Copy of Able Seaman Ted Jones

Commando Experiences and Training.

Extracy notes AB Ted Jones, F4409, Naval Beach Commando, 1st Aust Beach Group, 1 Aust Corp, A.I.F.

In my memoir notes written some time ago there are various references to what I did in Borneo. Some of the references written by me had been forgotten completely until I looked them up following your request. I have selected extracts that I have deemed to be pertinent to what information you have requested and I leave you to be the judge as some may be completely irrelevant but have been written here to maintain some context. A lot will be about my activities with the U.S. Army to which I was seconded sometime after we landed at Red Beach Brunei.. This American permanent army unit was nicknamed " 9th Divvy Navy" as they had been with the 9th Division A.I.F. since Milne Bay, New Guinea and had taken part in the island hopping campaign without being relieved. I believe that they had seen longer contiousual overseas active service than any other U.S. unit. Many of them had been in a Paratroop battalion before forming the Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment. They had a large shore base in Brunei to which we would return occaisionly for engine maintenance. This was a well run base camp with top facilities and voctualling. They had a large PX(canteen) where almost anything could be bought. The time I spent with the Americans was a very happy experience.

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It may not be generally known amongst Association members that some of us served in the Ist Aust Beach Group, I Aust Corps, A.I.F. as a RAN unit known as Naval Beach Commando. After leaving the Atherton Tablelands in Far North Queensland we went to the I Aust Corp staging camp outside Townsville, my Certificate of Service, which is most incomplete says that I was at HMAS Magnetic, Townsville from 1 Jan 45 to 31 March 45 although I have never been to Magnetic, however this must have been the time we spent in the Army staging camp awaiting embarkation overseas. We left Townsville in a ship whose name I do not recall and we were told that we were going to Madang. Again my service record says that I was at HMAS Madang but I have never been near Madang.. This journey in the ship was fantastic as we hugged the Australian coast inside the Barrier Reef to Thursday Island and then across to New Guinea to Port Morresby than around Samurai Island and up the New Guinea east coast. These were protected

waters. Around the top of New Guinea we went to Biak Island, part of Dutch New Guinea for a while and then on to Morotai in the Halmahera Group, again part of Dutch New Guinea.. Here we disembarked and set up camp way outside the perimeter amongst American troops. There were snakes everywhere and the weather could only be described as "wet". (During last Anzac Day, Lofty Elliot, Merv Smith, Murray Lloyd Taylor talked about the snakes and the weather with me as the four of us were Ist Aust Beach Group.). At night we would go to an American Negro Battalion camp to the pictures and concerts. The outdoor picture theatre was huge. Camped with the negros was a unit of Nisei Japanese, that is, Hawain born American Japanese. Most unusual as they had only been used previously in the European theatre but now that the conflict there had resolved they had been sent out to the Pacific mainly to do Intelligence work and act as interpreters. There presence was perilious for them as the Japanese were still active in the Halmaheras but were short of food as their supply lines had been cut and they would infilitrate the American lines, steal uniforms, and line up for meals. They were starving. What used to give them away was their distinctive smell. I well remember much later in Borneo when I went down an underground Japanese bunker the smell there was quite distitive. It is, I believe, something to do with their diet. These Japanese infiltrators would cheekily attend the pictures at the Negro camp and I remember being at a film one night when a Negro soldier behind me started to scream "Nippon". It appeared he had woken up that he had a Japanese infiltrator sitting next to him. Others piled on top of him and disrupted the film watching for several minutes. This was a genuine Japanese army infiltrator which a Nisei could easily be taken for.

One day a party of us joined an Australian patrol whose mission was to seek out Japanese gardens in the interior of Morotai and destroy them. It appeared that the Japanese troops still active had extensive fruit and vegetable gardens under cultivation and as it was the intent to starve them out these gardens had to be found and destroyed. It was very rugged jungle country, full of snakes. We found many Japanese graves but no live Japs.Some of the gardens had already been destroyed and burnt. On the way back in one of these trips I absentmindedly plucked a leaf from a shrub and put it in my mouth. All my saliva dried up, the inside of my lips blistered, my throat swelled up and I couldn't swallow. I was admitted to an ADS (Advanced Dressing Station) and then transported to

to the 2/5th AGH where I spent a couple of days. As I was "walking wounded" I busied myself helping the medics with dressing to the wounded. These troops were ones who were doing raids using fast US PT boats on neighbouring islands and the Phillipines. I enjoyed the work attending these experienced soldiers who were either SRD or Independent Company troops. Whilst I was there I saw a small Indonesian boy brought in. His big toe on one foot was bound up in mud and grass and had been like this for some time. Apparently he had been beated up by a Japanese soldier who smashed his rifle butt down on the toe, crushing it. It infected and he had bound it up himself in the grass and mud. The duty MO was a WA Doctor who knew my sister well. She was a Lieutenant in the AANS serving at that time in New Guinea. He asked me to assist him in removing the dressing which had to be done very carefully, softening the mud with warm water. On clearing the mud and grass the toe was revealed to be alive with writhing maggots. Dr Rose explained that these maggots had kept the boy from developing septicaemia as they kept the wound clean of diseased tissue thus preventing the onset of gangrene.. The maggots were cleaned away one by one with a forceps. The smell was putrid. The little boy was stoic and never winced. We were more upset than he was. A local could not be given as this may spread any latent infection. The cleaning of the toe took a couple of hours then it was dressed and bandaged. The bone was clearly visible. The boy was given light duty work around the hospital which he did with great gusto as he was highly appreciative.

Also admitted to the hospital whilst I was there were two Australian commandos. They had been preparing to go off on a raid and were sitting on their beds opposite each other in their tent preparing grenades. On one side of the beds they had unprimed grenades and they pulled the pins, checked the firing mechanism, primed and replaced the pin and placed the grenade on the other side of them on their beds. Apparently one of the commandos rolled a cigarette and leaned over to get a light from his mate and as his backside left the bed monentarily a primed grenade rolled through with the unprimed lot. Sitting down again he picked up the primed grenade, pulled the pin and suddenly realised that it was primed. He yelled "live grenade" and went to throw it throuygh the tent flap but it hit the tent pole and rolled back under his mates bed. They both dived for the tent flap but collided aand fell to the ground just as the grenade under the bed exploded, Fortunately they were not seriously iunjured but

backs and legs were peppered with fragments. I was given the job of picking out some the fragments with a forceps. They were very embarrassed and there was a steady stream of Army investgators coming and going. " Accident don't happen, they are caused." was very true in this case.

What an interesting life I am leading!.

Soon after we were given an embarkation order and were loaded on to the USS David C. Shanks and with an American destroyer escort set off for the China Sea and the Borneo invasion. The David C. Shanks was a relatively new ship and was really luxurious with fantastic food. We were all given our medical shots and both arms were pretty sore. During our sea voyage the President of the United States of America died and we had a moving service on board the ship. We saw some aerial activity between Jap planes off Palawan and Australian fighters from Morotai. The airstrip there was for the 77th Squadron I think and when on Morotai I would go up there to watch the planes leaving and returning from missions. One day when on the David C. Shanks we sighted a loose rogue sea mine and shot at it to blow it up. It passed very close to the ship. These loose mines were a great hazard during nighttime.

Just before or shortly after we left Morotai we had word that the 2nd Aust. Beach Group had landed at Tarakan in Dutch North Borneo on the East coast. There were no casualities in the initial landing. After two days reports came in the opposition was heavy. We still did not know for where we were bound. Rumour had it that it was Balikpapan on the south coast of Dutch Borneo. However we soon realised that it wasn't to be our destination as we went north into the South China Sea and rouynded the tip of British North Borneo and sailed down the coast. Ships were gathering from everywhere where previously we had been on our own apart from the four stack "tincan" American destroyer escort. We knew now that our baptism wasn't that far away.

One day we were assembled and briefed. I was to go in in the first wave on Red Beach, Brunei Bay and help establish a beach head. This meant setting up lines of communication, removing obstacles snd set the scene for a fast easy landing for the invasion troops. We went in just before dawn under a tremendous barrage of ships guns and airplane rockets. It was pitch dark as only a tropical predawn can be when we disembarked into the Assault barges. We were fully equipped and heavily armed and kept our heads down as shells and rockets flamed overhead. The noise was horren-

dous. To say we were scared would be an understatement but by joking amongst ourselves we steadied our nerves and tried not to think of the unknown at the moment we landed and moved onto an open beach.. We were highly trained for this type of work, very fit and very young. As we approached the beach in the lifting dawn we saw the fires burning on the tree line with shells and rockets exploding and toppling huge palm trees and sending beach sand spurting high in the air we knew that this barrage would make our enemy keep his head down too. We hit the with a sudden jar and the ramp in the bows dropped down with a thud, out we tumbled, a terrible dry feeling in the mouth, heart pounding as we waited one and all for the bullet that we always joked about - the one that had our name scratched on it. Our landing wasn't clean as the barge had hit a sandbar and it was on to this that we jumped only to soon find ourselves in waist deep water hopping it would shelve upwards we plunged to the shore. Fortunately it shallowed quickly and we reached the dry sand of the beach. I will always remember trying to struggle up this beautiful white tropical beach with boots lead heavy and waterlogged. It seemed I would never reach the small dune ahead of me where I would be sheltered from a Japanese bullet. I reached the dune, flung myself down, rifle ready loaded and cocked. Fortunately the Japs had retreated under the relentless barrage so we advanced to the treeline to regroup under the lifting barrage. Branches and trees were still falling and toppling and we were in more danger from being hurt by them than a Japanese bullet. After the tremendous noise of the strafing planes and ships guns, shell explosions, rockets screaming ending with their spectacular, widespread, sideways, flaming explosion the silence was very eerie. Our Officers and Non Commissioned officers barked out commands to us - we knew what to do. The years of sometimes monotonous training would now be justified. Rapidly we went into the water looking for obstacles and checking for safe landing sites, good hard beach sand areas on which we could safely bring ashore tanks, trucks, supplies etc.. A Petrol dump had to be picked out away from the main landing area. Now the second wave was hitting the beach with our vehicles and communication equipment. A party of us was told off to recconoitre off the beach head to check on the enemy, others stayed to erect signs all along the beachhead. Beyond the tree line we saw much evidence of the enemy but no live ones for which we were grateful. Just inland we discovered a swamp which was a blow as it was through this our landing troops would have to go. We waded through and around it and found it to have a firm bottom

It was now some hours since our first wave landing and troops were pouring ashore in waves. The planes could be heard strafing inland around Brunei Town and the warships had moved away leaving destroyers, corvettesm minesweepers and fast MGB's to look after the LSI's which were disgorging troops and equipment. It was controlled chaos on the beach, metal roadways had been laid, supplies were being stockpiled, on the beach in scattered dumps just on the treeline. Airforce and Navy planes continually flew low along the beach in a caring, observation role as we were too frenetically busy to watch our backs. The noise of the planes was deafening. Invasion landing is not a quiet affair - only covert incursions are quiet. One of jobs of the Naval Commando Beach Party was to erect signs which designate where various items are to be deposited. These are in international code, both color and symbol. These were all in place and the landing was well underway with heavy vehicles rumbling ashore and hundreds of soldiers, some battle hardened others first timers.

The Beach members have great responsibility to keep the landing moving and to ensure that all signs are obeyed explicity. I recall I was up one end of the beach havibng been sent there by a Beachmaster for some reason. There became a blockage in the landing of some vehicles as a jeep with an army officer in it was stationary some hundred yards away from me. I was wearing the NBP armband and a jeep peeled off from the blockage and roared up to me. The army officer aboard snapped "Beach party" and I replied "Yes,sir". He pointed to the stationary jeep and roared "Move it". I ran up the beach to the stationary jeep where the officer aboard was viewing the beach head through binoculars and said "Beach party, sir I want this jeep moved now you are blocking the landing ". He looked hard at me for a moment and then said "Right, sorry on my way". He also was aware at what the NBP armband signified. It must have been the next day when with others were notified that a VIP was coming ashore and we were to act as escort to show the way inland. A fast patrol boat pulled up off shore and one of our duty barges proceeded to take a party off. A high ranking Australian officer appeared amongst us and I recognised that it was Brig. Windeyer. He was adored by his 9th Divvy troops. With him were American officers and war correspondents. The barge hit the shore right up the sand for a dry landing and down the ramp came a retinue, amongst them General Macarthur. Brig. Windeyer snapped to attention and threw a smart salute - Macarthur brushed past without a pause failing

to return the salute and went over to the American party. A growl went up amongst the 9th Divvy men nearby. I was shocked, Macarthur was faultlessly dressed in a light coloured uniform, quite foppish in fact, his after shave was overpowering and followed him as he walked past us. A jeep had been provided for him with a 9th Divvy driver.

As the landing had gone without incident and order had been restored we were being sent off in all directions. I joined an Army patrol to go into Brunei Town checking out villages on the way for Japanese who had been left behind when they fled the invasion. On the way we examined an underground bunker on which a flamethrower had been used. It was still smouldering and the stench was dreadful. This was routine patrol work which to the uninitiated can be nervewracking when you check out native houses not knowing who could be behind the door especially if you have heard a noise from inside which would turn out to be a rat or a cat. ON the outskirts of Brunei Town we heard a loud explosion and rushed towards it. No need for concern as it was just two "old soldiers" blowing up a bank strong room. They were real characters who were affectionately known as "the old and bold" as they had served in Greece, Middle East, New Guinea and now Borneo..I souveneered some postal notes, quite useless of course.

Here and there were Japanese bodies left from the initial push. I remember going round the back of one house and treading on a mound of very soggy soil (we had quite a bit of tropical downpour) and out of the soft soil popped a hand and wrist of a dead Japanese that had been interred there. It gave me quite a turn.

Soon after our commando established a camp outside Brunei Town. It was a good site adjacent to a market garden so we had a good supply of fresh vegetables. Because I spoke Malay when I was working in the camp kitchen I was sent over to barter for vegies. I would take over tinned butter, egg powder, milk powder, bully beef, tinned herrings in tomato sauce was highly prized. The vegatable plots were in rows irrigated from sloping narrow ditches into which the Chinese market gardener would ladle liquid manure from 44 gallon drums stationed at the head of each plot. One day (even then I was a keen vegie gardener) being curious as how the vegetables grew so lushly, especiallynthe string beans, I asked what was in the liquid manure. Imagine my horror when told it was human faeces and urine collected from the village each day and poured into the drums. As I remember we would get from him, string beans, chinese greens, lettuce and some strange

root vegetables. As I have said I was working in the camp kitchen by choice and we would serve rice for breakfast as a type of porridge, a fried rice with scramplded powdered eggs. Boiled rice for lunch mixed with the vegetables. Rice for night dinner with meat etc. and a rice pudding for dessert. I discovered that I Aust Corps had captured a huge rice warehouse and Army Supply was delighted to dole out generous rations of it to all the camp kitchens. Because we were Navy we had contact through our Assault ships with the U.S. Navy anchored in the bay and we were able to get good supplies of meat under the lap. I recall being sent off in a barge to collect the prearranged meat. I also remember going down to the beach to wash off some small maggots when a lrge leg of American pork had become blown. I found I could swap tinned butter or Ghee for fresh eggs - not large quantities for all the troops but enough for private tent eating. Later I was to find that the Dyaks loved tinned condensed milk for which they would barter, however, our supplies were mainly Ideal milk which was unsweetened and wasn't thick like condensed milk. The Dyaks would shake the tin and if it sloshed around they would knock it back and I found that if you shook the Ideal milk can violenty it would thicken for the moment and when it was shaken on handing it to them it wouldn't slosh in the can and they would think it was condensed milk. A little bit of trickery which made the Ideal milk barterable.

In our camp outside Brunei Town after nightfall we would spend duty watch in foxholes dug around the perimeter. Alone we each huddled in the muddy hole covered by a poncho or groundsheet stretched overhead and one hanging as a backdrop. It rained constantly at night and was generally very black. Sporadic firing would occur along the perimeter lines of other camps and it was unnerving squinting out into this blackness imagining all sorts of things and jumping at shadows especially after the night that the Japanese raided an American camp down the road a way and slashed the tents gave a yell and when the soldiers sat up in their bunks took their heads off with long knives and swords. It was mayhem and early next morning the party of murdering Japanese were found by Australian soldiers at the Salvation Army Coffee van stuffing biscuits in their mouths, paper and all, they were so hungry. The Australians made short work of them. THE LATRINES were outside our perimeter and those who required to use them after dark were supposed to go to the foxholes first and warn the sentry. One of our sailors was nearly shot as he wandered straight across the perimeter

One night without alerting the sentry. I recall another night or should I say early hours of the morning when I was huddled in my damp foxhole opposite the latrine spooking at shadows, rain dripping down the groundsheeton to my neck when a hand came through the rear flap and touched me on the shoulder. It was one of my mates who was going across to the latrine and wanted to let me know. To say I had a coronary on the spot would be unstating, he was not amused at my opinion of him and seem to understand why I was cross and badly shaken. This was after the Jap attack and out on the perimeter we were all twitchy.

One day a party of Naval Commandos from the Ist Aust Beach Group were taken to live on a deserted island in the South China Sea named Pulau Daart. This was to be a trial in self sustenance. It was a truly beautiful tropical island privately owned by a wealthy Chinese and the Japs had confiscated and turned it into a rest and recreation centre for officers. There was a Japanese graveyard there with its curious postlike wooden grave markers with carved inscriptions. A copra and rubber plant was there although a bit worse for wear. We were left there with minimal supplies and left to our own devices.On the island near a lagoon was a grove of mandarin trees that were in fruit and many other tropical fruit trees.The interior of the island was thick with dense lantana and the wild pigs on the island had made tunnels through the thich undergrowth. Man could walk along these tunnels in a bent gait and across some of the tunnels were giant webs of bird catching spiders. If you blundered into one of these webs it was hard to get out of them. The ground around them was littered with feathers and bones of bird victims. The spiders themselves were huge.. The smell around the webs was foul. The coast teemed with fish of all kind and there was a huge fish shaped like our garfish and with a .303 rifle you could actually shoot those fish as it travelled on the surface. We would also detonate grenades in the water and get vast quantities of stunned fish. One day I jumped into the water off a reef toto grab a fish that was stunned and a small shark swam a full speed between my legs, its body skin chafed my legs with its roughness. The others reconed I didn't touch water or ground getting back on to the rock. They all thought it was hilarious. Across the island from the camp was a a small stream that wandered through mangroves and on the beach near the mouth was a massive ocean going crocodile that had died somehow. It was immense and had barnacles on its hide.

Above all, the finding of this crocodile gave us proof that to swim in these tropical waters could be indeed dangerous. The beaches were truly beautiful as was the island itself and the time we spent there learning self sufficiency would be long remembered.

(Murray Lloyd-Taylor mentioned Pupau Daart to me recently and we were able to swop yarns about our time there and it was the first time I had spoken about it for 50 years.)

After returning from the island exercise I was called before the C.O. and told that I was to be seconded to the United States Army, the unit was a Engineer, Boat and Shore Regiment, permanent army who had been with the 9th Australian Division since Milne Bay, New Guinea. Originally the regiment was formed from a parachute battallion. They were known to Australian troops as the 9th Divvy Navy. The craft were 66foot converyted LCM's with high speed motors. Living accomodation and galley were in a large superstructure built aft. Armanent were twin 50 cal. fore and aft plus lesser weapons. As I recall there were about 5 in the crew and the skipper was a Master Sergeant. Our job was to ferry patrols up the great rivers, bring refugees down and conduct our own coast and river patrols seeking intelligence on Japanese movements. Our boat seemed to have an independent brief on intelligence gathering and they were very experienced in this type of work. All were of mature age and very supportive. Our patrols ranged throughout Sarawak, Brunei, British North Borneo. One journey into the hinterland of Br.N.B. was to seek intelligence from the Dyak's of the region on the Sandakan-Ranau death march. We found a lot of evidence in the form of family photos of POW's and we saw haversacks and other items of equipment. We were told tales of the dreadful conditions suffered by these unfortunate prisoners. The up river Dyaks hated the Japanese with a great intensity as they had mistreated their women during their occupation. Together with Australian Commandos we would go up river as far as we could go in the boat and on some occasions I recall we went further up river in native praus or long boats which had no freeboard and were very narrow. The Dyaks handled them with great skill but with all our gear on you felt as though you were balanced on a shelf ready to tip over into the water at any time and if the craft did tip over we would sink like a stone. Sometimes it was very hairy and our trepidation would amuse the Dyaks no end. The patrols were very small parties and were for the purpose of intelligence only, not search and destroy missions.

For the latter we would take upriver larger parties whom we would leave there or wait and pick them up a day or so later. Sometimes we would go to pick up parties and take them to other points up river in response to signal we would receive. I am sure that some of the places we penetrated few white men had ever been. The Dyaks were very supportive and their respect without humility to "orang puteh" was truly wonderful. It was evident in their attitude that they had never been exploited by white man, however they had been exploited by the Japanese and later by missionaries and the Malayan Government. The Dyaks we worked with were Ibans, Muruts, Dusins, Punans, Kayans. Some of the headwater Dyaks were very primitive but very clean with high morals. They were in the main pagan spirit worshippers with an amazing ability to know what was going on by using their own type of ESP. I witnessed some truly amazing incidents which to them was common place and they always seemed amused at our reaction - their attitude was "doesn't everyone have this second sight". The Dyaks are usually very small, rarely over 5ft 3ins tall, beautifully proportioned and very muscular. The Punan are the smallest and possibly the Iban can be the tallest. Their skin is generally a creamy color, very smooth and except for their long waistlength black hair they grow little other body hair. The Iban particularly can be heavily tattooed from head to foot in most intricate designs especially on the throat and face. Their ears can be long and elongated due to blockof wood and bones worn in huge holes in their lobes, some noses are also pierced. Their clothing and headresses are incredibly complex and colorful using brightly colored materials, feathers and human hair. Their headhunting parangs or long knives are decorated accordingly. The women are very beautiful and dainty and extremely modest edspecially when bathing in the river which they do frequently. They live in huge longhouses as communities and underneath are their pigs that consume all debris so that the kampongs are very clean and hygienic. They were a very happy people and providing you behaved yourself and respected their customs you would come to no harm whilst with them. The Muruts which were castal and more civilised had flat faces and a strange pigmentation loss in their skin giving them a blotchy appearance. Because I was freckled the Iban used to chide me jokingly as "sama sama Murut".

The Dyaks principal hunting weapon was the Sumpitan or blowpipe. The Sumptan can be from 4 to 6 feet long, beautifully handcrafted and decorated with silk thread and human hair as are their headhunting parangs or long knives

Darts are fired from the blowpipe by a seemingly simple puff of the cheeks. Iwould be the butt of their jokes when I could not do better than a trickle of the dart out the end of the blowpipe whereas the smallest, puniest tribesman could easily fire a dart 15 dapats, which is a pace or arm length or approx. 45-50 feet and embed it deep into a piece of wood. For stunning birds in flight they would use a dart which had a hard resin knob like a marble fixed to it. Another dart was triangular shape and quite large. This was for bigger game.They would apply a brown paste to the end of the dart which was made from the Upas tree sap. This was a deadly poison with no known antidote. When handling these darts you had to make sure you didn't prick or scratch yourself. Another preparation acted like Curare used by the South American Indians. This poison paralysed the victim for a period.

When I was with the US Army we had on board a Malay youth named Ahmit. He was about 15 years of age and a Muslim. During the Japanese occupation he had been very active in harassing the Japanese and was a fund of knowledge when it came to rivers and places we had to visit. Whilst he spoke rreasonable English he and I would converse only in Malay as it helped me to resurrect my schoolday knowledge of that language.One night way upriver I was talking to Ahmit about the Dyaks and said to him that when I was a boy stories used to be told of "the Wild men of Borneo". He replied that there was a wild man of Borneo and he claimed to have seen them when once he fled up into the mountains to escape the Japs. He said that they had a lot of hair, short tails, were entirely naked and lived in trees and that they were known as Uluots and that they were very firce and warlike and feared by the Dyaks. Ulu means forrest or bush but what the ot signifies I do not know. He added that they were very shy and rarely showed themselves to others and travelled in very small parties, possibly families and he believed that they were cannibals. I laughed and said "Are you sure you didn't see orang utan - the man of the jungle. His very serious reply to me was "Does orang utan use bow and arrow, Tuan". Because I was foolish and laughed at his description of the Wild Men of Borneo he would not be drawn again on the subject. I have no doubt that what he saw he believed to be Uluots. Later I spoke to a very old Chinese gentleman of what Ahmit had told me and he confirmed the description and said whilst he had never seen Ululot he knew of old Malay and Chinese traders who had seen them many years before in the mountains around the headwaters

of the great rivers. He described them also as being Chinese or Mongol looking with very high prominent cheek bones and slanted eyes. The deep interior of Borneo is very rugged especially up in the mountains and anything ccould be hiding there.

Whilst I was with the Americans we ranged from the Limbang and Lawas Rivers in Sarawak right up the coast to the Padas River in Br. North Borneo and all in betweenOur jumping off points for various operations were from the towns of Limbang, Lawas, Weston, Beaufort, Jessleton and Kudat to name principal towns. One of our jobs was to go upriver in BNB and bring back a party of Javanese slave prostitutes that the Japanese had been holding aand we handed them over to the Army Intelligence and Provosts so they could interrogate them. One was a young attractive girl named Kandi and I talked with her on the journey back. Another journey of several days we went deep into the interior up a great river and stayed at a Dyak village tied up to the bank. It was obviousl@y that we were waiting for someone. Late one afternoon just before tropical dark fell a voice called out from the river bank. It wasa person dressed in jungle green. He was largely uncommunicative but it appeared thart he had been parachuted into the jungle some weeks before and had become "lost" - or so he said. He didn't speak Malay and really was not very well equipped for the job he was sent to do. Whether he was English or Australian I did not know. We assumed that he was SRD or AIB. Even the skipper was in the dark and we really couldn't be bothered with him. Next morning before we left to take him down river I spoke to the Pehghulu or headman concerning thios character as nothing is hidden from the Dyak. He said he knew about him some time ago. There is no comunication as such between the up river tribes and each valley can speak a different dialect yet they seem to have a psychic communication. There are no message drums as such. When you question them on matters such as this you simply get a smile and they say "We know, Tuan", and that is that. It appeared that the Dyaks in the area where he parachuted in were a bit worried about him falling out of the sky and being spirit worshippers just watched him and as only they can do had him going round in circles without actually contacting him. When they knew that we were coming to pick him up they guided him down the river again nwithout any actual contact. You have to work with these wonderful people to actual know what I am saying.

Another time up river at the topend of BNB at a remote Dyak village we came upon a strange character who just walked in from the jungle. He was known to the Dyaks as he had been a regular visitor in the area for some years. He was a tall, lean Moro Filipina dressed as though he came out of a piratre story book. He told us actually he was a Moro pirate who with others had been coming over to BNB for many years. He claimed to be working for U.S. Intelligence and had heard that there were Americans in the area. He was swarthy, had long black hair tied back by a red bandana huge gold earings were in his ears and he wore a colourful sik shirt and waistcoat with black skintight pants tucked into knee high black leather seaboots. A wide cummerband was around his waist in which were stuck a pistol, knife and a huge pirate type sword. He was a very arrogant, swash-buckling character fluent in Englash, Dyak dialect, Malay and Chinese. It was quite unbelievable for him to just walk in out of the jungle. Apart from what I have related he didn't give much away to us and I have no doubt that he was mixed up with U.S. Intelligence in some way. Whether or not he was genuine Moro pirate I don't know but he was certainly dressed for the part and created a lasting impression on a 20 year old matelot. After some hours with us he just drifted back into the jungle saying he had a fast boat on a nearby beach.

Another mission was to go deep upriver in BNB and pick up a bunch of armed Dyaks, Chinese and Malays togrther with some very colourfully dressed Dyaks from the interior who I know now where being brought done to "civil-isation" to be questioined on Jap strength and location. They were bring accompanied by a white Army person of indeterminate rank who was a non Auatralian and he was uncommunicative. Now I realise it was one of the AGAS operations. Another time we took back deep into tjhe interior another party of Dyaks who were unaccompanied. With them was a very old man who was being taken back to his village after having been isolated from it by the Japs for a longtime. From somewhere he had obtained a very old weapon which had no firing pin. Our engineer gave hin a piece of metal and a file and by hand he fashioned a perfect firing pin after working laboriously for hours. He was apagan spirit worshipper jungle Dyak with no formal education but his toolmaking skills were amazing. To gain "orang puteh" approval and applause for his skill gave him great happiness as his wide toothless grin showed. If only our peers today were of such a nature as these so called "savages".

I well remember going up river to find a sawmill belonging to the British North Borneo Company. It had a large sign, a little the worse for wear, on the river bank. The riverbank and water were chock-a-block wwith logs and in the water they were so close and jammed up you could walk over them and as the clear bank further down was steep and muddy we tied up against the logs. It was late in the afternoon and villiagers came down calling out "ujan datang" which meant that it was raining up in the mountains and would soon be raining here and they river would rise 20ft or more very rapidly. Thankful for this information we moved downstream and tied up to a treeleaving plenty of line. The river rose alright that night and we were kept awake by logs banging against the hull. At daylight the river had gone down again but out from our ramp was a veritable raft of debris, dead carcasses etc.. We had of course tied up with the ramp facing upriver as logs and debris would damage the screws if we faced downriver.. It was here if I remember rightly that somone left the bow door down one night. I was the first up as I was duty breakfast cook. The shower was in the well deck aft and I scrambled down the ladder into the well to be confronted by a huge crocodile who had boarded over the ramp overnight. I don't think I used the ladder to regain the deck. It was quite hilarious trying to persuade the croc to go back over the ramp into the river. If you have ever had to try and shepherd a bobtail goanna out of your house or shed with a broomstick you can imagine what it was like with a huge croc. Because of the commotion we caused the village to turn out to help - they thought it was hilarious as they have an excellent sense of humor. On some of the operations we would stay in the Iban and Kayan Dyaks longhouses and would have to sit with them all night drinking their potent brew. As I remember the Chinese used to ply us with a rice wine called Sumsu and the Dyaks with an even more potent brew which I think was called Arack. They could toss it down with gay abandon and to refuse a refill would indeed be dishonourable. It was much like Vodka though sour and more fiery. I was fortunate enough to be invited to witness a "Feast of the Heads". The heads were Japanese taken in a Dyak raid. Despite their hatred and disdain for the enemy they still maintained their pagan tradition of caring for the head. The heads were mounted on a pointed stick in a ring around a fire. On their arrival in the kampong they were "given food" by stuffung the mouths with rice. The fire was to keep the heads warm. All this was so that the heads wouldn't be angry. Dyak maidens also

combed the hair of the head. It may sound strange but the Dyaks were very serious about the spirit welfare of the severed head. We sat around eating and drinking while all sorts of entertainment was presented. It was a very noisy, riotous night. When heads are taken without loss to the headhunters the Dyaks raise their voices in a terrifying warcry. It is a falsetto that rises and rises becoming louder and louder. It is a blood curdling sound. That night has lived long in my memory. Those pagan Dyaks were wonderful hosts and very impressive human beings despite their pagan ways.

The mighty rivers of Borneo were a maze and woe betide you if you took the wrong turning. Mangroves can well stretch from the rivers edge inland for miles and be completely impassable. One morning early we went along the coast of BNB and entered a river mouth. These mouths were difficult to see even from close up due to the massive amount of vegetation. Through the mouth we journeyed up a short way and inadvertently took the wrong turning as we were tricked by its reasonable width. Some miles up it we rounded a sharp bend and found ourselves being fired upon from both banks from two parties of Japanese. We didn't have time to return fire. The skipper was a genius in rivercraft. He was a wiry New Yorker from Brooklyn with accent to match. He threw one engine into reverse and gave it full bore with the wheel hard over. The noise was deafening and as we turned we clipped the bank with our ramp top swiping off jungle like a bulldozer. All the greenery fell into our welldeck and forward vision over the ramp was limited. We were 66ft long and I suppose the river was only 70-80 ft wide at that point. We made the bend again and fled around it. I think our manouvre had unnerved the Japs because looking back as we went into the bend thay were nowhere in sight. Down the tributary we went still full bore back to the main stream and on with our mission which possibly was an independent recon.

I didn't ever take much notice of who came aboard on our trips when they were very small parties. Sometimes it was only one person and they would stick to the wheelhouse. When we took larger parties of half a dozen or more they would be down in the welldeck and we would go down and talk to them. Most times they were Australian Cav. Commandoes, sometimes ther larger parties would be Australian infantry and artillery. Teams of Army Provosts and Intelligence would go up river to question prisoners who were taken just for that purpose. The very small parties we took we assumed

were SRD or AIB and sometimes they would be accompanied by a Chinese or Malay. Once we took upriver a party of Indonesion soldiers. They were tough nuggetty troops.

I recall a party of Japanese prisoners of war that we had to go up river and bring down and hand them over to Provosts of Ist Aust Corps. Australian soldiers had brought them in to a village for us to pick up. We arrived downriver at the POW stockade at lunch time and the Provosts fed us and we saw first hand how they interrogated them - quite strongly but nothing the interrogation the Japs conducted as when I was with the Americans I saw evidence of the Japanese brutality especially on civilians, men and women. One of the prisoners we brought down was a officer and he gave me his visiting card, His name was Yamasuki Gosh, the card which I had for many years - he was fluent inEnglish and as I was his guard went to great lengths to convince me that he was a non combatant officer, and that he would very much like to visit Australia. All this went down with me like a lead balloon. He was not very subtle in his approach and got short shrift from me. His troops were a sorry, smelly lot. We were warned not to engage a prisoner in conversation, just let them talk if they wanted and listen as good intelligence can often be gained this way. He really was a pain as he wouldn't shup up. On one of our journeys up river in BNB we were tied up at a town whose name escapes me, however, it was sawmill town with a large Chinese populatioin. On our second day there we were visited by an elderly Chinese who was the manager of the sawmill for the British North Borneo Company. He invited us to his home that night for dinner. I recall that we walked to his home along a jungle road that was overhung with frangipani trees. It was about dusk and the fragrance was over whelming.The jungle was truly beautiful with its staghorns and orchid high up in the trees, Tropical fruit grew inabundance. The smell of the jungle was cloying and sweet, heavy with the scent of decaying vegetable matter which formed a thick blanket of compost over the ground. His home was high up on stilts with an open plan and no windows just louvred wooden shutters that were open to catch the evening breeze. His wife was a very gracious lady and she had cooked up a sumptious feast. I always remember the huge river prawns that were heavily spiced and we commenced the meal with these followed by a pork stir fry type meal that contained a multitude of greens and tropical fruit. He plied us with copious glasses of a Chinese wine that was very potent. Throughout the meal he apologised to us for

the "miserable food" he had to offer us because of the privations they had sufferred from the Japanese occupation who he said not only raped their women but their land and gardens. Goodness knows what magnificent food they ate before the occupation but we agreed that it was a feast fit for kings. To be fair he and his wife had gone to great lengths to feed us this way in a effort to show their deep appreciation of our act of liberation. Their son was living with them and he had been living in the jungle, high up in the mountains, fighting the enemy during the occupation.. They were wonderful people and we left early the next morning and they came down to see us off. It was a sad occasion to leave them. On two other occasions one of the Americans took me to visit a Chinese family in Brunei Town when we were there for repairs. This Chinese man would have been about 50 and he was a businessman. We would both stay overnight in a double room that had down mattresses and pillows. The family even provided pajamas, dressing gowns and slippers. Their dinner at night was also fantastic and for breakfast we were plied with boiled eggs and toast all cooked by their three teenage daughters who were very beautiful in their Chong Sams. During the occupation the three girls were inland so to be safe from the attentions of the enemy. The whole family were very greatful for our invasion. Their name was Noong, pronounced Nu-ong as I remember. It appeared that our boat, before I joined it, had brought thre daughters back downriver with others who had been in hiding and the father, to show his gratitude, always invited a couple of the crew to dinner should they be in Brunei. I was fortunate indeed to be taken along. Mr Noong had been active in the underground harassing the Japanese during the occupation and after dinner he had great stories to tell us. The daughters were very affectionate and caring towards us which was a little hard to take but their attention was purely platonic and we kept it that way, to have done anything else would have been an insult to their gracious hospitality.

Once in BNB we were taking a small party of special troops upriver from a town that was right in the front line. I think from memory it was Beaufort because we were there when Starcevich of Grass Patch WA won his VC. We were moored in the shelter of a high bank and near us was an artillery battery of 25 pounders that engaged in harassing , sporadic fire against the entrenched Japs. All day and all night these guns thundered and cracked All the guns would fire together continually for several minutes then dead calm would fall - just when you got used to the silence the guns

would start up again this time each gun would fire independently in rapid fire and then staggered fire then they would all fire intermittently and stop suddenly. It was a pattern that was psychologically damaging to the Japanese morale as just when they thought that they could imerge from cover from the barrage it would start up again. At night it drove us crazy and even though you got used to it knowing that it was our own guns it certainly psychologically harrassed us. We were on standby during the day and it was great to go of and do our missions. It was this time I think that we took a small party of Australian Commandos up river behind the perimeter and they wanted to observe some Jap movement and assess strength. We dropped them off up a small tributary and hid to await their return. These trips would be done very slowly and it was surprising how muffled our big engines could be. One of the Americans and I accompanied the party up a small mountain. From the top we could look down on a Japanese encampment in a jungle clearing. It was "recreation" time, Japanese style, and what we saw was sickening. There were Japanese in a circle surrouding a mob of small native pigs who were trying to get through the circle. They were terrified and their squeals could be clearly heard as could the laughter and cheers from the Japanese soldiers as they systematically hacked at the pigs ears particularly trying obviously to cut them off. They had long knives and swords and blood was spurting out from the demented pigs ears and heads. We were there to observe only and we made our way silently back to the boat where a signal was sent and later as we chugged down the river we heard planes go over and the thump of bombs and gunfire came to our ears. No doubt this action put a stop to the barbarous blood sport those crazy people were indulging in. The pigs too no doubt were put out of their misery. The hardbittern commandos were visibly affected by what we had seen.

One of my trips was with two of the American crew was to go up one of the great rivers in a U.S. Navy PT boat as guides as we knew the river. They were to go up on a mission of some sort and wanted to know the way in because it was tricky. Some of the river mouths were hard to detect from the coast line and once inside it would open up to several offshoots and if you went up the wrong one it coukld be disastrous. It was an interesting trip in the PT boat especially in the open sea as they were very fast, very noisy, cramped and uncomfortable in the ride especially at

speed against a chop. The skipper would say "Take hold there" when making a turn and you certainly would have to grab a stanchion or rail or end up in a heap in a corner. As I recall it had four engines. Two were Packards that were used in short bursts to get out of trouble fast. I was told that at full throttle the engines lives were limited and were thus only brought in to operation on desperate occasions. I was told that they used them to get high speed up to jump harbour booms. Those boats used for in harbour raids had a reinforced bow.

On one mission we stayed in a Dyak village where they were celebrating some occasion. The river up to the village was alive with crocodiles and the banks were lined with raucous monkeys who would dance up and down on the trees and shake the branches violently in their protest at us disturbing their jungle silence. Their noise was deafenening coupled with disturbed bird cries. Even though the sound of our motors were reasonably muffled it was possibly a noise that was entirely foreign to these jungle creatures. Crocodiles were on both bank s and at our approach they would leave them and disappear into the water. It was interesting to see how fast a crocodile can move over a mudflat from a standing start. Sometimes an exicited monkey would run out on to a thin tree branch and his dancing and bobbing would dip the branch near to the water surface. There would be a swirl of water and a crocodile snout would appear, lunge out with gaping jaws and snatch the dancing monkey off the tree branch. We took good care not to lean out too far over the sides as I had no doubt that we could be taken too in a mere instant. Some of them were huge and would be basking on a mud bank or mangrove flat as we would round a bend. We would shoot at them to pass the time away and when we reached the village the headman asked us not to shoot them as it was declaring war on "buayer" and in turn they would declare war on the villagers. They worshipped the crocodile in this particular village and claimed that they never harmed the villagers who bathed in the river daily. We witnessed a pagan ceremony using the crocodile. A party of Dyak warriors went into the water and came out carrying a large crocodile which appeared to be sedated. They told us that they tickled the crocs stomach and this mesmerised him, however, I did observe the Dyaks strewing the water with pieces of tree bark and I believe that it was this bark that sedated any croc. nearby as I also saw fish floating on the surface. They set up the sedated croc. in a clearing near the longhouse and proceeded to hold a ritual feast. The animal was stroked and patted and covered in flowers and fruit. They

made lots of noise and drank their fiery brew - which we had to also. Huge amounts of wonderful food was consumed. All night the crocodile remained motionless. I think their stroking helped to maintain the suspension. Early in the morning with great ceremony they walked back into the river carrying the crocodile which promptly sank out of sight and I assumed swam away. The headman told me that they never harmed any of his village and they knew each crocodile by name. It was a very impressive ceremony.

I recall the day the atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. We were well out in the South China Sea off the tip of British North Borneo doing a recce as it had been said that we were to go to Kota Bharu on the northern corner of Malaya near the Thailand border with a party who were to strike inland to the highlands and link up with communist insurgents and then go down through Penang to Malacca to destroy the Japanese coastal defences there as Ally ships were not able to get through the Straits of Mallaca. There was thought that this force from Borneo would link up with a force from Burma. Kota Bharu was where the Jaranese entered WW2 some half an hour before they attacked Pearl Harbor. They landed on the Beach of Passionate Love and moved down the Malaysian Pensula to Singapore. I think we were doing a trial run that day. The skipper called us all to the wheelhouse and told us that the US Airforce had dropped a huge bomb on the Japanese mainland and thousands had been killed and we were to return immediately to Br. North Borneo. It was here some time later having offloaded some troops that a Australian soldier came running out of the jungle calling out to us that the war was over and the Japanese were surrending. We didn't believe him at first but when we got it confirmed by our own wireless there was much rejoicing. We were recalled to the Brunei base. It was around this time that an Army officer on board one day mentioned that if I liked it could be arranged for me to join the British Borneo Civil Administration Unit that was being formed and he could make immediate arrangements for me to be discharged from the Navy there in Borneo and go straight into the BBCAU. It sounded very attractive and as I liked the country and got on well with the people I was considering the move when we returned to Brunei and I was returned to my unit.

One day we were advised that some of us were to go with a force from 1ST Aust. Corps to the Celebes to quell a communist uprising there when a cable arrived from Australia telling me that my mother had suffered a stroke and was in hospital and my father had made a request that I be

sent home immediatly on compassionate grounds. I was given about one hour to get ready to board a POW plane from Singapore that would be landing in Brunei to pick me up. I was not allowed to take aanything but a change of clothes, my weapons, haversacks etc. I had to leave behing several beautifully decorated parangs given to me by Dyaks, also a lot of souvenirs including a hand made Chinese type woven hat of which I was very fond and wore it when with the Americans as a protection from the relentness tropical sun. I boarded the plane ina whirlwind of activity, failing to say goodbye to most of my shipmates of several years. From Brunei I flew to Biak where I was offloaded for several days then on to Merauke in Dutch New Guinea, flying low over dense jungle all the way with an very occasional village clearing. It was a troop transport - I think American with aluminium benches along three sides. Freezing cold, hard alumiunium seats and we flew through a tropical storm. I was asleep on the bench and I woke up up ssomewhere near the roof of the plane as it dropped several hundrend feet like a stone. Lightning was all around us and the thunder was deafening. I thudded to the floor of the plane with all the stuffing knocked out of me. It was very scary and left us all shaken up as we flew out of the storm into clear skies. After a stay in Merauke I caught a RAAF plane to Brisbane. I was dressed in faily well worn jungle clothing, needed a haircut and my skin was burnt dark brown from the tropical sun and no one wanted to know me in Brisbane. Eventually I got an RTO to believe that I was Navy and they sent me to HMAS Moreton. Here arrangements were made to send me to Sydney to board the P & O liner Otranto which was a troop ship. By this time I was heartily sick of having to explain who I was several times a day. I was treated as ~~some freak who go away~~ some sort of freak who would go away and make their life a bit easier.

I proceeded back to Fremantle on this once famous liner. The food was unbelievably bad and conditions on board very poor. Troops on board were a very motely lot - including me. No one knew what to make of me dressed like an unkempt soldier complete with battered slouch hat and full webbing gear, .303 rifle, bayonet and jungle machete but claining to be RAN. Army personel can identify themselves by a paybook - sailors only by being dressed like sailors. When we reached Fremantle we filed down the gangplank a Red Cross lady tried to shanghai me as she seem convinced that I was a repatriated POW and she wanted to take me to the RGH at Hollywood. There were some ex POW on board and I directed her to them. I couldn't get any-

one else on the wharf to listen to me so I grabbed my kit and walked over the foot bridge into Fremantle and to my fathers place of business. For a moment he didn't recognise the dishevelled figure who presented itself. He knew I was on my way home but I had been unable since arriving in Brisbane to tell him when. I don't think walking in on him helped his health in any way. I found that my mother was home recuperating and he phoned to let her know I had arrived.

Next day dressed in pusser rig (my clothes had been sent home long before) I reported to HMAS Leeuwin. They were nonplussed with my presence and didn't know what to do with me - a special service rating in a general service depot, especially as I hadn't been drafted there, was unthinkable. I was asked if I could drive a horse and cart (couldn't every naval commando). I said I could as my brother had had a dairy farm in the 30's. So they made me OC Sullage Removal HMAS Leeuwin. My job was to look after the stable, hitch the horse to the sullage cart and tour the depot collecting rubbish and swill and load it onto the rubbish truck then accompanying the truck to the Fremantle tip. That was it. We would have a few beers and a counter lunch at the Davilak Hotel then back to the depot. That was it - I played billiards in the afternoon. As I had no hammock I slept on a loan mattress on top of the lockers. I still have the loan mattress. I didn't attend any parades or do any watch duty. I was largely ignored as long as I drove my horse and cart and collected the sullage. Three weeks later I was piped to attend the OOD on the quarter deck where I was advised that they had discovered that I shouldn't be at HMAS Leeuwin as I was a special service rating and I was being transferred to HMAS Leewin Leeuwin 2 which was previously the Freshwater Bay Yatch Club on the Swan River. This was a special service depot where personel were RMS (rendering mines safe), SRD, Small Ships, Coastal Patrol, Coast Watchers, etc. All officers were RANVR Wavy Navy and were in the majority. It was very low key. I and another sailor who had been a coastwatcher were given a job refitting launches of the coastal patrol so that they could be handed back to their civilian owners. This was great - no parades - no watches - home every night. I walked home or rode my bike. The C.O. of HMAS Leeuwin 2 was the owner of one of the launches being refitted and he found that the Navy would only paint the hulls navy grey. He and the previous owners did not want grey hulls so he convenced Navy Office to compensate all owners so that they could arange for the hulls to be painted privately. So my mate and got a weekend job - £20 between us for painting the hulls

white with paint supplied by the owners. I had gone to Leeuwin 2 on Oct 26 1945 and when the depot was being decommissioned I was drafted to HMAS Leeuwin in Fremantle on Jan21 1946. From there I was sent to HMAMSL 704 dumping ammunition and war surplus in a trough past Rottnest Island. Our skipper was RANVR Special Service two and half ringer. We got our food sent from Leeuwin and mail otherwise no contact. Each night one of us would stay on board and the rest would go home, likewise at weekends. We would sail just before dawn around to the ammunition jetty in Cockburn Sound and load up from railway wagons and we would return to our pen under the Fremantle railway bridge about 4pm. This continued until May 1946 except I was at one time transferred to HMAGPV 593 and our job was there to winch up an arsenic coated ASDIC cable from the ocean bed between Fremantle and Rottnest. It was a submarine detector of sorts. It had something to do with RMS as our officer on board was from that unit.

I guess it was a great advantage really being Special Service once they got it sorted out.

Training Notes Far North Queensland 1944-5

When we moved up to Far North Queensland our Commando training began in earnest. Endless route marches, along roads, and excursions through Queensland jungle which can be as damp, as muddy as any other tropical jungle. Stinging bushes, "wait-a-while" barbs would tear your tough army clothing if they didn't tear your flesh. Leaches, ticks, stinging tree ants were plentiful. Physical training and assault courses were on all the time. We had Army instructors, tough veterans who knew their job. We were given training in unarmed combat and silent killing with our hands and knives. We had been issued with a commando knife that had a double edged blade and a knuckle duster handle. We were taught to use this blade up so that a stabbing motion to the enemy body could be brought up so that the knuckle duster struck their throat or chin or raked the face. Likewise an initial strike with the duster across the face and throat could on the downswing become a stabbing. We were trained to become proficient in dealing with the enemy from behind and several ways to break a neck in the event of us having to employ our training. The instructors would dwell on going in and doing it fast - not to think about it - they stressed constantly -"that he who hesitates is lost". They stressed constantly that if it is your intention to kill - kill, don't maim or would, otherwise you will be killed.
Heady stuff for 18-19 year olds.
Our weapon training was in Thompson machine gun, Austen machine gun, Owen gun, Bren gun, an over the shoulder anti gun whose name I have fogotten. And we were trained in mortars. We were taught how to make Bangalore Torpedos from lengths of galvanised water pipe. These were packed tight with explosive, fitted with a detonator and fuse and were useful in blowing up barriers and obstacles. They were particu larly useful in demolishing barb wire entanglements.
We fired all the weapons that we were trained in and learnt to strip them down and reassemble at speed in all conditions.
One day out in the jungle a party of us were engaged in felling trees using F.I.D. (fuse instaneous detonating). We were on a ridge and below us, unbeknown to us, another party had laid a Bangalore torpedo which blew up. I was flubg backwards peppered with gravel and couldn't hear for some time. Everyone thought it was hiliarious.
We were thoroughly trained in explosives. Matches Fuzee, Service Safety Fuse mk.2, Service Detonator No.27, No.3 Electric Detonator, Mk.7 Service Exploder, Fuses Electric No.31 Mk.1, and in explosives such as Guncotton wetand dry, T.N.T., Gelignite, 808, Ammonal, Aluminatol, F.I.D., Cordex, Primer Cord. We were instructed in how to make up, set and blow cutting charges for iron and steel plates, rounds and rectangles, I foot thick steel, 10 inch timber and 20 inch masonary and taught Lockerlauts Rule of Thumb Method to select the size of charge. Bore hole charges, blowing craters in very hard ground to very soft soil or mud. Camouflet charges using gelignite - the resultant chamber from this initial explosion is called a "Camouflet" and into this is poured Ammonal over which clay is packed. It was stressed on us that we should never try to blow more than a 20 foot crater. Usually these craters would be blown in roads to slow the enemy down. We

were shown how to blow bridges, houses, etc.. When we put what we were being taught into practice we thought it was great. A course in Booby-trap setting was completed. Anti-personel - tiny traps that fired a .303 bullet up to full scale landmines. We were trained to fit them to doors - windows, under objects cuch as books,ornaments, etc.. In houses - in satchels, cig arette packets - almost anything. I well remember going through houses later in Borneo and being very wary of anything lying on the floor or table. One house had a bottle of Japanese rice whisky on a table and no way would I pick it up in case it was booby trapped. Traps could be set up across a road using a trip wire that when activated or tripped it pulled out a little split pin allowing a bolt to strike a .303 cartridge which went off igniting a block of explosive strapped to a rock or tree. A pull igniter also was used on trip wires and this had a flash cap and detonator in the adaptor which was placed in a block of explosive. Anti-personel switch or ground spikes could be set on a pathway and immediately anyone stepped on it it would explode sending a spike up through the foot and into the lower body. A Shrapnel Mine Mk. 1/1 with time pencil was another useful anti personel device we were taught to use. Explosive material is usually quite safe to handle if sensible care is taken. One of the most dangerous is F.I.D. as this is so instaneous it is a fuse that becomes a lethal explosion. Wrapped around a tree or wood bridge support it will have a tremendous cutting action. A piece of this inserted intead of a detonator will produce an instaneous explosion. We were instructed to do this with a bomb that has to have a pin pulled which will normally give a several seconds delay. The idea was to throw the bomb at the enemy with the pin in. When it did not go off they would see that the thrower had forgotten to pull the pin. They would pick it up and pull the pin so they could throw it back. They didn't know what hit them. A popular bomb used was one that was for anti tank attack. Later in Borneo around Beaufort the Japanese would step out on to a jungle path with their hands up in surrender, however, their elbows were clamped to their sides. When a soldier moved forward to take them prisOner they would take their elbows from their side and a grenade fitted with an instaneous fuse fitted would tumble to the ground and up would go the Jap and the capturer or capturers. It was of course a suicide mission like the Kamakazis.

We undertook an Army Engineers Course in Field Work placing obstacles both protective and tactical. Instructions were given in A/. Triple Dannert Wire, T>D>W> or concertined wire. B/. Double Apron Fence, D.A.F. C/.Tank Traps using blocks of concrete which were specially cast with a sloping top. They were placed with some higher than others so a tank would mount them and be trapped. Lengths of railway line were put vertically in the ground some with a lean all ways, concrete "coffins", slit trenches, weapon pits, Trobruk Trace W.P., machine gun pits, Bren gun trench, breastwork and revetting using sandbags or A.R.C. mesh and saplings. Camouflage was taught in three ways, viz. Screening, Blending and Deceiving. Use of colour, disruptive patterning. How to park a truck so it will blend in to the scenery. The use of camouflage nets and natural foliage. We were taught about Bailey Bridges, pontoons and piers, cord roads and the laying of metal

roadways on beaches and swamps. We were trained to drive and handle many different vehicles from jeeps to very large six wheelers. Amphibious jeeps and the American amphibous truck D.U.K.W.S.. Some instruction was given in Bren carriers and earth moving equipment. Should any of these vehicles be left on a beach during a landing without a driver we had to know immediatly how to drive them off the beach to clear the area. Instruction was given to us on how to recover a bogged vehicle. We were all of course proficient in handling small water craft. I doubt if any other sailors underwent such intensive and rigirious training.

Patrol work was a large part of the training and here is an extract from my diary which indicates the activity level in this regard. :- Tues May 16 (Ca.1944) Arose early after being dismissed from our usual double had to get ready for a route march exercise. The march was through scrub and S/Lt. Atchison gave me charge of one section and Joe Pollock the other and we carried on on either side of Greg Heenan and Mr, Atchison. Crossed a creek bed as in actual warfare then called a halt. Mr. Atchison then took Joes section plus Greg up a gully and set them in fortifications. My job was to get my section past the "enemy". I sent out two scouts, Tilly and Smith and then went forward myself. Only one of my men got through which was not surprising as it was an impossible task, We went on then to the top of a mountain. I was feeling it terribly and just flopped. Coming back down I could hardly make it and eventually Frank told me to go back to camp. I did and after Butler making me hang around I saw the Doctor and he ordered me to hospital. Got my gear and arrived at another R.A.P. where I was thought to have Malaria. On to 109 C.C.S. (Casuality Clearing Station) where I was admitted and a blood slide taken. Major Burns examined me and took down all my past history. Best examination I have had. Bad chest trouble, reccurrence of Broncho Pneumonia I think. Had a good night."

^Another reference in June in the Diary refers to a two day patrol "Patrol returns covered in leeches and ticks".

Another course of instruction was titled ^Communication in Combined Operations". The American and British systems were covered and ~~gen~~ GIVING details of the communication network and procedure phrases. We had all had previous training in W/T, Semaphore, lamp etc at HMAS Assault. A further course was titled "Making a Camp" and had three headings. A/. Permanent camp. B/. Semi Permanent camp. C/. Temporary or Bivouacs. ^Sub headings covered :- Water supply, acreage, extensions, drainage, communication, roads, proximity of camp to suitable training area, sanitary conditions, defense, proximity to firewood and fuel. Positioning of cook houses and ration stores away from living quarters, guard room position, parade ground in centre, motor transport site, latrines position important, hygiene, flies, mosquitos and rats.

In our camp at Brunei we had rats who would come down from the palm trees at night and get under ones "mossie" net. I turned over one night and got bitten on my arm.

We had experienced Army instructors and Army drill sergeants and Regimental Sergeant Majors. Very tough and uncompromising people generally. We were very fit but bored silly because of the time we had spent in active training and the often

cancellation of overseas operations. When Lt.Commander McKauge joined us as C.O. he called us undisciplined rabble and brought in an Army R.S.M. to "fix us up". He would double us round and round the parade or "bullring" with full 70lb packs and our rifles over our heads. It didn't faze us at all and he became as I recall very angry. Some of the boys stole a jeep from the pool and went AWOL into Cairns. Unfortunately the jeep turned over and one of our group died. This was the worst incident. Many will remember McKauges driver - no names -no pack drill - taking McKauge into Cairns where he lived (and still does I believe) and when it was time to drive him back he was so drunk that McKauge had to put him in the back seat and drive the jeep back himself. He had a black thunderous look on his face. At the time I was McKauges batman, a job, I loathed. He was a strange man in my opinion- a very experienced combined operation officer who had seen much action in landings, both covert and overt in Europe. His problem was he tried to treat us like his British troops that he had been with for a long time and it just didn't work. However everything settled down eventually and we all got on fairly well.
When one looks back I plus others were in some sort of training from 1942 to 1945 asnd this training had covered all aspects of Navy, Army and Commando work, much of it very rigorous. Naval personel generally, including many Assault Association members who were not Beach Party would not be aware of the wide training some of us received.
Certainly much wider than most service men I would think.