

## NEWSPAPER ARTICLES - LOOKING BACK

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES LOOKING BACK{mospagebreak title=PATROLS ACTIVITY AITAPE-WEWAK AREA} The Western Australian Wednesday 10th January 1945 Page 6 PATROLSâ€™ ACTIVITY AITAPE-WEWAK AREA Earlier Battles Recalled New Guinea, Jan 9 â€” The Japanese in the Aitape-Wewak-Sepik River area were first isolated by the landings of the US troops, supported by Australian and American naval units and the RAAF, at Hollandia and Aitape, in April 1944. The troops landed at Aitape, carried their perimeter south-easterly to the line of the Driniumor River, and outposts were established farther down the coast toward Wewak. The Japanese reacted strongly to the landing, and in the initial stages the Americans were driven from their outposts and enemy forces massed for the attack on the Driniumor River line. Early in the second week of July the assault was launched. The Japanese forced a break-through two miles from the river mouth and one division crossed in force. At the same time the enemy attempted an outflanking movement farther inland with the object of attacking the American defences from the west and then pushing on to Aitape itself. The flank attack failed, and in endeavouring to retire across the river the enemy suffered heavy casualties. Daring Venture Another force made piecemeal sorties on Americansâ€™ other flank and was repulsed with serious losses. During one of these attacks a daring attempt was made to capture the command post of a brigadier-general. A small force made an amphibious landing behind the US lines, but after a sharp and bloody battle the defendersâ€™ base personnel drove the enemy back into the sea. When the Japanese realized that their three-pronged assault had failed they attempted to extricate themselves. US cavalry troops got behind the retreating forces and inflicted further casualties. After the beginning of August, the enemy withdrew towards Wewak, and the Americans followed as far as Babiang, where an advanced patrol base was established. At the end of October Australian commandos commenced patrolling down the coast and inland through the Torricelli Range. Other long-range patrols were carried out by ANGAU officers, in conjunction first with US infantry and later with Australian units. Commando Strike Commandos struck the first blow at the Japanese in the Australian campaign to eliminate the enemy from the Aitape-Wewak area. One squadron was â€œbloodedâ€• in the jungle fighting which accounted for 84 enemy for the loss of one man. A feature of this new phase was the tightly-knit co-ordination between Army and RAAF. Both services worked as a team. For once, battle terrain was reasonably favourable. The country was flat for the most part, moderately wooded, swampy in sections. Fighting occurred mainly on the coastal belt where the enemy was shaken and picked off in small groups by hard-hitting fighting patrols. As the drive progressed, the enemy retreated across the foothills of the Torricelli range. A spur of this 7,000 ft high range runs down to the coast, with densely timbered and sharp ridges, some 500 ft high. Soon after the arrival of the main body of Australians a small patrol east of Aitape, down the coast towards Wewak, sighted 28 live Japanese in two days. Of these they killed 11, probably fatally wounded four others and took two prisoners. Twelve of the 28 escaped. Patrols had to make their way through thick jungle, up and down steep mountains, across swift flowing rivers, and through mosquito infested sago swamps. Tracks leading to the Torricelli Range, which runs parallel with the coast and rises in precipitous ridges to 5,000 feet, provide many natural obstacles to troops. Supplies by Plane Men on patrol, using native carriers, have been equipped with arms, ammunition and supplies weighing about 60 lb. The natives carry 35 lb. Over the mountains, 20 miles in five days is considered good marching. One of the main difficulties has been that of supply and in some cases, food and equipment have been dropped by RAAF planes. Throughout the campaign, close support has been accorded by the RAAF. A works wing went ashore with the first American landing at Aitape and made the airstrip fit for Allied fighter operations. In co-operation with US PT boats, Beaufighters harassed Japanese seaborne traffic. In June, two Beaufort squadrons arrived and gave ground troops full support in reconnaissance, in bombing enemy positions and in strafing Japanese foraging patrols seeking supplies from native villages inland. They maintained close liaison with commando patrols and ANGAU, which frequently called for air strikes when the enemy was encountered in numbers. Some Japanese managed to cross the Torricelli Range, but bodies by the tracks are mute evidence that others delayed their bid too long. On one section of the coast the enemy cut down practically every coconut tree in his search for food. An Australian patrol surprised one party cooking a meal of coconuts and eating the roots of the palms. Another patrol surprised five Japanese cooking breakfast in a native village. Four were killed and the other wounded. Enemy dead were found throughout the village. A number had died of starvation or illness, but many had been killed by RAAF bombing and strafing. In the first six weeks of their operations in the Aitape-Wewak area Australian troops lost only three killed and three men wounded. Japanese losses in the same period cannot be accurately assessed. Patrols, searching out toward the main areas of enemy concentration, reported that they had killed and counted 129 Japanese, many other bodies had not been recovered, and they could not estimate how many more had been wiped out in the numerous air strikes. A considerable amount of enemy equipment was also captured, including rifles, light machine-guns, Czech bren guns, wireless and optical equipment, and swords.

{mospagebreak title=INLAND FROM WEWAK}

The West Australian Newspaper : Friday 27th July, 1945- page 7 INLAND FROM WEWAK Enemyâ€™s Mountain Melbourne, July 26 â€” In New Guinea fighting patrols from the Sixth Australian Division yesterday drove further down the southern slopes of the Prince Alexander Ranges behind Wewak, states Army Public Relations. Pushing on 1,000 yards from the Hambruari group of villages patrols of the 19th Brigade are coming under fire from enemy outposts and snipers. They found partly dug bunkers and foxholes indicating that the Japanese had intended resisting just south of Hambruari but instead had decided on a further withdrawal. Patrols from the 2/6 Cavalry Commando Regiment operating several miles inland from Karawop (captured three months ago) encountered the Japanese in strength with machine-guns in well-prepared positions on high ground. The Japanese lost an unknown number of dead in the first clashes. In the Mandi area 49 cases of Japanese ammunition, including 75mm Shells, 40 boxes of mortar bombs and drums of petrol were located. A succession of Japanese defensive positions around the important villages of Ilipem and Kaboibus are proving

troublesome to troops of the 17th Brigade thrusting east in the inland sector of New Guinea. During the night raiding parties were active around several Australian perimeters. Feeler patrols from the 2/5 Battalion moving east from Yamil have reported clear one village previously held by the enemy. Australian parties operating in front of the main forces killed 20 Japanese in brisk actions. Many huts were destroyed and Japanese marching along inland tracks were strafed by 33 RAAF Beauforts. Venturas and Corsairs gave Rabaul its usual visit, destroying 19 buildings, some motor vehicles, a caterpillar tractor and a large fuel dump.

{mospagebreak title=COMMANDOS IN RAID ON ISLAND} The Courier-Mail (Brisbane, Qld. Monday 30 July 1945 page 1 Commandos in Raid on Island Melbourne, Sunday "A party of 2/6 commandos raided Karasau Island, off the Cape Karawop, near Wewak, yesterday. They took three prisoners with them back to the mainland. On the track inland from Dagua other patrols killed 24 Japs in sharp engagements, including a lieutenant-colonel, two captains and three lieutenants. Heavy rain, particularly in the inland sector, has slowed down 6th Division operations in New Guinea. Generally, but some progress has been made in the Prince Alexander mountains, and in the central inland areas.

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{mospagebreak title=ADVANCE TO BUT AERODROME}

Â The Advertiser, SA Wednesday 21 March 1945 Page 6 Advance to But Aerodrome Map No. 2 "Aitape-Wewak area, New Guinea

Â The westernmost limit reached by Australian troops in the Huon Peninsula and Ramu Valley campaigns was the Sepik river. Between this line and the Allied base at Aitape were elements of three enemy divisions and the headquarters of the 18th Japanese Army. Enemy troops had established themselves in many native villages between the coast and far into and beyond the Torricelli Mountains. The Allies held a perimeter south-east of Aitape to the line of the Briniumor River. Current operations began in November, and some Japanese were pushed swiftly across the foothills of the Torricelli Range. Before Christmas, the Australians had advanced 34 miles from Aitape, having crossed the Danmap River, and driven past Rocky Point. They have now increased their advance to more than 60 miles and the capture of But aerodrome has just been announced. Patrols which struck inland from Aitape had pushed 40 miles beyond the Torricelli Mountains by mid-December. This year they have had sharp clashes with the enemy in several villages, and they are now fighting between Balif and Maprik. There are reported to be 2,000 Japanese concentrated in the Tong-Maprik area, with a concentration at Perembil, eight miles south-east of Tong. Estimates of enemy strength vary considerably. During the lull last year, it was reported that there were up to 20,000 thousand Japanese troops in the Wewak area and to the west, but casualties from battle and disease have been heavy and undoubtedly, large numbers of troops have fled to the mountains. Possibly the total enemy combat strength today is less than half the original estimate. The area in which our troops are fighting is typical New Guinea country. The rugged Torricelli Mountains rise to 5,000 ft and advancing patrols have had to negotiate many precipitous ridges. Along the coast are difficult tracks and fast-running streams, while off-shore are heavy surf and a savage undertow which make travel by "œduck" or small coastal craft a hazardous undertaking. In addition to difficulties of terrain, the Australians have had to contend with monsoonal storms and heavy floods during the last two months. During January, swollen streams destroyed bridges and made communications difficult, but our troops have pushed on steadily. The Sepik river area is malaria infested, but the anopheline is not so active around Aitape. In the high Torricelli Mountains, it is not found. In all sectors, full anti-malaria precautions are being carried out.{mospagebreak title=NEW LAURELS GAINED IN SYRIA} The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954) Wednesday 16 July 1941 , page 8 Â A.I.F.'s PROUD RECORD New Laurels Gained in Syria From G.F. Harriott "Haifa, July 14 The brief Syrian campaign has brought much credit to the Australian troops engaged. It was brief but hard fought. With whatever regret this chapter in the A.I.F.'s history is written, it is one on which the A.I.F. can always look back with pride. The graves along the Litani River, beside the Damascus road, on the shell scarred hills round Merjiun and Jezzín, and in the banana groves below Damour, give the lie to those who would seek to class it with the Iraq revolt as an inconsiderable sideshow. From that bleak hour on the morning of June 8 when our troops crossed the frontier into Syria until the last shot was fired two days ago the fighting was bitter and bloody. The French troops against whom the Australians were pitted were not the disheartened remnants of a beaten army. They were fresh troops who had not fought in France, and consequently they had escaped the demoralizing influence of the breaking up of France's forces there. The great majority of the soldiers themselves were not metropolitan Frenchmen, but mercenary troops " Foreign Legionaries and native regiments " who carried out their orders without concern for politics. They were the flower of the world's finest colonial army " men with a long and honorable tradition of hard fighting, highly trained, and rigidly disciplined professional soldiers. They were seasoned troops who knew the country over which they were fighting like the backs of their hands. They were led by officers most of whom hated fighting former brothers in arms; nevertheless, they felt that they were fighting not only for their own honor as soldiers, but also to redeem the tarnished honor of France in the only war they conceived left open to them. To those who had experienced Greece and Crete when the air seemed always full of death, the most striking feature of the Syrian campaign was the comparative immunity of our troops from air strafing. Certainly they were bombed and machine-gunned many times, but it was never on a large scale or for long periods, because this time air superiority belonged to us. "œThe Kelly Gang " Another interesting feature of the campaign which must have delighted cavalymen all over the world was the way in which the horse came into its own again. In the "œtiger country" east of the fertile coastal plain of Lebanon mechanized cavalry was useless, except on roads, and patrolling the flanks was left to horsed yeomanry, who did a first class job. The Australians had their own

“Light Horse,” irreverently christened “the Kelly gang.” This little force, which did excellent work in the Jezzin sector, formed by Australian mechanized cavalrymen “all former Light Horsemen” mounted on captured French cavalry horses with French saddler. The Australians played a big part in the Syrian campaign, which incidentally saw for the first time in history the combined use in a single operation of the three arms of Australia’s fighting services when units of the Australian navy, army, and air force co-operated in an attack on the French in the coastal sector. It was an Australian column which forced the passage of the strongly defended Litani River, defeated the Foreign Legion in the Battle of the Caves, took Tyre and Sidon, and crowned a brilliant campaign by one of the greatest feats of arms in the history of the AIF when men from every Australian State smashed Beirut’s last southern defence in the Battle of Damour. Jezzin was an Australian “show.” The Australians bore the brunt of the bitter fighting which centred round Merjiyun. Australians, too, saw hard fighting during the advance on Damascus, and an Adelaide lieutenant-colonel who won the Victoria Cross in the last war, was the first British officer into Damascus. We lost hundreds of good men and valuable officers killed or wounded, but there is a considerable item on the credit side of the ledger. It is the experience our troops gained. A proportion of them were seasoned veterans of the Libyan and Greek campaigns, but the majority at the beginning of the Syrian campaign were without battle experience. This is something which no amount of text books or instruction in theory can teach. It is the personal experience which every man has to gain for himself on the field of battle, and when once he has gained it he is a 100 percent better soldier. The Syrian campaign was a particular valuable experience for our men because their opponents were highly skilled soldiers who knew and employed every trick of the grim game of war. They had a double lesson on warfare on the coastal plain and in the rough hilly country reminiscent of the north-west frontier of India. Their commanding officers say they acquitted themselves magnificently.

{mospagebreak title=BARDIA FALLS} Morning Bulletin Rockhampton, Qld. : Page 4 “BARDIA FALLS” A special news scoop will be screened at the Liberty and Tivoli theatres today and tonight, and this will be the item; “Bardia Falls.” This item is the second of Captain Frank Hurle’s dramatic pictures taken in Egypt, and he has secured for the world another scoop in remarkable and vivid pictures and events leading up to and the final capture of Bardia, the Italian stronghold. The camera travels through the dust of the Egyptian desert side by side with the men who went into action; goes with them to the very brink of the Italian barrage; and watches them disappear into the smoking inferno of warfare. Dramatically the camera pauses and then, from out the barrage of exploding shells come figures running. They might have been Australian troops in retreat “but they are not” they are Italian prisoners coming through their own barrage to the safety of the Australian lines. Tanks go into action, big guns as well; while from overhead the RAF and the RAAF rain down thousands of bombs. Bardia falls, and the cameras are set up in the streets of a town which a few hours before was in Italian hands. The “Fall of Bardia” is a vivid full record that will thrill Australians, for it shows above all else the marvellous spirit of the Australian troops under fire.

{mospagebreak title=JAP ATE JAP}

{mospagebreak title=JAPS UNDER ORDERS}{mospagebreak title=WEATHER SLOWS ADVANCE}

The Western Australian, Perth, WA, Monday 30 July 1945, page 5

NEW GUINEA FIGHTING WEATHER SLOWS ADVANCE Japanese Officers Killed Melbourne, July 29, - In the northern New Guinea coastal area a party from the 2/6th Cavalry Commando Regiment raided Karasau (or Paris) Island, a coral-encircled outcrop just off Cape Karawop, says an official Army statement issued today. They took three prisoners with them back to the mainland. On a track inland from Dagua other patrols killed 24 Japanese in sharp engagements, including a lieutenant-colonel, two captains and three lieutenants. Heavy rain, particularly in the inland sector, has slowed down the Australian Sixth division's operations in New Guinea generally, but some progress has been made in the Prince Alexander Mountains and in the central inland areas. After an attack by 28 Beauforts Balimug, at the outskirts of the important Japanese base of Koboibus, was captured by the 2/5th Battalion. The village had been attacked unsuccessfully on the previous day. Two miles east of Ilipem troops from the 2/6th Battalion registered another success with the capture of a feature on Big-road, which leads to the coast.

{mospagebreak title=KARAWOP COLLEGE}

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The Sydney Morning Herald, Monday 14 October 1946, page 2

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ARMY EDUCATION SERVICE "COLLEGE IN ISLANDS"

Â Sir, - My interest was attracted by Dr C.E.W. Bean's article in the "Herald" in which he deals with the patchy quality of the Army Education Service and with the absolute necessity for an efficient service in the peace-time army. A particularly interesting though little-known example of army education at its best may be found in "Karawop College," a fine organisation set up by 2-6 Aust. Cavalry (Commando) Regiment (6 Div. Cav.) in the first months of peace. The "college" was set in a more or less secluded site, a mile from RHQ, and was staffed completely with volunteers, thus eliminating the eternal round of fatigues. Thither came intending students from 2-9 Aust. Commando Squadron, 20 miles off at

Dagua, from 2-10 Squadron nearby at Cape Karawop, and from 2-7 Squadron some miles in the other direction at Boiken plantation. As students ("Boarders" all) they kept a liberal syllabus of study and recreation. The choice of study was almost unlimited, for capable instructors in a variety of subjects - languages, sciences, agriculture, woolclassing, history, etc - were also recruited within the regiment and all were promoted (where necessary) to the rank of acting sergeant, supernumeraary to Regimental Establishment. Unfortunately, this was an isolated example, the success of which was due largely to the enthusiasm of the CO, Lieutenant-Colonel Hennessy, and the "O.C. School," Lieutenant Ryan, of 7 Squadron, so that when the regiment was disbanded the equal of the "college" was not again encountered in the islands. However, as an interesting example of what can be done with a little tolerance and a lot of enthusiasm, "Karawop College" deserves recogniton and emulation. H.H. Bell - Punchbowl.

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