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Papua New Guinea Patrol Reports

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[185]


LUMI PATROL REPORTS 1944 - 45

LUMI PATROL NO 11 SOUTH WAPEI

A.F.GOW P.O
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

→ SEE ATTACHE

LUMI 1944 - 45 57 7761

DUPLICATE
9/9/87
P/D EXPORT


WAPI - A.R. GOW.

Airtape # 11 of 44/215

Suppliment

SEE AIRTAPE

John W. G.

PATROL REPORT

AIRTAPE No 11 OF 44/45

BY

LT A. F. GOW

WAPI AREA

Native Hospital
St
10. 11. 44.

St. Augustin Sabatu.
~~St. O'Connell~~
~~Delape~~

WAPI LABOUR HIGH DEATH RATE

The reason for the high death rate among WAPI labourers during the dysentery outbreak recently, was mainly due to the psychological views of these natives regards excreta.

The following information was obtained from a Wapi premier medical orderlie, she was tending the Wapi cases, at this hospital.

According to the boy a Wapi attaches considerable importance to nature of his stool. He claims it is customary for a Wapi native to judge the prognosis of his illness by the condition of his excreta.

For example if the stool is not good in his opinion; i.e. contains blood & mucus, he is convinced internally his body is the same and he will die.

He is the poorest class of Natives I have had any dealings with.

He is content to remain sick, will make no effort to fight sickness.

Natural diet play an important ^{part} in the recovery of all natives, who have suffered from a febrile disease. Not only Wapi natives, but all when sick refuse to eat the rations supplied. They crave for their natural foods, that is easily understood.

If a supply of native foods i.e. sage, banana and Kawkan were available, many more would recover. A large percentage of deaths are due to the inability of the natives to eat the food provided.

E. Hagelbocher Wapi

DS 30/4/15

HQ Northern Region
ANGAU
LAE

8 Nov 44

ADO
AITAPE

Patrol Report Aitape 11 of 44/45
Lt A.F. Gow

Reference your memo dated 20 Oct 44 forwarding a/m
Patrol Report.

2. DADMS, HQ Northern Region has commented as follows :-

"Reference page 4 para 4. The 20% death rate as
quoted is not borne out by figures held at this HQ
During Aug and Sep 44, 23 and 16 deaths were
registered, respectively.

Reference ADO's comments, para 5. Advice is required
as to the accurate death rate in WAPI. No EMAs are
available for patrols to WAPI.

H.L.R. Niall Capt
for H.L.R. Niall Maj
ADDS & NA NORTHERN REGION

HQ ANZAC STATION
AIXAFB
7 Nov 44

WOL Hagenlocher
AFL HQ.

Extract from comments on Patrol Report
hereunder:

"What are the reasons for the high death rate
amongst the WAFI labourers, and is this still continuing?"

Please advise your views re this matter.

.....Gaps
(G.C. O'NEILL)
O.C. ANZAC STN

their own free will.

What are the reasons for the high death rate amongst the WAPI labourers, and is this still continuing?

Stop

1.

[Signature]
Maj
H.L.R. Hiall
ADDS & NA NORTHERN REGION

Admiral

- ① your own plea.
- ② Mr. Hapuleshu briefed also.

411

No knowledge of this matter except that a number of recruits when first brought in, were suffering with dysentery. Since signing on of natives - no deaths of indentured labourers.

DS 30/4/15


HQ Northern Region
ANGAU
LAE
1 Nov 44

HQ
ANGAU (DS)

Patrol Report Aitape No 11 of 44/45

Attached is Report by Lt Gow, Patrol Officer covering a difficult patrol in the WAPI area to apprehend deserters.

2. The Lower - or SE - WAPI has never been fully controlled and in peace times there were always a large number of deserters in the area, who could not be apprehended. They had mostly been re-signed in other Districts and sent on leave.
3. Lt Gow did very well to recover nearly half of the deserters in an area in which such a large party of Japs were moving, as apart from the danger of attack, the natives must have made comparisons between the strength of his small party and that of the enemy.
4. It is considered that no further action should be taken to apprehend the deserters until the whole Island Aitape area is free of enemy troops. The apprehended deserters should not be punished in any way, as on account of the high death rate of 80% they had a very good reason for deserting. Formerly, if a native felt he was unfit for work or that he strongly objected, he knew he could state his case to the "Kiap", now, with the latter acting as the recruiter, his only recourse is to desert and endeavour to hide in his mountains.
5. We must endeavour to keep the faith in the "Kiap" alive, whilst at the same time render assistance to the prosecution of the war and all the Field Staff should endeavour to win the natives to freely assisting us to clear their area of the enemy. The destruction of gardens, coconut palms etc, should provide a good field for propaganda to this end.
6. Any outstanding deceased estates should be paid out as soon as possible.


for Dan Vertigan
SOLDIER NORTHHERN REGION

Maj

Encl

CC
AITAPE

For your information.

It is desired that a Patrol Officer be stationed permanently in the WAPI area, with sufficient police to adequately protect him from Jap and native attacks.

No direct action is to be taken to apprehend the remaining deserters, but efforts are to be made to induce them to return of

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCE.

HQ ANGAU DET,
APO 705.

20 Oct 44.

Rcg. Commander,
HQ Northern Region,
ANGAU,
LAE.

FORN ADDS.

PATROL REPORT - LIEUT GOW.

1. Lieut GOW is too modest. The difficulty of apprehending bush kanakas in and amongst enemy parties many times larger than his patrol can be easily appreciated. This was a good patrol.
2. I do not intend to let the matter of deserters rest, and will implement a patrol to cover: (a) WAMAI, (b) outstanding deserters, (c) deceased estates.
3. WAMAI has no excuse. Too many constables have deserted with impunity over the past few years. I found him quite good, but evidently the pressure from his village and wives has been no great.
4. S/Constable NIMINIK has been discharged, and so will a lot more of these shotgun gentlemen as soon as I can.
5. The death rate amongst the WAPIS has been regrettably high, but probably not as high as in their villages, which have been riddled with dysentery.

G. C. O. Doherty
.....Capt.
(G.C.O. DOHERTY)
CO ANGAU DET.

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION REPORT

40 MILITARY,
APO FPO.

17 Oct 44.

OO: APO FPO,
APO FPO.

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION - EAST AREA.

AREA COVERED.

South, south-east, and central WEST area.

OPERATIONAL AREA.

1st - 1 mile ALBANY, WEST WEST, and FARM WEST.

REASON FOR REPORT.

To attempt to apprehend 74 native laborer deserters from No. 2 Compound, ALBANY, to south and south-east WEST areas.

PERSONNEL.

MSG 1st	MSGT A. F. GUY
MSG 53309	S/O 11 O. S. BISHOP
MSG 2395	MSGT ROBERTSON
2392	MSGT F. L. JAMES
2855	" " " "
3131	" " " "
S/O const	" " " "
1978	" " " "
2598	" " " "
3596	" " " "
3561	" " " "
MSG-2390	MSGT T. J. ...
S/O const	" " " "
" " " "	" " " "
" " " "	" " " "

EVENTS.

26 Sept.

Left ALBANY at approx 0830 hrs., and proceeded towards KUMI, (ALBANY-KUMI road being along banks of swampy practice in that area). Arrived KUMI at 9:30 hrs and stayed for the night. S/O 11 Farm advised that Const ... and four other police were already on the heels of the deserters proceeding towards KUMI.

27 Sept

From KUMI at 0700 hrs to ... Road in bad condition and progress slow. Arrived ... Const ... contacted, who reported ... and four other police were already on the heels of the deserters proceeding towards KUMI.

28 Sept

From ... at 0700 hrs towards the ... river. At ... contacted KUMI, who was instructed to accompany west on his ... which were much neglected. Four ... const ... with five domestic ... on river. Instructed this party to accompany patrol. At ... gave village officials instructions to ... and rest ...

28 Sept
(Cont)

Met American patrol of 4 GIs from 1st BATTAL on river south of KUMAI, and advised them to return to KUMAI because of rising level of river, and likelihood of it flooding. KUMAI village deserted because of recent Jap occupation. Runner sent to KUMAI to obtain guides for KUMAI road.

29 Sept

Five deserters returned to KUMAI with 12 native carriers. Patrol left KUMAI 0500 hrs, proceeded up KUMAI and contacted village officials half an hour north of KUMAI. Left KUMAI and continued along stream bed in a southerly direction. Numerous houses seen on river indicated recent occupation by deserters. One deserter found in house who had been left by main party because of sprained knee. Patrol proceeded across KUMAI's over very rough terrain and eventually reached KUMAI at 1600 hrs. Village officials contacted, who advised large Jap party had passed through area and were now probably staying at KUMAI. Some native food bought, and camp made on river below village.

30 Sept

One KUMAI deserter contacted, but managed to escape. Patrol continued to KUMAI where one deserter was apprehended. KUMAI natives stated large party of Japs had stayed in the village only a few days previously, and were now at KUMAI. They had eaten food, and destroyed houses and coconuts. He continued to KUMAI, and found this village also in great disorder; houses destroyed by falling coconut trees on them, and trees and grass and shell money destroyed. Natives contacted with difficulty, but proved most helpful. Said Jap party, estimated strength 60, had passed through village about 24 weeks before. They had come from KUMAI-KUMAI, and had stayed for two nights at KUMAI. There were also reports of Jap parties at KUMAI, KUMAI, KUMAI, KUMAI, and KUMAI.

1 Oct

Native scouts sent to KUMAI to obtain information regarding Jap party at KUMAI and/or KUMAI. Patrol continued to KUMAI and camped at 1700 hrs. Patrol of KUMAI and Gul Gul of KUMAI report Japs still at KUMAI and are demanding countryside of all food. Unable to estimate strength, so instructed them to return and report later any further developments. KUMAI scouts returned, and report that Jap party from KUMAI have now joined group at KUMAI. Still no estimate of numbers. At KUMAI, two deserters apprehended, but another two escaped with assistance of Gul Gul of KUMAI.

2 Oct

Left KUMAI at 0730 hrs and proceeded to KUMAI arriving 0910 hrs. One deserter apprehended. Four natives, KUMAI, KUMAI, KUMAI, and KUMAI sent to apprehend deserters at KUMAI and KUMAI. Main party continued to KUMAI arriving 1130 hrs. From KUMAI to KUMAI, arriving 1305 hrs. Village officials contacted. Patrol and Medical Gul Gul of KUMAI report Jap party from KUMAI had moved to their village this evening. Told to return, put watch on road and advise any further movements immediately. One deserter, KUMAI, apprehended. Reports from KUMAI report Japs entered that village about 1400 hrs- apparently elements of KUMAI party.

3 Oct

KUMAI scouts instructed to return and advise further movements of Japs. Patrol moved on to KUMAI, village deserted, and locals cannot be contacted- apparently in anticipation of patrol's arrival. Native rations badly depleted; only about three days left; must obtain native foods. European rations also much reduced (one box of 10 in 1 opened yesterday found to be almost entirely spoiled). Party from KUMAI at KUMAI returned with six deserters; also patrol of KUMAI with a target on which he had numbered the Japs seen in his village as 140. Two KUMAI deserters apprehended. KUMAI says number of Japs (140 at KUMAI) is probably authentic, and parties at KUMAI and KUMAI were only foraging for food.

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- 4 Oct From TUSKONK to MUKWA - usual reception; a deserted village. One more TUSKONK and one MUKWA deserter brought in. No contact made with MUKWA natives. Police GIBBY and PAIS sent to MUKWA area to search for deserters.
- 5 Oct Police attempted to contact local natives without success. They were apparently well prepared for our coming, and have moved in a south-westerly direction towards MUKWA. Patrol and Gul Rai of WITIKI reported and were told to bring in their two deserters. Gul Rai of WITIKI caught in his outstanding deserters. Natives of WITIKI contacted.
- 6 Oct Police with WREU guide sent to that village to apprehend three deserters. Main party moved on to WITIKI; this village also deserted, apparently for some time. Police sent out to contact locals returned without success. Patrol and Gul Rai of WITIKI reported with two deserters. Police returned from WREU with three deserters.
- 7 Oct Police sent in direction of MUKWA where fires were observed at night. One WITIKI deserter apprehended. Some of WITIKI natives conversed with patrol by calling from nearby ridge. No satisfactory arrangements came to. Decided to depart for coast on morrow owing to extreme shortage of rations.
- 8 Oct Left WITIKI at 0600 hrs and proceeded to MUKWA, MUKWA and MUKWA. All these villages were deserted; however, some natives noticed near MUKWA working on a new garden. They were not contacted. From MUKWA to MUKWA and MUKWA. In latter place village officials contacted, they advised Jap party had moved out of immediate vicinity. These natives pleased to see patrol, and anxious to assist. Party moved on to MUKWA and camped for night. Village officials most co-operative, and plenty of food left.
- 9 Oct MUKWA, native constable who has been at his village MUKWA, reported with one deserter and two women, one his wife. Instructed to get rid of women and return with patrol. Shortly after leaving MUKWA, he disappeared from the line, and did not rejoin it. Left MUKWA at 0715 and proceeded through MUKWA and MUKWA, where village officials presented themselves, to MUKWA and MUKWA. In the last mentioned place, signs of recent Jap occupation were evidenced by gutted coconut palms and desolated houses. Village officials report that Jap party, having spent previous night at MUKWA, came and slept at MUKWA and then moved on in the direction of MUKWA. We continued to MUKWA and camped. Village officials from MUKWA, MUKWA, MUKWA, MUKWA, MUKWA and MUKWA reported with food. Elements of Jap party were MUKWA, MUKWA, MUKWA, MUKWA, MUKWA, MUKWA, where they joined the larger group mentioned earlier. The strength of this party was between 50 and 70.
- 10 Oct From MUKWA at 0645 hrs through MUKWA where signs of Jap party's visit were again evident. Over Mount MUKWA to MUKWA arriving at 1230 hrs. Road in fair condition, but washed away in places by heavy rains. MUKWA still deserted-staged there for the night.
- 11 Oct From MUKWA at 0630 hrs towards MUKWA. Continued rain and river in partial flood, but good time made. Arrived MUKWA. On instructions given when passing through, village had been cleaned and roads improved. Road from MUKWA to MUKWA also much improved. Arrived MUKWA at 1:00 hrs and camped.

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- 2211 -

- 12 Oct From BSM at 0630 hrs along WAPI road. Arrived WAPI at 1215 hrs. Road in better condition because of comparatively dry spell.
- 13 Oct From WAPI to AITANE. Left at 0730 hrs and arrived AITANE at 1030 hrs.

When this mass desertion was first reported, the exact number of deserters was not stipulated, as, at this time, few of these laborers were indentured. However, by questioning other WAPI natives at No 2 Compound, a list of the villagers was compiled, the total being 74. These natives were all from the east and south-east WAPI, the main villages concerned being FUMBE, BIRIKI and WAPI, which adjoin, in the south-east WAPI area.

- It is thought that possible reasons for desertion were:-
1. Frightened by prospect of indenture for two years, after having been recruited for casual labour.
 2. Some of the escapees were suffering from physical defects. (some filariasis, agnathia, etc.) and gave this as their excuse. However, had they been patient until they contacted the signing-on officer, they would have been discharged medically unfit.
 3. The majority of the deserters were from the south-east WAPI, an area which is only semi-controlled, and has been patrolled only occasionally in the past. The natives generally are a primitive and timid type, and probably found the discipline of the labour line against the grain.
 4. It is thought that the alarming death rate amongst WAPI natives working in the AITANE area, (approx 20%), also affected their decision.

The apprehension of deserters was comparatively easy in the east WAPI, but in the south-east area, the deserters went off in the direction of the dense bush near WAPI, and not many were caught.

The deserters had the support of the local natives, and had told the story that the War was now finished, the Inducement had left AITANE, and that all indentured labour had been finished and repatriated.

Of the 74 deserters, 30 were apprehended.

At the time of the patrol's arrival in the WAPI area, news was received of two enemy patrols. One based in the vicinity of WAPI, and the other at WAPI. The first mentioned party had been in the WAPI area for some months, and moved east from the WAPI area to WAPI, and thence to WAPI. It is known that the second party originally came from the WAPI area, via WAPI, and is thought to be the fusion of the two WAPI parties encountered earlier in this campaign.

The natives were at first unable to estimate the strength of these parties, but, with the co-operation of the Indian of WAPI, we sent a man to hide in a kopok tree, near the village and count the party by making a knot in a piece of bush rope for every man seen. I was able to approximate the strength at 150.

These enemy parties are receiving no native co-operation, and as a reprisal against this are laying waste to villages as they pass through, and will shoot any native on

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- PAGE 5 -

sight. However, the natives are very successfully evading them, and only one death, a native of WAMBU, has occurred through enemy action to date.

The Jap parties do not seem to be seeking an escape route, but are merely trying to exist. Apparently, their own food supplies are exhausted, and they are entirely dependent on native foods. On entering villages, they cut down coconuts, and steal any other food available from nearby gardens. When this food is finished, they pass on to the next village, and repeat the process. They are well armed, but some of the personnel are physically unfit, as some stretcher cases are carried. Some of the others walk with difficulty.

ROADS AND REST HOUSES.

The coastal roads are in a deplorable condition. If the foliage bordering them could be cleared so that the sun could dry them, no doubt they would improve. The roads in the WAMBU, SIKALI, WAMBUKI area have been cleaned, and in parts constructed, and also rest houses in these places have been repaired and are in good condition, as are the roads.

The work of the police on this patrol was disappointing, the efficiency of some members being impaired by the lack of discipline.

WAMBUKI did a good job as usual, but was handicapped by having too many Sepiks in the line.

SIKALI did excellent work.

WAMBUKI has gully roads, but can be most useful, particularly in WAMBUKI area.

WAMBUKI, WAMBUKI worked well.

WAMBUKI, WAMBUKI, WAMBUKI only fair.

WAMBUKI. This man is not physically capable of hard work on patrol. He was employed before the war as a Govt Store-boy at WAMBU, and should be relegated to some such position at WAMBU.

WAMBUKI is too old for active patrolling. He could not be used on patrol for normal police duties, as he was physically incapable. He lost about two stones in weight during the patrol.

WAMBUKI. A recently signed special constable. Absolutely hopeless, and should be discharged as mentally and physically incapable.

INDIGENOUS PERSONNEL.

WAMBUKI NO 11 C.S. WAMBUKI, who accompanied the patrol, was responsible for native labour, their relations, and medical care, and performed his tasks excellently. This is his second patrol of the WAMBUKI area, and he has now gained quite a lot of valuable local knowledge.

LOCAL SITUATION.

The first natives encountered were those of the east WAMBUKI, and although they have evacuated their villages to avoid meeting enemy parties, they were easily contacted, and co-operated well.

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- PAGE 4 -

In the southeast WAFI area the natives behaved very differently, and around KUAN, WITIK, and WAKI were openly hostile to the fact that the object of the patrol was to apprehend deserters.

The feeling in this area has been anti-white for some time, probably due to the fact that so many of these natives are fugitives from justice, and that so many have been arrested and imprisoned. Several village officials are amongst those languishing in custody, which fact has an adverse effect on the native feelings. Also the village WITIK is the home by a nephew of WAKI. Quite a number of his nephews also come from this area.

Only once was the bad feeling evidenced during the tenancy of the patrol. On this occasion, at WITIK, a native spokesman from a nearby ridge informed the patrol that they were tired of our hounding, and were coming to attack us.

Lieut. GUN replied through an interpreter and told them how stupid it would be for them to attack such a well-armed party, and attempted to convince them of our friendly intentions if the deserters were returned. These words were received rather coolly, and the spokesman once again informed us of the impending attack. To give these people some idea of our fire power, Lieut. GUN fired a few short bursts from an Owen Gun. This had the desired effect, and the spokesman then became more reasonable, and eventually his party withdrew. There were no further incidents of this kind.

The people of central WAFI were most co-operative, and, although they too have temporarily deserted their villages while the enemy patrol is in the area, they were easily contacted, willingly supplied information, and brought quantities of much needed native foods.

parties are

rationing

The European rations carried for this patrol were two cases of 10 in 1 rations, and sufficient supplementary "B" rations to provide food for 2 Europeans for 14 days. When the first case of 10 in 1 ration was opened, it was found to be almost entirely spoiled. This limited the time spent in apprehension; no doubt had more time been spent in south east WAFI many more deserters could have returned with the patrol.

.....Lieut.
(L. GUN)
Patrol Officer.