movements reported enables ambush positions to be set and possible concentrations to be located.

(c) As contact patrols into enemy territory.

The object of these patrols is to contact natives in certain areas who are under the enemy's influence and to endeavour to withdraw them into our own areas. On occasions the entire inhabitants of a village, totalling up to 200 refugees, have been brought in by this method. The withdrawal of these natives serves three purposes :

(i) It deprives the enemy of his only means of portage and his main food providers.

(ii) Under interrogation by ANGAU, it is a means of obtaining fairly accurate information regarding enemy's ration situation, medical facilities and state, and conditions generally in rear areas.

(iii) It provides a regular flow of first class sentries and guides who have a complete knowledge of a particular piece of terrain.

31. Divorcing of natives from the enemy

Besides the use of contact patrols for this purpose, artillery harassing fire and air strikes can be of considerable assistance. The native fears bombing or shelling more than any other weapon and where contact patrols may not succeed, indiscriminate fire will have the desired effect, forcing the native to desert the enemy and go bush, even if fire lands 500 yards away.

32. Interrogation of Natives

(a) This is a matter for a person who has had some experience in the handling of natives and who possesses a certain amount of military knowledge. A good knowledge of pidgin English is required and the person must be capable of understanding with some degree of accuracy the working of the native mind.

(b) From a purely military point of view, the worst aspect of native interrogation is the inability of most natives to count, with accuracy, above 10 and the fact that he has no medium of distance with exception of hours travelling time.

(c) The best assistant the interrogator can have is the police boy. He moves freely amongst the natives and, he can understand their talk, their feelings and their reactions and he can tell at a glance whether the native is stating the truth or not.

(d) A model of the particular area in which the native inhabits is of considerable assistance in this matter. After a brief explanation as to what the model represents and the meaning of various marks, the native is capable of understanding, when questioned, what is required of him. Further, with the use of a model it is a simple matter to brief the native for a patrol and on his return he can then indicate on the model his route and any enemy locations encountered.

(e) In the interrogation, again with the assistance of a model, much data about unmapped villages and tracks can be obtained. His information can be marked on the model and if wrongly interpreted the native will correct.

(f) The information gleaned from natives is on the whole fairly reliable. Where a native has only recently been withdrawn from the enemy, though he invariably wants to

tell all he knows, he is hesitant for fear he may be punished for the assistance he has given to the enemy. However, after a short period in the refugee camp where he has been given the opportunity of settling down, his information is soon forthcoming.

### 33. Native Intelligence

Native intelligence is on a much higher level than is generally realized and during the period of operations, this was proved conclusively. His ability to interpret the meaning of a model and to indicate on it, routes and enemy dispositions is an example. On one occasion a message containing information of an enemy concentration was received by an ANGAU representative. This message gave the exact position of the enemy, requested that an air strike be carried out and explained it was necessary to bomb first the area in the vicinity of the village and then the village itself. On another occasion a native sent in a rough sketch of enemy positions, giving the area, strength and disposition of weapons. There were also instances when native police boys would leave their rifles hidden and dressed as a Kanaka would converse with the enemy, thus gaining information. Again, on one other occasion, natives had a meal with the enemy, slept in their huts and departed in the morning to collect sak sak. The following day a patrol killed 6 enemy in the hut.

### 34. Control

When on a patrol, the handling of natives should be the task of one person only and any communication with any of the natives, other than through this person is to be discouraged. Instructions by this person should be given to the police boy or "number one boss boy" who, in turn, will pass it on to the rest of the line. Interference and untimely questioning results in the task being incompleting by the native and an uncertain report given.

## AIR 71 R/B WING

### 35. Effectiveness

(a) Close air support, even within 150 yards of forward troops, can be carried out effectively, provided accurate bombing, a good indication of the target by infantry and a reliable ground/air communication can be guaranteed. These are considered to be the three main factors to ensure a successful strike. However, attention must be given to other factors as the right approach by the aircraft, the indication of a clearly defined and easily recognisable target bomblines, the ability to pin-point the position of the enemy's, and our own, positions, and the employment of the suitable type of bomb.

(b) An air strike carried out against well prepared positions has little killing effect, unless the bombing is exceptionally accurate. At times, too much is expected as regards accuracy, especially where the enemy's positions are located on a narrow razor backed ridge. Under such circumstances, air support becomes more of a harassing nature and, in many cases, repeated strikes will force the enemy's withdrawal by breaking his morale.

### 36. Indication

(a) The most satisfactory method of indicating a target is by 3 inch mortar smoke, which can be fired by observation as requested by the aircraft. However, due to the beaten

zone, this method is not entirely accurate. RAAF personnel should, therefore, have a working knowledge of the employment of mortars and be capable of understanding the varying fall of the smoke indicators. In such instances, they should bomb on the centre of the beaten zone. The MPI of an artillery concentration is also a fairly effective method of indication.

(b) In this type of country, due to its heavily timbered nature, the indication of own troops' forward positions is very difficult. The ordinary ground strips in such circumstances are useless, it requiring something in the nature of the new type fluorescent panels. The green Verey lights are of absolutely no value. However, with an adequate means of indicating the target, the indication of our forward positions becomes of less importance.

(c) In operations of this nature, close targets should on no account be engaged unless the target can be indicated. Bombing on a map reference is unsatisfactory and will only cause casualties to own troops, as infantry are not in a position to give an exact reference of the target and position of own troops. Further, it requires a very high standard of map reading on the part of RAAF personnel, even when the target is prominent and easily identifiable.

### 37. Ground/Air Communications

(a) The ideal communication set up when an air strike is being conducted is to have one 22 WT Set with the air support party, located at the forward troops' position, to observe the fall of mortar smoke and to ensure the safety of our own troops, and to have one 22 WT Set located at the mortar position for the purpose of giving smoke indicators as required by the aircraft. Since aircraft expect indication immediately following request, the employment of the latter set saves time by obviating the necessity for relaying the request by line back to the mortar positions.

(b) However, where only one 22 Set is available, which is usually the case, its location is dependant on the circumstances. In certain cases, where the mortar is firing by direct observation, and the target and position of own troops can be clearly observed, the best location may possibly be at the mortar position. Generally these conditions do not prevail and, consequently, the location of the set must be at an OP with the forward positions.

(c) It is essential that all officers receive instruction and practice in ground/air communications. To understand the procedure requires but little training and practice will give confidence. It is not always possible to have an air support party available, in which case it necessitates an infantry representative to conduct the strike.

### 38. Approach of aircraft

(a) It is advisable that aircraft approach the target in the direction requested in order to ensure maximum coverage. It is realized that when determining the direction of approach factors, as the location of own troops in reference to the target and the nature of the surrounding country, have to be taken into consideration but where, for example, the approach to a narrow razor backed ridge is at right angles to the ridge, there is very little likelihood of bombs striking the top of the ridge.

(b) It is considered that the infantry are in the best position to determine the direction of approach and only where this is impracticable from the air point of view should

it be departed from.

39. Devastation effect

(a) When considering air support the important factor of the effect of bombing on thickly timbered country should not be neglected. In certain cases the effect of an air strike may be of more value to the enemy than to our own troops, inasmuch that the devastation effect may provide the enemy with more cover and produce obstacles which would impede any assault following.

(b) To clear an area entirely of debris and undergrowth requires exceptionally heavy strikes. The support provided in these operations has not been of sufficient weight to effect any such clearing.

40. Use of incendiaries

Unless used as very heavy concentration, incendiaries are of no value. They have little burning effect and will not light debris for the purpose of clearing.

41. Target Bomblines

(a) It is not always easy to provide a clearly defined target bomblines and in certain requests this cannot be given at all. Under such conditions the infantry must make the decision whether the strike should be carried out and then be prepared to take full responsibility in the event of casualties being inflicted to own troops.

(b) Even where a clearly defined line does exist the tendency is to make use of grid lines. This should be avoided unless the grid line follows a line of features or a river course and even then it is better to refer simply to the feature.

42. RAAF Air Support Party

Where support is not required at short notice, the attachment of an air support party to a brigade headquarters is not warranted as infantry are quite capable of preparing requests and conducting an air strike. If the air support party is to be attached, an elaborate communication set up is of a disadvantage since it does effect the mobility of a headquarters. All that is required is an RAAF Officer sufficiently trained to understand normal infantry principles, two signallers and a 22 WT Set.

PART II : LESSONS FROM OPERATIONS

ADMINISTRATION

~~Administration lessons given as a separate report.~~

## PART II - LESSONS FROM OPERATIONS - ADMINISTRATION

1. No new lessons were learnt from the operation, the main consideration is to be able to handle and have facilities to deal with problems as they occur.

2. The undermentioned points, however, are considered worth mentioning: -

### (a) Mortar Ammunition

- (i) If 3" mortars are to be used to any extent on tasks, the scale allotted under WE is not sufficient, and it was found that approximately two WEs were carried by units. This is of course alright where units are operating with MT, but impossible when units are moving across areas and stores are moved by native carriers.
- (ii) It was also found necessary to maintain large stocks of 3" mortar ammunition in DIDs, as if a unit does use the mortar, it generally fires a heavy concentration.

### (b) Artillery Ammunition

- (i) It is found necessary to keep holdings at guns above WE where possible and large stocks in DIDs, as if artillery is used at all, it is generally used in heavy concentrations.
- (ii) On movement of a battery, regiment or DID the additional ammunition was often an encumbrance but it is considered that the trouble involved in the moving of it from place to place is worthwhile.

### (c) AASC Detachments

- (i) It is considered essential that supply depot platoons or detachments are placed in any area where supplies are landed by barge or dropped from planes.
- (ii) It was found that unless this procedure was adopted, rations soon became unbalanced through units drawing too much of one commodity and too little of another.

### (d) Fresh Meat Supplies

- (i) When fresh meat was on issue and platoons or companies were any distance from unit B echelon, especially where native carry was involved, it was found necessary for meat to be cooked in B echelon and carried forward in that condition.

### (e) Natives

- (i) Where possible it is considered that natives should be kept in a central compound and allotted daily to units by Ede.
- (ii) Reasons are as follows: -

Better use can be made of resources. Units often require more natives one day than another, and if allotted to units, the allotment would have to be on maximum requirements and natives wasted on days units do not require maximum numbers.

- (iii) At times over rough surface roads, native carriers were utilized in preference to jeep ambulances.
- (iv) In calculating numbers of natives available for work each day, it was found necessary to allow for ten per cent being sick or lame and one seventh resting. By allowing one seventh to rest daily, it meant each native received one free day a week. This free day was found to be good policy, as unless given, the rate of sickness increases and natives become very tired and "crack up".
- (v) The maximum in weight that ANGAU would allow natives to carry was 35 pounds. Based on this, it was calculated that, after allowing for rations, POL, ammunition and ordnance stores, one native would maintain four men.
- (vi) Great difficulty was experienced in establishing native compounds 800 yards from nearest troops and still keep the compound within the defended area. This often meant that carriers would have to walk up to two miles before picking up cargo to carry forward.



PART III : WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

General

1. The conditions under which the campaign has been conducted has provided ample scope for the testing of all items of equipment and infantry weapons.
2. Equipment and weapons which have not been mentioned are considered as satisfactory and require no comment.

Weapons and Ammunition

3. Bayonet Parachutist

The adoption of the Bayonet Parachutist in lieu of the present bayonet No 1 Mk I is recommended for the following reasons.

- (i) It obviates the necessity for the issue of a machete. The Bayonet Parachutist is superior to the ordinary machete in quality of material, workmanship and balance, besides retaining the cutting edge for longer periods without resharpening.
- (ii) Weight, which is an ever present problem in jungle warfare, is reduced in that this bayonet is much lighter than the combined weight of the present bayonet and machete.
- (iii) As a bayonet, it is quite effective.

4. Owen Sub Machine Gun

(a) This weapon proved reliable and efficient but <sup>in</sup> its present form has certain defects arising from the design of the safety catch. The defect has a tendency to make the gun unsafe, inasmuch that it is possible, when the change lever is set at SAFE, if an attempt is made to cock the gun, the bolt will jam between the existing sear and the top of the body tube or, in certain instances, the bolt may be able to move sufficiently to the rear as to feed and fire a round on its return forward.

(b) To overcome these faults by merely stipulating a drill routine no allowance is made for human nature being under stress when in contact with the enemy. It is considered, however, these defects can be eliminated by the modification of two components, the sear and the bolt. This modification briefly consists of the following:

- (i) Forming a bent at the top of the existing sear by deposit of weld metal.
- (ii) Squaring that portion of the bolt rear face concerned to provide a positive engagement with the above bent.

(c) Full details of this suggested modification has been given in our report G1281 of 14 Apr to 6 Aust Div.

5. Grenades 36 M

Tropic proofed igniter sets are essential and if these cannot be provided, sufficient reserve of the ordinary igniter sets should be made available to replace those rendered unserviceable by weather conditions.

6. Vickers Medium Machine Gun

There was limited scope for the use of this weapon.

7. Ammunition

Despite adverse weather conditions, apart from pyrotechnics, all types of ammunition proved satisfactory. However, the provision of a more durable bandolier is essential as the present cloth issue has an extremely short life and will not stand up to patrol conditions.

Equipment : General

8. Webbing

Recent issues of web equipment, particularly in the case of water bottle carriers, were of an inferior quality and frayed easily thus making the equipment soon unserviceable.

9. Pouches Basic - New Type

(a) Though enlarged from the original basic pouch, this new type pouch is still not practicable for the carriage of either magazines for the Bren LMG or Owen SMG as, when they are fitted with magazines, they cannot be closed. The depth of the pouch should be increased by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

(b) The press stud type of fastener is not durable or safe. With exertion they frequently open and there is a tendency for the studs to pull out of the fabric. A D type buckle to fasten would overcome this disadvantage.

(c) The clips for the attachment to the belt should be positioned so that the base of the pouch is level with the lower side of the belt. This would obviate rubbing in the groin of the wearer.

10. Pouches OSMG

The new type pouch requires modification by the addition of a loop similar to that on the basic pouch at the top of the buckle to enable the haversack or pack straps to be attached to the top of the pouch.

11. Bottles Water

(a) The present water bottle is unsatisfactory for the following reasons :

(i) It is too heavy.

(ii) The cork method of stopping the bottle is not lasting and the metal screw through the cork rusts causing an enlarged hole resulting in leaking.

(iii) The heavy cloth cover is not waterproof, absorbs moisture and becomes saturated with dirt, resulting in chafe when carried besides causing an unhealthy odor.

(b) It is recommended that the present type water bottle be replaced by a bottle of aluminum or other light metal substance fitted with a screw type stopper and durable canvas cover.

## 12. Tents Shelter Half

These were used under service conditions for the first time. Due to their weight and shortness in length, they leave much to be desired and unless they consist of the heavier type of material which has been camouflaged they are not waterproof.

It is recommended these be increased in length by one foot and made of a lighter but waterproof material, as, for example, JAPARA silk.

## 13. Stretcher Canvas

It is recommended these be increased in length by six inches. When used with stretcher legs the canvas is of adequate length for the average person but when used with bush timber as bed rails, the consequent sagging which cannot be overcome, decreases the length of the canvas.

## Signal Equipment

### 14. Equipment used for the first time

- (a) Fullerphones Mk IV Special (Aust)  
Good performance.
- (b) Units Long Range Fullerphone  
Good performance.
- (c) Telephone Sets 'L' No 2 (Aust)  
Weakness in construction of generator causing faults, otherwise good.
- (d) Switchboards Magneto  
Shutters tend to stick and no adjusting screw provided. Plugs and cords still principal of faults as with U.C. Boards.
- (e) Wireless Sets No 22 (Aust)  
Excellent results. RF Gain now giving trouble. Headphone and microphone assembly should be two separate assemblies or microphone wiring lead in at plug not at headphone wiring split.
- (f) Apparatus Cable Laying No 6  
For infantry formations these are ideal. Laying can be well away from tracks and much more speedy than with a carrier type of layer.
- (g) Reels Cable No 1 Mk II<sup>X</sup>  
Porterage of cable simplified by use of these reels.
- (h) Wireless Sets SCR 536  
Used very little in this operation, because of delicate construction not suitable for movement over difficult L of C.
- (i) Telephones, Sound Powered, Head and Breast.  
Performance was poor, as well as being too bulky and construction weak at headphones. No tee-in facilities.
- (j) Wire Electric Assault Twisted W130.  
Valuable for use with patrols. As a metallic circuit was unsatisfactory because of length of line but gave good results as earth return.

### 15. Wireless Sets No 108 Mk III

- (a) Wireless Sets No 108 Mk III were used within

battalions and their performance was poor. Climatic conditions affected the value of components to such an extent that in 2/3 Aust Inf Bn all sets were replaced by withdrawal of sets from other units.

(b) It is considered that the replacement of these sets with a crystal controlled set with two or three channels would give far better communications within a battalion.

16. Switchboards, Magneto or UC Type

(a) Switchboards of each type were used within the brigade in this operation and each had the same consistent fault, plugs and cords.

(b) To eliminate this, it is recommended that switchboards of these types be replaced by a cordless type.

17. Telephones, Sound Powered.

(a) Those held by battalions, head and breast type, were not satisfactory.

(b) As the number allowed on battalion WET is 24, it is recommended that they be replaced by

Telephone, Hand, Sound Powered 12  
Telephone Sets Infantry No 2 (Aust) 12.

(c) Telephone sets, Infantry, or a similar type of phone is necessary for use on OP lines the length of which is usually too great for any sound powered telephone.

18. Modifications

The following are suggested modifications of signal equipment used within an infantry brigade.

EQUIPMENT	SUGGESTED MODIFICATION	REASON
Switchboard UC or Magneto	Switchboard, Cordless type.	Reduce faults. Plugs and cords main source of faults.
Wireless Set No 22 (Aust) - Headphone & Microphone Assemblies.	Headphone and Microphone be separate.	The combining of these makes weight on headphone wiring too great.
Batteries 12 V 20 AH Secy Part	Strengthening of construction and provision of cover on carrier.	To prevent damage during portorage.

19. Suggested Additions to WET of a Brigade Signal Section

ITEM	EST		REASON
	Present	Suggested	
Cable Electric D5 Mk VI Twisted mls	-	10	For metallic circuits which have been found to be still necessary.
Reels Cable No 1 Mk II	33	50	Almost all cable used was from these reels. To simplify portorage.
Apparatus Aerial Sig Strips.	10	20	Only sufficient held for one display.
Superposing Unit - 1 Transformer	2	6	To replace two superposing units, 3 transformers. With latter units a fault in one transformer means withdrawal of complete unit for repair.
Units, Long Range Fullerphone	1	2	To allow change over of HQ and twice during this operation it has been found necessary on bn trunk to use extra batteries.
Chests, Spare Parts, ) Wireless Set No 22 ) No 108 ) Tropic Treatment and ) Sealing material       )			Required to reduce number of evacuations of equipment for repair.

20. Suggested Deletions from WET of a Brigade Signal Section

ITEM	EST		REASON
	Present	Suggested	
Stand Instrument	2	-	Not required
Telescopes Signalling	2	-	" "
Head & Breast Sets No 2 (Aust)	3	-	" "
Lamps Signalling Daylight Short Range	2	-	" "
Stands Lamp or Helio Mk III	2	-	" "
Superposing Units - 3 Transformer	2	-	Replacement with Superposing Unit-1 Transformer.
Test Set Portable	1	-	Not required.
Reception Sets No 4 (Aust)	2	1	" "
Wireless Sets No 208	5	-	" "
Frames D & P 10 Wire Sets	3	-	" "
Connectors 5 pr	3	-	

21. Suggested Additions to Battalion WET

ITEM	EST		REASON
	Pres-ent	Sugges- ted	
Wireless Set No 22 (Pack Station)	-	1	Control of 108 Group if Wireless Set 108 Mk III to remain on WET.
Telephone Sets L (Aust) No 2	12	20	To cover standing patrol positions, etc.
Reels Cable No 1 Mk II <sup>x</sup>	42	60	To carry Wire Electric Assault issued on 2 ml drums.
* Apparatus Cable Laying No 3	-	1	Rewinding and recovery of cable.
Units, Long Range, Fullerphone	-	1	To work over lengthy earth return lines.

\* This is considered essential. A more suitable equipment would be one similar to the American type which is a light portable frame with geared winder and can be used either from a jeep or carried to lay cable from Drums Cable No 5 or erected on the ground to re-wind and recover cable.

Transport

22. Trucks  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton 4 x 4.

These were found to be generally satisfactory and with good maintenance gave an excellent performance. A weakness does exist with the type of shock absorber used. These, once damaged, owing to necessary equipment not being available, cannot be repaired. Further replacement stocks were not available.

23. Trailers 2 Wheeled Aust No 3 8 cwt

In this type of terrain trailers are unsatisfactory. They proved a serious handicap since trucks  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton 4 x 4 are incapable of pulling them even when lightly loaded through sandy stretches or mud. Under these conditions they caused excessive strain on the vehicle and impeded the movement of other traffic.

24. Waterproofing of vehicles.

This assisted greatly, allowing for normal creek and river fordings and beach movement where roads did not exist or were impassable.

25. Recommended Scale of Issue MT

The present WE of transport proved inadequate and it is considered that the minimum scale of transport required by a brigade to be as follows :

(a) each battalion:

(i) Trucks  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton 4 x 4

Comd	1
Bn HQ and I Sec	1
RAP	1
QM	1
Each coy	1
1 Pl	1
2 Pl	1
3 Pl	2
5 Pl	1
Spare for maint.	2

Total per bn	<u>16</u>
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(ii) Trucks  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ton 6 x 6

General stores	1
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(iii) Trucks 3 ton 4 x 4 . 400 galls

Water vehicle	1
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(iv) Trucks  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ton or  $\frac{5}{4}$  ton 4 x 4

For towing Tk A guns	4
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(b) Brigade Headquarters

(i) Trucks  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton 4 x 4

Comd	1
BM	1
SC	1
IO	1
Ede TO	1
LO	2
CQMS	2
Maint Spare	1

Total	<u>10</u>
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(ii) Trucks  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ton 6 x 6

General Stores	1
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Engineer Equipment

26. Motor Transport

(a) The most useful vehicle has proved to be the 6 x 6 GMC  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ton truck fitted with winch, as a load carrier of all types of engineer stores on rough terrain it performed excellently. It also does less damage to a road than either the 4 x 4 truck or Jeep. In the initial stages before a good road is developed it is recommended that all supply be done by 6 x 6.

(b) Trailers proved a serious handicap to all vehicles in heavy going and it is recommended that trailers be abandoned until engineers advise their use.

(c) 4 x 4 tip trucks suffered continual break-down under heavy wet conditions and badly cut up the initial formation. However, it must be pointed out that these vehicles have

had 18 months' continual use of which a considerable proportion had been under very adverse conditions. Continual break-down of sliding gears and transfer cases occurred.

(d) Spare parts for 4 x 4 tippers were in short supply, but fortunately enemy vehicles proved a source of supply of 10 axles, brake linings, 2 transfer cases and 6 dozen spare plugs, otherwise unobtainable at short notice.

## 27. Bridging

(a) Adverse weather such as phenomenal rains experienced during Phase 2 resulted in flooded rivers with shifting river mouths, making the erection of semi-permanent timber bridges impossible. The only answer is ample equipment bridging such as FBE which can be removed during peak flows and replaced in a new site. This campaign has proved the necessity of ample bridging equipment being held as far forward as possible under the command of the forward Field Company.

(b) A recommended scale for this type of terrain is :

- (i) One set of FBE.
- (ii) 6 additional trestle bays FBE.
- (iii) 4 sets of SBG with sufficient SPP to provide running strips for tracked vehicles.

To be held by forward Field Company

- (iv) One set of FBE.
- (v) 2 sets of SBG to be held in advance Field Park Dump.

(c) Shortage of repair material such as paint, selected timbers, screws copper rivets etc, made equipment maintenance difficult.

(d) Supplies of SPP and sawn decking aided the erection of semi-permanent bridges to release equipment bridging.

## 28. Arc Mesh

(a) This proved invaluable for temporary repair to tracks, particularly on loose sand spits. Unfortunately the supply of ARC had to be husbanded for future operations and it was only used in particularly bad places. A more liberal use would have reduced the deteriorations of track in clay sectors under heavy traffic and thereby greatly reduce the subsequent repair.

(b) The preparation of a level surface was found essential to the type of the mesh. Where existing wheel ruts were not removed the mesh rapidly deteriorated. In subsequent improvement of the road the mesh forms an excellent foundation for gravelling.

(c) For this campaign it is suggested that the scale held be 50 yards of mesh per mile of track.

## 29. Mine Detectors

Aust Pattern Mk II Mine detectors proved useless in this campaign owing to presence of high percentage of iron in the soil, producing a continual high pitched whine in the ear phones.



### 30. Signal Equipment

(a) Unfortunately our WE 108 sets were withdrawn for issue to infantry battalions secondhand 308 sets being supplied in lieu. Consequent continual break-downs seriously reduced the effective number of terminals to three, whereas five was desirable.

(b) An improvised 10 line switchboard made by company personnel proved of great assistance and enabled line (salvaged Jap wire) to be laid to HQ RAE, Bde, all Pls, internal Q and transport. Up to 100 calls per day were made during the advance to the HAWAIN.

(c) Alterations to equipment held :-

(i) Five - No 22 sets to provide links from Coy HQ to each of three Platoons and rear Company HQ.

(ii) Two - No 108 Mk III for reconnaissance parties.

(iii) A 10-line switchboard.

(i) and (ii) have already been authorised but unfortunately not implemented.

### 31. Company Stores

A complete revision beyond the scope of this summary is required as it has again been proved that much that is not essential is carried, whilst deficiencies in useful equipment exist, e.g. petrol driven chain saws.

### 32. Plant

The R.4 tractor proved a great asset not only as an aid to logging bridging timber but as a salvage vehicle. However, despite the current views of allotment of earth moving equipment in view of maintenance, it is recommended that D.4 Angle-dozers be substituted. In addition to haulage duties the Company would be able to fill abutments and excavate minor road construction without calling on and thereby reducing the efficiency of the M.E. Pl.

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BM 16 Aust Inf Bde

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