

## **AUSTRALIAN ARMY AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC: 1942-45**

### **DON'T DO IT - SOME ADVICE FROM VETERANS Lieutenant Colonel Glenn Wahlert**

At the Army history conference, one veteran of the 9th Division's landings at Lae and Finschhafen in 1943 offered the following advice regarding amphibious operations: 'Don't do it. If you have to do it ... ensure you have overwhelming superiority [in all three environments—land, sea and air]'. This sage counsel prompted discussion at the conference on what constituted a successful amphibious landing. For example, why were the command and administrative arrangements for the OBOE operations at Tarakan Island, Brunei Bay and Balikpapan better planned, coordinated and executed than those at Lae and Finschhafen? The AIF was, of course, more experienced at amphibious operations by 1945 and had obviously learnt by their mistakes in previous landings. But experience alone did not guarantee successful landings, even in 1945, as the abortive operation at Porton Plantation proved in June of that year. What is the formula for a successful amphibious assault and what are the lessons that we can draw on how to conduct amphibious operations some fifty years after the 7th and 9th Division landings at Borneo?

To answer these questions, the author interviewed veterans of the Australian Army's amphibious operations during World War II from brigade commander down to private soldier (a list of contributors is to be found at the end of this chapter). The aim was to record their impressions of what made one landing a success and another a failure. These soldiers were not directly familiar with higher-level strategic or operational issues of the Borneo or Finschhafen campaigns. Rather, the strength of their knowledge lies in the tactical lessons they can impart; of how to 'get your battalion quickly and efficiently onto and over the beach ... after all, isn't that what amphibious operations are all about'.<sup>1</sup> This paper, therefore, is based on testimony from selected veterans examined against the principles of war they considered important at the tactical level. Despite the recognised limitations of oral history, especially after such a lengthy period has elapsed, the responses provide a unique, 'hands on' explanation of important events in the history of the Second World War.

All of those interviewed were remarkably frank, eager to help and possessed seemingly exceptional memories. While Mr Gullett's comment that '50 years ago is a hell of a long time' is certainly true, the amphibious landings that these men participated in made an indelible impression on them. Most could recall at will details of names, places, events and sequences that most younger men and women would forget after only a few years, let alone fifty. Perhaps George Tucker's explanation that 'being shot at and seeing good men—colleagues and mates—die around you has a way of sticking in your mind' accounts for the clarity of their contributions.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Maintenance of Morale**

'Morale' rated as among the most important factors a commander must consider during any operation. Those interviewed thought this especially the case for amphibious operations where the soldier is exposed to a foreign environment, the sea, and is reliant on another Service, the Navy, with which they had little exposure. Lieutenant Colonel Tucker, then commanding the 2/23rd Battalion, described 'maintaining morale in light of the very slow progress we were making' as his greatest challenge on D day at Tarakan.

Morale is an essential element of combat power and engenders courage, energy, determination and bold offensive spirit. It is promoted by good leadership, training and, to a lesser extent, by administrative and material conditions.<sup>3</sup> Morale is also influenced by a unit or formation's performance in battle. The battles of Kokoda and Milne Bay in November 1942, the first substantial successes by Australian ground forces against the Japanese, gave the

Australian Army a huge boost to morale by proving finally that the Japanese Imperial Army was not invincible. Morale and success feed off one another, the higher morale the more successful a unit, and the more successful a unit is the higher its morale is likely to be. As pointed out by Major General Broadbent, a veteran of Lae, Finschhafen and Brunei Bay, 'Nothing improves one's morale more than continuing success'.<sup>4</sup>

The complete success of the 9th Division's landing at Lae soon dispelled any misgivings the troops may have held about amphibious operations and increased their confidence for the follow-on assault at Finschhafen. The speed of these assaults and the relatively few casualties suffered by the division certainly improved morale. After Finschhafen 'the division appeared to be on a roll';<sup>5</sup> they were confident in their equipment, their commanders and their training for amphibious warfare, and were even developing a 'begrudging respect for the Navy and the Yanks'.<sup>6</sup> They were also happy to be 'on the winning side'; for too long the Australians had suffered 'morale shattering defeats' at the hands of the Japanese and were finally dealing the enemy 'the sort of blows we had been waiting years to deliver'.<sup>7</sup>

By the time of the Borneo (OBOE) operations in 1945, both the 7th and 9th Divisions were 'chewing at the bit'<sup>8</sup> to 'get at the Japs'.<sup>9</sup> Both divisions had spent about a year on the Tablelands in North Queensland re-equipping, training and receiving reinforcements:

By the time my battalion moved from Cairns to Morotai [staging area for the OBOE operations] we were all dead keen to kill Japanese and finish the war ... we'd spent over a year training in Queensland and everyone was more than happy for the change, even for combat ... As we went ashore at Tarakan morale and confidence were high; there was no question that we were going to achieve all of our objectives.<sup>10</sup>

In an attempt to ensure morale was kept high, the troops were not always given accurate information. Brigadier Whitehead, for example, when addressing the 2/23rd Battalion before embarking for Tarakan, gave the impression that the assault on Tarakan, 'would be a "walkover", and the whole campaign would be over in a few days'.<sup>11</sup> But, according to George Tucker:

There were enough sceptics in my outfit to entertain serious doubts about how short an operation it would be ... I didn't need the men having unrealistic expectations about the capture of Tarakan. It was a bloody and hard fought campaign, and it certainly lasted longer than a few days.

An example of how accurately the men in the battalion judged the forthcoming action in Tarakan, despite Whitehead's promise, can be seen from the following dialogue recorded in the 2/23rd Battalion's history:

'They say it'll all be over in three or four days Lofty. It hardly seems worth going over there for such short time.' 'Look mate, the only thing I've seen short in this bloody outfit is leave, cigarettes and beer. They started off with with nine months in Tobruk and they've made bloody long distance records ever since. No. The Japs don't give up that easy. I bet they'll still be shooting at us a couple of months after we land.'<sup>12</sup>

Two other aspects had an affect on morale just before the 2/23rd went into action: delivery of mail and attendance at church services. While training at Morotai and waiting for the date to commence OBOE One, the battalion had received no mail. 'Some of the men became understandably upset'.<sup>13</sup> The battalion's mail bags were eventually located; they had been mistakenly delivered to another unit. The unit's history notes that the eventual receipt of this mail was 'an indispensable part of maintaining high morale [before going] into action'.<sup>14</sup> It is also noteworthy that the departure of the battalion's chaplain only days before Tarakan caused some disquiet among the soldiers, although a new one was appointed.<sup>15</sup> Father Bryson had served with the 2/23rd for some time and had become a member of the 'family', even among the atheists and non-believers. This is, perhaps, an indication of just how strong the sense of 'family' was in the battalion. They disliked losing valued 'family' members and were initially suspicious of newcomers.

At Brunei, John Broadbent, then commanding the 2/17th Battalion, thought that:

the high morale of the troops, not only in [his] battalion but throughout the division, was essential to the success of the operation. ... The men were fit, they'd been cooped up on the Tablelands too long, and they were extremely keen to finish the war ... as we jumped from the landing craft there was a noticeable air of excitement and optimism.

These observations are supported by Colin Grace, then commanding the 2/15th Battalion for OBOE Six. During his battalion's operations in securing Muara Island, and then supporting the 2/17th Battalion, the level of morale was noticeably high. 'The men were very enthusiastic ... there was little that would stand in their way.'

Similarly, Brigadier Chilton felt that morale in the 18th Brigade was 'extremely high' for the 7th Division's landing at Balikpapan (OBOE Two). In the 2/16th Battalion 'there was ... a great feeling of self-confidence. They were going into battle again'.<sup>16</sup> And in the 2/10th Battalion:

ably led by Lieut-Colonel Daly and staff, [it had] reached a high standard in regard to morale. The unit was exceedingly fit, trained, and ready for action. All were proud of the past history of the unit, and were fully determined to do their utmost to maintain that reputation in whatever action that might lie ahead. ... They were confident of their own ability and that of their commanders.<sup>17</sup>

At the history conference, some presenters questioned the strategic imperative of the Borneo campaign,<sup>18</sup> with the question arising of how morale in the force may have been affected by the knowledge that the OBOE operations were 'unjustifiable'. Dr Stanley said that 'contemporary documents and retrospective evidence suggest that many men—though by no means all—did not believe the OBOE operations to be worthwhile'. Interestingly, all interviewed were adamant that they believed firmly in what they were doing and that their troops were 'solidly committed to the aims and objectives of the enterprise'.<sup>19</sup> George Tucker's battalion 'believed in what they were doing and fully supported Morshead [the divisional commander]. Major General Ron Hughes saw:

Tarakan as only one in a series of ops taking us all the way up to Malaya Besides, the soldiers' hatred of the Japs was a major point here: to kill Japs was good for morale, and while they were doing this they couldn't have given a damn for any wider strategic considerations.<sup>20</sup>

Brigadier Chilton endorsed this view, adding that:

the soldiers were keen to get at the Japs, particularly after a year on the Tablelands and relative inactivity. ... I don't know that they really would have cared at the time whether there was any strategic point to the operation.

Others were apparently convinced that Borneo was an important key in the grand plan to close the door on the war in the Pacific. The 2/23rd Battalion's history notes that for Tarakan 'morale was high, for this was the first definite step towards the recapture of Malaya and Singapore, and the liberation of members of the 8th Division'.<sup>21</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Dorney, when asked his unit's feelings about the importance of Borneo, replied that 'we did not even think about it previous to landing, and thought it worth while after the fighting because of the early release of the POWs and the help we gave to the native population [at Brunei]'.<sup>22</sup>

In many ways, these sentiments are understandable. Soldiers must believe in their leaders and feel that their own deeds and sacrifices have some value. One cannot but help feel for them: it is hard when, as a young man, you did things you were told were brave and necessary, and that cost so many of your friend's lives, only to be told fifty years later that your effort and their sacrifice were unjustifiable.

## Leadership

Leadership has a direct affect on morale: 'If you have good officers morale is high'.<sup>23</sup> Every person interviewed had a story to tell about how essential good leadership was for amphibious operations; about how effective leadership 'carried the day' on the landing beach or was responsible for the building of such high morale in a unit that 'the men appeared fearless' in the face of opposition after landing.<sup>24</sup>

For example, soon after George Tucker's unit came ashore at Tarakan, the troops became frustrated by their slow rate of advance. They initially encountered deep mud on the beaches, then numerous mangrove swamps followed by razorback hills, heavy tropical forest and secondary growth. To make matters worse their casualties were mounting due to increasingly effective enemy fire from commanding positions just inland from the beach area. To overcome this problem and incite the battalion, Tucker made himself as visible to the troops as the enemy and the terrain allowed, even stopping 'to chat with the boys' between actions. On the beach, and later during the 2/23rd Battalion's capture of the features Milko and Hospital Ridge, he was always 'popping up unexpectedly' to hasten the advance and inspire confidence.

Tucker also indicated why he felt the men of the 2/48th Battalion at Lae and Finschhafen so admired their brigade commander, Brigadier 'Torpy' Whitehead:

[At Lae] after enduring mud, slush, mosquitoes and downpouring bloody rain the troops arrived just to the rear of Mount Lunaman. AI had been out of smokes for days, and all were at the snarling point, caused mostly by no bloody smokes [then] came the grand old man, Brigadier Whitehead, puffing away contentedly at his pipe. The aroma of good tobacco drifted to the troops ... Jim Absalom asked in a quiet, matter-of-fact voice, 'What about a puff on the pipe, sir?' In a flash the brig. stopped in his stride and replied, 'What, lad, haven't you any tobacco?' On being told they had not had any for the past three days the brigadier immediately took his pouch from his pocket and, saying, 'Well here, lad, I have to keep one last pipeful', and gave the remainder to the men. In the same movement he swung around to one of his officers and asked why these men had received no issue of tobacco. The reply almost sat the brigadier on his heels. 'Tobacco is a luxury and men cannot expect luxuries up front.' In less gentle tone the brigadier told the officer: 'Luxuries! Well let me tell you that if tobacco is not up here by tomorrow you will be on the way out'. The tobacco arrived!<sup>25</sup>

Brigadier Chilton provided another example of how important the Commanding Officer is to the performance of a unit. After the 18th Brigade's operations in the Ramu Valley in late 1943, Chilton had become concerned with morale in the 2/10th Battalion. The battalion had suffered heavy casualties at both Buna and Sanananda and appeared tired: it lacked identity, the troops were unduly critical of their officers and the unit's general performance was not as high as the other battalions. Chilton approached the divisional commander, Major General Vasey, and requested a 'good officer' to assume command of the unit. Consequently, after their return to Australia in early 1944, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Daly was appointed. Daly had been the original Adjutant of the battalion and had proved a very competent Chief of Staff to Major General Milford at Salamaua. He wasted no time in improving morale in the unit. He achieved this, like Tucker in the 2/23rd, by high profile leadership. Such a high profile that it included standing on the abutments during live firing practices with his company commanders; the rationale was to prove to the troops that he had full confidence in them and their abilities. Fortunately for him, and his company commanders, he was a popular CO.

The battalion's history notes that Daly 'earned the admiration and respect of all by his administrative ability and soldierly qualities'.<sup>26</sup> According to Chilton, after a year on the Tablelands under Daly the battalion was one of the best in the division and possessed 'excellent morale'. Daly had proved a 'first-rate commander' who had turned a 'tired battalion into a first-class fighting unit in which [Chilton] had absolute confidence' as they departed for Borneo and OBOE Two. This confidence was to prove well founded during operations at Balikpapan.

## Maintaining the Momentum

All those interviewed agreed that the most crucial time for a landing force was that spent disembarking from the landing craft and getting clear of the beach: 'You are at your most vulnerable point on the beach. ... There is a clear need to get off the beach as soon as possible and secure a beach-head.'<sup>27</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Daly's actions in attempting to secure the division's vital ground on the first day of fighting at Balikpapan, provides an excellent example of leadership and 'maintaining the momentum'.

During brigade orders, Brigadier Chilton had tasked the 2/10th Battalion with capturing the dominant Hill 87. It was then to exploit north along the feature nicknamed Parramatta. 'This ridge at the base of the peninsula on which Balikpapan stood dominated the entire landing beach area, and was vital ground which should be seized as soon as possible.'<sup>28</sup> To assist him in this task Daly had been promised a squadron of Matilda tanks and three Frogs (flame throwing tanks) from the 1st Armoured Regiment, direct fire support from a battery of the 2/4th Field Regiment, the fire of the USS *Cleveland's* 6-inch guns, a platoon of the 2/1st Machine Gun Battalion, a gun from the 2/2nd Antitank Regiment and a section of 4.2 inch mortars.

The day commenced well for the battalion. As the first wave headed for the shore at about 0830 hours on the 1st July 1945, the tempo of the naval fire onto the beach increased. 'The noise from the guns, shells and bombs was terrific, the whole area of the landing beach seemed to move under the impact of the bombardment.' As the landing craft approached the beach, 'the LCI rocket ships commenced to fire the first of the two rocket concentrations each of 4,500 rockets into the area immediately behind the landing beach [while overhead] several waves of Liberator aircraft bombed the area between Parramatta Ridge and the beach.'<sup>29</sup> So impressed were the troops at this display of massive fire power that one soldier, Private Abel, 'nearly jumped out the landing craft in his excitement and praise of the Air Force'.<sup>30</sup>

The first sign that events were not to run smoothly came with the landing of the second wave, which included the mortars and machine guns, some 800 yards off course. This caused some delay in bringing these weapons into action. Soon after, Daly received news that the USS *Cleveland* had been withdrawn. Additionally, the tanks had become bogged on the beach and the promised artillery support was unavailable. Daly faced a difficult decision: to go on without the promised fire support against a relatively well-defended position, or delay the attack until another cruiser could register its guns, and the tanks and artillery were brought on-line. 'He made the bold decision to attack immediately.'<sup>31</sup>

Both the battalion's history and Gavin Long's *The Final Campaigns* give a good description of the battle for Parramatta which raged all that day. Both highlight Daly's swift action, combined with the 'the speed and skill of the individual infantrymen',<sup>32</sup> which enabled the vital ground to be secured before the enemy could reorganise after the bombardment. It was not, however, without cost. By nightfall, the battalion had suffered 13 killed and an additional 30 wounded.

When interviewed, Sir Thomas Daly gave as his principal reason for pressing on along Parramatta without the promised support, the need:

to maintain the momentum. Chilton [the brigade commander] was continually emphasising speed: speed to stop the Japanese from recovering from the bombardment and from organising a counterattack.

Daly added that he felt he 'really had little choice. The enemy on Parramatta had a commanding view of the entire beach area. It simply had to be taken. Any delay may have imperiled the operation'. Brigadier Chilton supported Daly's assessment, adding that 'it was his [Daly's] call. The vital ground had to be taken and Daly did exactly what was expected of him. He was a first-rate battalion commander and I had absolute confidence in both him and his battalion.'

Upon reflection, Daly admits that there was more behind his decision than is apparent from the histories. Firstly, as an cavalry officer his 'early training emphasised the importance of quick, decisive action—the thrust forward'. Secondly, the division's experience in the Middle East meant that 'tanks and artillery were always nice to have but the prudent commander did not rely on them'. Finally, similar to Chilton's confidence in him, Daly had unqualified trust in the abilities of the officer whose company led the attack on Parramatta—Major Frank Cook. 'I was proud to have been bracketed with Frank', said Daly. 'He had elan and was very good at what he did. When I gave him the order to proceed with the attack, Cook's reply was simply "Right, sir." An example of the relationship of trust these two officers shared is evident in their light banter. Before Balikpapan, while in training on the Tablelands, Cook commented to Daly that he'd follow him anywhere. 'No', replied Daly. 'I'll be right behind you.'

Interestingly, the 2/10th was not the only battalion to find that their promised armoured support was bogged on the beach just as a planned attack was about to start. During its attack on the Government House area at Labuan, 'C' company, 2/28th Battalion, was ordered to advance without fire support. Again, the desire to maintain the momentum of the advance, especially on the first day of the operation, was foremost in the mind of the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Norman.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, the battalion secured all its objectives by the end of that first day. Additionally, John Broadbent's 2/17th Battalion had been promised tank support for their drive on Brunei. 'It never arrived so we pushed on anyway. We had learnt at El Alamein that tanks were good if you could get them, but don't rely too heavily on them arriving in time.'

Finally, Lieutenant Colonel Tucker drew to the author's attention one additional example of 'maintaining the momentum' at a critical point in an amphibious operation. At Lae, during the landing of the 2/23rd Battalion on 4th September 1943, the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Wall, and eight others from his Headquarters were killed during an enemy air attack on their landing craft. The decimation of Battalion Headquarters had the potential to cause confusion within the unit at a crucial time, the point of landing. Such confusion may have slowed the battalion's egress from the beach and delayed the brigade's advance on Lae. (Brigadier Windeyer's plan for the 20th Brigade had the 2/15th and 2/17th Battalions securing Red Beach with the 2/23rd tasked to move through them to begin the westward advance towards Lae.) Fortunately, the momentum of the battalion's advance was not affected as the Second-in-Command, Major McRae, quickly assumed command and drove the battalion forward 'without a break in its pace'. Tucker added that in situations such as this 'it was leadership and training that really counted'.<sup>34</sup>

## Training

Those who participated in the 1943 landings at Lae and Finschhafen thought, at the time of those landings, that their training had been 'quite adequate',<sup>35</sup> 'simple but effective'<sup>36</sup> or 'good—giving the troops confidence in their commanders'.<sup>37</sup> An examination of the pre-operations training is also instructive. All battalions and support troops had been given experience in various types of landing craft either on the Tablelands in Queensland or at Milne Bay just before the landing at Lae. The 2/48th Battalion, for example, arrived at Milne Bay in August 1943, where their time was 'filled with hard training in amphibious operations. Beachheads were developed, there was snap shooting on the range, assault landings were practiced ... and the hundred-and-one exercises were carried out that were necessary to prepare for the coming offensive against the Jap'.<sup>38</sup> On the 21st August the battalion even conducted a full-scale mock landing using LCTs and LCIs.

However, during the actual landings the shortcomings in the training soon became apparent. The main problem was simply that the soldiers of the 9th Division had not had adequate time, or sufficient craft, to become adept at this new form of warfare. Nor were the crews adequately trained. Lieutenant Colonel Dorney, then Second-in-Command of the 2/3rd Field Ambulance, noted that the men became quite seasick on their journey up the coast from Lae in LCVPs and, 'combined with the effects of the diesel fumes, everyone was vomiting their heart out and then dry retching for a further two hours. [They] were useless on landing for a

further one hour after that'. Later landings either used the much larger troop carriers or LSTs, requiring only a relatively shorter journey from mother ship to shore in landing craft.

Additionally, Major General Broadbent thought that the lack of training of the LCI crews at Finschhafen added to the confusion of the beach area. Waves of LCIs were landed at the wrong area of the beach, causing confusion among the troops in the darkness and delaying the securing of the beach-head. Such errors 'had the potential to jeopardise lives had the beach been defended in any genuine manner'.

In comparison to the later OBOE operations the training for Lae and Finschhafen was 'primitive and indicative of our lack of experience in how to train for amphibious warfare'.<sup>39</sup> Most of the 9th Division's troops for the Tarakan operation, for example, had received intensive amphibious operations training on the Tablelands from August 1944 to March 1945, with additional training after their arrival at Morotai, the staging area for the OBOE operations, in April. The author of the 2/7th Field Regiment's history, David Goodhart, described the Regiment's training for Tarakan as 'by far the most intensive exercises ... in which the unit had been involved in to date'.<sup>40</sup> At Labuan, the 2/28th Battalion's landing went 'so smoothly that it could have been a training exercise on Trinity Beach near Cairns'.<sup>41</sup> The 2/4th Field Regiment's training for Balikpapan included working with the Naval Bombardment Group, learning how to embus and debus the guns from the landing craft and close cooperation exercises with the 7th Division's infantry:

A good deal of time was spent getting thoroughly acquainted with the Infantry, each Battery lived with 'their' Battalion for a fortnight and vice versa, learning each other's arts and making firm friends apart from developing a mutual respect and trust for the 'other arm'.<sup>42</sup>

Notwithstanding the improvement in training which was evident in the lead up to the Borneo landings, mistakes and problems still occurred. At Morotai, Lieutenant Colonel Tucker was concerned that his battalion had not spent enough time training in either the Alligators (the American amphibians) or the LVTs. 'There was only two days available for us to become accustomed to these unfamiliar vehicles. This caused quite a few problems during the landing and slowed our advance on the township.' Lieutenant Colonel Dorney also struck a peculiar problem for an army unit. Prior to embarking for Labuan the 2/3rd Field Ambulance received its quota of reinforcements, 'a considerable number of whom would not bear arms'. Dorney finally convinced them of the virtue of learning to use their weapons by having one of the battalion commanders assure them that if the ambulance was attacked they would have to defend themselves. Self-preservation is a strong motivator.

But perhaps the greatest challenge to unit and formation commanders during the training phase of the OBOE operations, was boredom. The incessant and repetitive training did affect morale. As did the constant 'furphys' (rumours) which 'flew around the camps about where we were going and when'.<sup>43</sup> 'It was obvious from the pressure of training that "it's on" could have been expected at an early date ... and finally when all were trained to the eyes it was announced that it was "off"'.<sup>44</sup> By February 1945, training 'had ceased to be amusing' and the 'browned off feeling returned stronger than ever and there were many applications for discharge, transfers, and hosts of other things associated with periods of boredom'.<sup>45</sup> Units had become desperate for combat just to gain relief from the monotony of the training. 'The men were anxious to "get going" and finish "it", whatever "it" was'.<sup>46</sup>

The above sentiments about the amphibious training in late 1944 and early 1945 appear representative of those expressed in the many unit histories. However, one unit history stands out. The 2/10th Battalion, commanded by then Lieutenant Colonel Tom Daly, appears to have enjoyed its training on the Tablelands in the lead up to Balikpapan, although they had been 'at it for nearly on a year'.<sup>47</sup> The difference between the 2/10th's training, and that of many other units, appears to have been the degree of personal interest the CO took in what his battalion was doing. Daly also ensured that the battalion's training was well interspersed with an appropriate amount of recreation and free-time.

The arrival of Lieutenant Colonel Daly ... in the unit [was] followed by an increased tempo in training combined with congenial recreation, [which] dispelled any inclination to boredom ... advanced training was always interesting if strenuous at times ... Sport, entertainment and recreation had been given an important place in the life of the troops.<sup>48</sup>

Daly was also well aware that the AIF, like armies in times past, marched on its stomach and a few other staples. 'Whilst in Queensland the rations had been the best the unit had ever received. Also smokes and beer were in ample supply.'<sup>49</sup> To achieve success in training and relieve boredom, Daly stated, a commander needed a small dose of imagination, but a large slice of careful planning.

## Planning

The OBOE operations were arguably the most complex of any the operations conducted by Australian forces during the war. Certainly, they were among the best planned. For Tarakan:

The 'OBOE ONE' operational order was extensive. The paper war had grown tremendously since the days when, as in 1941, the waving of vehicle flags ... was 'operational order' enough to bring about an advance in desert column ... There were also needed massive lists of personnel ... Topography, too, became important. There were Intelligence reports, beach landing conditions, elaborately prepared US Army graphs of tides, terrain, rainfall. There were air photographs; notes on enemy dispositions, strength, morale. These things were part and parcel of amphibious ops.<sup>50</sup>

For OBOE Two at Balikpapan the operations order was a 'masterpiece of concentrated information, maps, tables, airphoto books plus everything that five years of war can give in experience'.<sup>51</sup> The availability of overwhelming fire support, artillery, ship-to-shore bombardment, armoured support and air superiority, was a relatively new experience for the Australians:

This was a new kind of war ... no doubts about air support or supplies, no lack of equipment and no fugitive feeling of being out on their own. Here was minutely planned attack in appropriate numbers on an objective the strength of which could be reasonably well assessed.<sup>52</sup>

The level of detailed briefings down to private soldier level were also extraordinary:

For example, in the 2/10th Battalion ... the country over which they would attack was studied on vertical and oblique photographs, large-scale maps on which the enemy's positions were over-printed, and on a large-scale model. Lieut-Colonel Daly ... had lectured all ranks, by companies, on the model, explaining 'the overall strategy, the object of the operation, Div tasks, tasks of other Bdes and Bns and a detailed description of the Coy tasks, fire plan and probable subsequent developments'; the men had questioned him and all were made to realise their part in the plan. ... An Intelligence centre was set up containing maps, photographs, stereoscopes, Intelligence summaries, terrain studies, etc, and was open first to NCOs and then to all ranks. It was usually full of men all day.<sup>53</sup>

Within the 2/16th Battalion the troops were 'so well briefed for the task at hand. Every man knew exactly the job to be done ... it was a grand tribute to the planning of the action'.<sup>54</sup>

Even with this level of planning the operations in Borneo were not immune from problems. One controversial aspect of the planning for OBOE One was the assessment of forces required to secure Tarakan's airfield, which was the focus of the operation. The airfield itself was not able to be prepared in time for subsequent operations as it was too affected by the tide, its base being found 'unstable' by the airfield construction engineers. However, the 26th Brigade group had suffered battle casualties of 54 officers and 840 other ranks, nearly as high as the 6th Division's casualties at Cyrenaica in early 1941. Lieutenant Colonel Tucker's 2/23rd Battalion alone suffered 159 casualties. Tucker believed the planners misjudged the forces

necessary for taking Tarakan. He felt that another brigade group, or even more supporting arms, would have reduced the total casualty figure. However, others were not so sure. Major General Hughes, then a Liaison Officer HQ 26th Brigade, felt that 'there was really no room for another brigade to operate. I'm not sure more troops would have meant fewer casualties'. Certainly the Australian Government was concerned at the casualties at Tarakan. As indicated by Dr Stanley, they asked MacArthur's Headquarters whether casualties could have been reduced by employing a stronger force. The advice received was that sufficient forces were allocated and that additional troops may only have resulted in greater casualties. Whether this was the case will probably never be known. Certainly, George Tucker will never agree with the military hierarchy on this point.

While the planning for Borneo was vastly superior to that for either Lae and Finschhafen, these earlier landings proceeded remarkably well, especially considering the level of experience the Australians had in amphibious operations by 1943. Indeed, Brigadier Windeyer's 20th Brigade's ability to plan and initiate its landing at Finschhafen all within four days was a tribute to the efficiency of all concerned.

The main problem at Lae was the level of confusion on the beach, especially after the battalions had passed through. No beach group had been formed and the command arrangements for coordinating the beach-head were non-existent. Windeyer was concerned that the improvised arrangements made for the beach-head at Lae would prove even less adequate for Finschhafen. Consequently he tasked Major General Broadbent, an experienced combat officer who was then the Second-in-Command of the 2/17th Battalion, as the Military Liaison Officer (MLO). Broadbent was allocated a staff officer, a signals element and a beach protection group. The organisation created by Broadbent for Finschhafen formed the nucleus of the beach group organisation discussed by Mr Stevens, which was used in the OBOE operations.<sup>55</sup>

Broadbent's task was to coordinate the defence of the beach, the movement of stores, the development of the beach-head, the requirements of small craft, and the control of traffic. ... quick, energetic and full of initiative, [he] proved an excellent choice, and in the succeeding days the force owed much to his drive and flair for improvisation.<sup>56</sup>

In contrast to the OBOE operations, an example of poor planning and intelligence can be seen in an attempt to land a reinforced rifle company from the 31/51st Battalion at Porton Plantation in northern Bougainville in June 1945. The landing was designed to outflank an enemy position that was providing strong resistance to the 11th Brigade's attempt to secure the area. While the first wave of three rifle platoons landed successfully with no opposition, the second wave, consisting of the force's heavy weapons, reserve ammunition and supplies, grounded on a reef. The men made it ashore, however, the LCI then came under effective automatic fire forcing it to withdraw.

During the day, enemy resistance mounted and, after three attempts that night to land reinforcements and stores failed, it was decided to withdraw the 190 strong force. Captain Leslie commanded the three armoured landing craft used to withdraw the force the following afternoon. After collecting all the company from the beach two of Leslie's craft stuck fast on the reef from the weight of those on board. One eventually floated off at high tide, but the remainder, with 37 men on board, including wounded, remained stranded and exposed to enemy fire for an entire day before it could be rescued. Captain Leslie's first hand account of the operation shows that it was characterised by great heroism and bravery. Unfortunately, it also resulted in 23 Australians being either killed or captured and 106 wounded. Had the beach been more strongly defended the operation would have resulted in a much higher casualty figure.

Porton Plantation is an example of the failure of planning and intelligence and of the effects of combat fatigue on a unit. The official historian, Gavin Long, noted that 'the 11th Brigade was becoming worn out'. With one battalion member describing his unit as 'a tired depleted battalion—companies were no more than half strength and had been in forward areas continuously for four months'.<sup>57</sup>

## Coordination & Cooperation

In many ways the Borneo campaign exemplifies the level of cooperation achieved by the Australian forces in the Pacific. Most of those interviewed accepted that the level of cooperation between the Australians and the Americans, and between the Australian Services, was very good. They were particularly thankful for the US Navy's presence and the 'support of their big guns', and for the 'final presence of the RAAF in supporting the infantry'.<sup>58</sup> However, none were party to any of the higher planning considerations or meetings. Their experience was almost exclusively at the tactical level. It is, therefore, not surprising that their comments on the subject of 'cooperation and coordination' relate primarily to those issues most relevant to field officers engaged in both amphibious landings and jungle combat. Such issues included naval and air support, and the level of cooperation between the various branches of the Australian Army.

While the navy (both the Australian and the American) played a vital role in the AIF's assault landings, there was a degree of criticism of the influence they had over the planning for what was 'essentially an infantry task'.<sup>59</sup> 'We [the infantry] had to step ashore and do the fighting. Not the navy. Yet they fought to arrange things so it was most ideal for them.'<sup>60</sup> Colin Grace described how the navy always:

wanted to land us at the safest time for them: just after midnight. This was unacceptable. Can you imagine the control problems in a battalion, let alone a brigade sized group, getting off the beach and into the jungle in the dark?

In planning for Finschhafen, Admiral Barbey, the commander of the US 7th Amphibious Force, was insistent on commencing the landing in darkness as he was fearful of losing valuable amphibious resources in daylight air attacks. General Herring, commanding 1st Australian Corps, Major General Wooten, 9th Division, and Brigadier Windeyer, whose 20th Brigade was to perform the landing, strenuously opposed Barbey's plan, 'because they doubted the navy's ability to put the troops ashore in the right place and in good order in darkness'.<sup>61</sup> While a compromise was made, the 20th Brigade still commenced its assault in the dark. The result was that Windeyer's concerns were realised:

The navy failed to land the first two waves in the correct place. I was in the first wave and we landed some 500 metres too far south. Two companies of the 2/17th became mixed up with the 2/13th, and some hit coral.<sup>62</sup>

This confusion delayed the 2/17th and 2/13th Battalions whose job it was to secure the beach area. Consequently, when the 2/15th came ashore in the third wave they encountered effective enemy fire which should have been suppressed by the other battalions. This panicked the American LCI crews landing the third wave, who lowered their ramps too early leaving the disembarking infantry to swim ashore. Additionally, these same crews began firing indiscriminately into the jungle fringe of the beach 'where troops from the first wave were now moving into position. This resulted in the CO of the 2/17th being wounded'.<sup>63</sup>

Brigadier Chilton also had a 'fight with the navy' over the most suitable location for a landing at Balikpapan. The navy, concerned at the possible enemy defences at 7th Division's preferred landing site near Klandasan, favoured the beach at Manggar, some ten miles further along the coast. Chilton was adamant that such a proposal from the navy be rejected:

The navy's preferred location would have meant an overland trek for the brigade of some distance [approx 10 miles] along either a narrow beach or through dense jungle. And that would have taken us through the enemy's prepared positions and forced us to cross several rivers. We would also have had to do this without tank support, and probably without our artillery. ... I was also concerned that we would lose the naval bombardment support at any time during such a long fight.<sup>64</sup>

Other complaints about the navy involved the conditions the infantry were exposed to on the long journey from Queensland to Morotai. Lieutenant Colonel Norman, CO of the 2/28th Battalion, described the long sea journey as 'deplorable'. Citing the overcrowded conditions, the heat and poor design of some of the craft, he considered this journey the worst for the troops he had experienced during the war and 'had to be seen to be credited'.<sup>65</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Tucker had a similar 'beef with the navy and:

severely criticised conditions on board the General Buttner, which he described as appalling, and 'could only have been enforced by a captain of a ship who

- (a) places no trust in troops' officers ...
- (b) is himself a war neurosis case. It is considered criminal for troops to be subjected to such conditions'.<sup>66</sup>

Despite the harsh conditions the men seem to have retained their sense of humour:

I've had everything in this bloody army. I joined up—me, who's never been away from the farm—and a fellow looks me in the eyes, looks me in the ears, looks up me arse, and if that ain't embarrassed me enough he grabs me by the balls and says cough. Then before I can lift him over the ear he tells me to piss in a bottle. And now they set a mob of galahs up in front to shit in me lunch [this last comment refers to the crowded toilet arrangements on the ship taking the battalion to Morotai].<sup>67</sup>

Regarding air support, most commented that they saw very little of it during the fighting, but certainly noticed where the air force had been: 'We didn't have much contact with the RAAF after the landing, and there was no close air support as we know it today. However, the effects of the air bombardment were pretty obvious.'<sup>68</sup> Such was the level of devastation that the 20th Brigade was moved to criticise the RAAF for the 'wanton destruction' of the infrastructure at Brunei. Tom Daly also recalled a tragic incident after his battalion had succeeded in capturing Parramatta at Balikpapan. Returning to his battalion headquarters after a walk along the ridge-line, Daly saw three US Lightning fighter/bombers attack his Headquarters killing three unit members, one a Tobruk veteran.

John Broadbent's experiences at Finschhafen and Brunei gave him considerable respect for the worth of the engineers. Engineer support was essential to his battalion's advance towards Lae due to the crossing points required on the Buso River. At Tarakan, George Tucker was impressed with the obvious engineer effort that had gone in to clearing obstacles and mines from the beach area and beyond, and then maintaining the roads that were often just boggy tracks. Most, also, were full of praise for the armoured, artillery, machine gun and assault pioneer assistance they received, but classified it as 'very handy' rather than essential. All acknowledged that the assistance provided by these arms did help to reduce their casualties, but that they had been trained and used to an environment where such lavish support as they received in Borneo was unthinkable. 'We trained as a self-contained organisation and were always very happy for supporting arms to be allocated in support. However, the desert campaigns had shown us that, in the end, you could only really rely on the weapons systems available in the unit.'<sup>69</sup>

The much vaunted level of cooperation between the Services was also known to be strained at times. At Balikpapan, Milford was very critical of the RAAF, considering them lacking in discipline and 'accustomed to a high standard of comfort'.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, as happened at Tarakan, the RAAF did not take kindly to suggestions from the army that they should reduce their level of stores to light scales and, consequently, the number and weight of their vehicles caused unloading problems. Similarly, the Air Commander, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, was just as critical of Milford, claiming he attempted to 'interfere with professional and technical air force aspects'. The 20th Brigade after OBOE Six were also most critical of the destruction by the air force of facilities at Brunei. Major Donald, who was responsible for loading operations for Brunei, suggested he had some difficulties with RAAF loading parties, some of whom even went on strike.<sup>71</sup>

Major General Broadbent also discussed one particularly unusual aspect relating to 'cooperation'. In Brunei his battalion had forged an interesting relationship with the Dyak tribes. The Dyaks were fiercely independent and had no love for the Japanese. Broadbent's main problem was stopping the natives from cutting off the heads of the Japanese, even after Brunei fell. In July 1945, he wrote, 'cooperation by the natives, in particular the Dyaks, has been most helpful. Many of the Dyaks have proved to be first-rate soldiers of undoubted courage with a distinct hatred for the Japs'.<sup>72</sup>

### Administration

'Administration' is an important principle of war and is neglected at the Commander's peril. Fortunately, for most of the Australian Army landings the administrative arrangements, while not always perfect, appeared to have worked quite well. Logistic support for Lae was 'generally haphazard, but operated well enough'.<sup>73</sup> The major problem at Lae, as for Finschhafen, was not getting the right stores to the beach, rather it was getting them from the beach to the troops. The roads, or tracks, quickly became boggy and the many rivers made transport; the forward troops were regularly deprived of some essential combat supplies. For example, the 2/28th Battalion complained at the shortage of food:

Never before, even in Tobruk, were rations in such short supply as on this approach from the Burep River to Lae. Twenty men were issued, all told, with one tin of sausages, one tin of bully beef and one tin of beans. Two pounds of tea, mostly unusable, were expected to last a hundred men for a day ... fortified with this scant tucker [we were] expected to engage the enemy at any time.<sup>74</sup>

And at Finschhafen a 'grave administrative deficiency' was discovered: stocks of 9 mm ammunition for the Owen gun had apparently not been unloaded.<sup>75</sup>

Occasionally the slotting (loading) of stores was also a problem for both Lae and Finschhafen, causing confusion and delays as the stores were unloaded on the beach. Stores would be missing or essential supplies loaded at the back of nonessential commodities. Lieutenant Colonel Costello, who was in charge of administration for the 9th Division's operations at Lae and Finschhafen, thought that there 'were very few problems that occurred that could not be sorted. There was confusion, and things didn't always go according to plan, if there was one, but the resoluteness and professionalism of the troops kept major problems to the minimum. And certainly we got better with each operation'.

The administrative planning for the OBOE operations was more thorough and efficient. LCIs carried floating reserves that could be unloaded within a 'very short time'. Yet again, the problem was not so much getting the stocks on to the beach, it was unloading and distributing them. At Tarakan the unloading of stores and equipment proved extremely difficult. There was only a very narrow space between the high water mark and the road and this had been badly damaged by the bombardment. Even at low tide the extra space created consisted entirely of thick, black mud. Although wire mesh was quickly laid by the engineers, it was not heavy enough to support the tanks and the heavy machinery, which soon bogged. On the first day of the operation, the airfield construction group was brought ashore with all its equipment. However, 'as the roads were not capable of getting them to the airfield straight off, they really cluttered up the beach area'.<sup>76</sup> Over the next three days, logs were cut for corduroy surfacing, floating causeways were established, and the American Naval Construction Battalion built two pontoon piers.

Similar problems were experienced at Balikpapan where there were delays in clearing the stores from the beach because of the terrain and the lack of suitable exit routes. Serious congestion occurred at both Tarakan and Balikpapan because troops, equipment and stores could not be moved off the narrow beaches as quickly as they were landed on it.

To exemplify some of the administrative problems encountered by the landing force, we can examine the medical arrangements made by the 2/3rd Field Ambulance. Elements of the field

ambulance, usually stretcher bearers, went ashore in the first wave with the assault troops to help establish the beach-head evacuation site. Resuscitation staff accompanied the second wave and formed the beach medical centre to handle early wounded. The CO usually landed with Brigade Headquarters, with the remainder of the ambulance arriving when the beach-head was secured.

A jeep ambulance head was quickly established as far forward in the brigade's area as possible. This was not always very far forward because of the terrain. Casualties would be carried from battalion aid posts back to the jeep ambulance head, then back to the beach area from where they were evacuated. This system generally worked well for the OBOE operations but there were specific difficulties for both Lae and Finschhafen. At Lae, the Buso River was a major obstacle and difficult to get wounded across. It was only after sometime that a barge was available to move the wounded. The beach-head at Lae was also initially very confused and frantic. At Finschhafen, the absence of naval support craft soon after landing meant that the wounded spent longer on the beach. This did not present any major difficulties, but 'greater care could have been taken in planning for the evacuation of the wounded'.<sup>77</sup>

The OBOE campaign in Borneo showed that the Australian Army had come a long way in understanding and executing amphibious operations since Lae and Finschhafen. In Borneo, the 1st Australian Corps had successfully executed complex amphibious assaults that were the largest of their kind ever conducted by Australian troops in World War II. The success of these operations is attributable to the painstaking planning, preparation and training, and to the level of cooperation and exacting coordination between all the services employed. But these operations are also a tribute to the valour and determination of the troops who executed their commander's plan, the quality of the officers under whom they served, and the leadership displayed at all levels, from junior NCO to divisional commander.

While issues such as inter-service cooperation and interoperability with Allies were vital aspects to the success at Borneo, to the men interviewed, their interest was at a much lower, 'grass roots' level. To the infantryman, amphibious operations were not that much different to any other task he had been asked to perform in New Guinea, the Middle East or in Greece. 'The only thing that seems to change is the way you get to the battle. Once there it comes down to a hard slog and fierce fighting'.<sup>78</sup> Relying on the Navy for their transport certainly irked some soldiers, but others considered it a 'damn sight better than walking'.<sup>79</sup> Even the actual landing, perhaps the most crucial part in any amphibious operations, was not particularly difficult 'provided the troops had been adequately trained and briefed, were well-led and supported, and they felt there was some sense of purpose to their task'.<sup>80</sup> These criteria are the very essence of the military art. Certainly, the landings themselves did not prove particularly difficult. Besides the Japanese, the main problems and challenges for the AIF at Lae, Finschhafen and at Borneo were the terrain, weather, disease, and the long lines of communication; perennial concerns for any force in most operations.

It should also be remembered that the Australian's success in Borneo took place in an environment of overwhelming fire supremacy over the Japanese. While not denigrating the fighting spirit of the Australian soldier, nor underestimating the tasks they performed, for the first time they had 'everything [they] wanted: equipment; fire support; full establishments; fresh, well-rested men; and good training'.<sup>81</sup> This had not always been the case. 'In many ways we were spoilt. Just as we had learnt to make do with very little, forcing us to use our initiative, along come the Yanks and hand it all to us on a platter'.<sup>82</sup> This point brings us full circle in our discussions on amphibious operations; back to the sage counsel proffered in the opening paragraph of this essay—'Don't do it. If you have to do it ... ensure you have overwhelming superiority'.

## Contributors to this Chapter

**Major General JR (John) Broadbent**, CBE, DSO, ED, was Second-in-Command of the 2/17th Battalion for Lae, Military Landing Officer (MLO) at Finschhafen and Commanding Officer of the 2/17th Battalion at Brunei (OBOE 6).

**Major General TF (Timothy) Cape**, CB, CBE, DSO, served in a succession of General Staff Officer (GSO) positions during the period of the Australian Army amphibious operations in New Guinea and Borneo. Between 1943 and 45 he was GSO 1 OPS, HQ New Guinea Force, GSO 1 AIR, HQ 1 Aust Corps, and GSO 1 OPS, Advanced Land HQ.

**Lieutenant Colonel CH (Charles) Costello**, was the senior supply officer at HQ 9th Division for the OBOE operations.

**Brigadier, Sir Frederick Chilton**, CBE, DSO, commanded the 18th Brigade for the 7th Division's operations at Balikpapan.

**Lieutenant General, Sir Thomas Daly**, KBE, CB, DSO, commanded 2/10th Battalion, 7th Division, at Balikpapan.

**Lieutenant Colonel JL (John) de Teliga**, was a private soldier with 2/2nd Battalion for Dove Bay, Wewak landing.

**Major JA (Alex) Donald**, served as the Adjutant, Service Corps, HQ 9th Division, for Tarakan and Brunei Bay operations.

**Lieutenant Colonel KJJ Dorney**, DSO, was Second In Command 2/3rd Field Ambulance for operations at Lae and Finschhafen, and was Senior Medical Officer, HQ 9th Division, and Commanding Officer, 2/3rd Field Ambulance, at Labuan.

**Colonel CH (Colin) Grace**, DSO, ED, commanded 2/15th Battalion for the landings at Lae, Finschhafen and Brunei (OBOE 6).

**Major Henry 'Jo' Gullett**, AM, MC, ED, OM, was a member of the AIF detached to a British regiment as a company commander for the D-Day landings at Normandy.

**Captain C (Craig) Horn**, AAMC, Medical Officer to 41st Australian Landing Craft Company for New Guinea landings and Labuan.

**Major General RL (Ronald) Hughes**, CBE, DSO, served as a Liaison Officer for HQ 1 AustCorps with 162 US Regiment for their landing at Nassau Bay, and with HQ 26th Aust. Brigade at Tarakan.

**Captain S (Stuart) Leslie**, Second-in-Command, 42 Aust. Landing Craft Company, RAE, for Porton Plantation landing.

**Lieutenant Colonel AJC (Arthur) Newton**, was a Staff Officer with HQ 26th Brigade, 9th Division, at Labuan.

**Lieutenant Colonel FAG (George) Tucker**, DSO, ED, was the Second-in-Command of the 2/48th Battalion for Lae and Finschhafen, and commanded 2/23rd Battalion at Tarakan.

**Lieutenant R (Jock) Scott**, was a Platoon Commander with 2/43rd Battalion, 9th Division, at Finschhafen, Morotai and Labuan.

**Captain AW (Aub) Smith**, Officer Commanding 9th Division Provost Company, Finschhafen, and Acting Divisional Assistant Provost Marshal (DAPM), HQ 9th Division, Brunei.

**Major General D (Tim) Vincent**, CB, AM, OBE, commanded 1 Aust Corps Signals at Morotai for the OBOE operations in Borneo.

## Endnotes

1. Colonel Grace, CO 2/15 Bn, Lae, Finschhafen and Brunei.
2. Lieutenant Colonel Tucker, 2IC 2/48 Bn for Lae and Finschhafen, and CO 2/23 Bn at Tarakan.
3. See *The Fundamentals of Land Warfare*, Australian Army publication, 1993, p 29.
4. Major General Broadbent, 2IC 2/17 Bn at Lae, Military Landing Officer for 20 Bde at Finschhafen and CO 2/17 Bn at Brunei.
5. Tucker.
6. Ibid.
7. Captain Smith, OC 9 Div Pro Coy, Finschhafen, and DAPM, HQ 9 Div, Brunei.
8. Lieutenant General Daly, CO 2/10 Bn at Balikpapan.
9. Brigadier Chilton, Commander 18 Bde, Balikpapan.
10. Tucker.
11. P Share (ed), *Mud and Blood*, history of the 2/23 Bn, Heritage Books, Melbourne, 1978, p 352.
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17. F Allchin, *Purple and Blue: The History of the 2/10th Battalion AIF*, Griffin Press, Adelaide, 1958, pp 365 & 372.
18. See papers by Professor McCarthy and Dr Stanley.
19. Lieutenant Colonel Newton, Staff Captain, HQ 24th 1 Bde, Labuan.
20. Major General Hughes, HQ 1 Aust Corps Liaison Officer with HQ 26 Bde at Tarakan.
21. Share, *Mud & Blood*, p 358.
22. Lieutenant Colonel Dorney, Commanding Officer, 2/3rd Field Ambulance, Labuan.
23. Dorney.
24. Chilton.
25. JG Glenn, *Tobruk to Tarakan*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1960, pp 202-203.
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27. Major Gullett was attached to a British regiment as a company commander for the D Day landings at Normandy.
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30. Ibid.
31. Long, *Final Campaigns*, p 516.
32. Ibid, p 519.
33. See P Masel, *The Second 28th*, Griffin Press, Adelaide, 1961, p 170.
34. See *Mud & Blood*, p 260.
35. Broadbent.
36. Tucker.
37. Chilton.
38. Glenn, *Tobruk to Tarakan*, p 194.
39. Grace.
40. D Goodhart, *History of the 2/7th Aust Field Regiment*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1952, p 276.
41. Masel, *The 2/28th*, p 170.
42. RL Henry, *The Story of the 2/4th Field Regiment*, Merrion Press, Melbourne, 1950, p 334.
43. Lieutenant Colonel CH Costello, senior supply officer, HQ 9th Div for OBOE operations.
44. Henry, *The Story of the 2/4th Field Regiment*, p 330.
45. Ibid, p 334.
46. Uren, *A Thousand Men At War*, p 224.
47. Chilton.
48. Allchin, *Purple & Blue*, p 364.
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50. Goodhart, *History of the 2/7th Aust Field Regiment*, p 293.
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53. Long, *Final Campaigns*, p 510.
54. Uren, *A Thousand Men At War*, p 231.
55. See also D Dexter, *Australia in the War of 1939-1945, The New Guinea Offensives*, Australian War Memorial. Canberra, 1961, p 450.
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57. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p 210.
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62. Broadbent.
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68. Daly.
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71. Major Donald, Service Corps Adjutant, HQ 9th Division, Tarakan and Brunei Bay.
72. Long, *The Final Campaigns*, p 493.
73. Donald.
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76. Tucker.
77. Dorney.
78. Costello.
79. Broadbent.
80. Major General Vincent, commander 1st Aust Corps Signals, Morotai.
81. Chilton.
82. Newton.