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REPORT - LIEUT. D.C. HORTON.

Submitted:

Attached hereto is copy of report from Lieutenant
D.C. Horton, R.A.N.V.R.

[Signature]
Lt. Commander, R.A.N.

Encl. 1.

~~D.N.I.~~

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REPORT ON COAST WATCHING STATION PWD

INTRODUCTION:

During late November 1942, Japanese forces occupied Munda in New Guinea Group and proceeded to settle in.

I was then at Cactus and was instructed to proceed to establish a coast watching station in order to observe all activities at Munda and obtain all possible information in that area. At that time ZGJ 5 under control of Captain D.G. Kennedy, who had his station at Segi at the eastern end of New Georgia Island, was the only station in the area. I left Halavo in Tulagi Harbour by PBY and arrived at Segi on December 21st. I then proceeded by canoe to a position five miles east of Munda on New Georgia Mainland. This did not prove suitable as I could not overlook the aerodrome and I moved from there to Rendova on January 5th, 1943, and established myself at approximately 2,000 feet in the bush. At that time there were no Japanese on Rendova. From this position I had an excellent view of Munda Airfield and by means of powerful binoculars was able to see everything that went forward.

ESTABLISHMENT AND PERSONNEL ARRANGEMENTS.

On arriving at Rendova, I recruited 25 boys from Roviana and also Rendova Island and trained them as police, scouts, look-outs, etc. These men remained with me and were sent out on missions from the camp. At that time was also covering Rendova, New Georgia Mainland, Kolombangara and Wana Wana Lagoon. For these purposes a half-caste, Harry Wickham was given rank of Sergeant in the B.S.I.P.O.F. and he acted as liaison and control officer on New Georgia Mainland. Special forces of Scouts were in Wana Wana and Kolombangara. They were under the control of a head scout in each case and reports were sent forward every two days to a central station in Roviana Lagoon and soon on to me by canoe by night. It should be noted that all travelling unless of an urgent nature was carried out by night. These arrangements worked well until about the beginning of February. The Japanese then landed at Ugeli Village and proceeded to establish O.P. s at Ugeli and at the South West point of the Island Baniata. Their arrival necessitated the removal of Station PWD to a safer location. This was done and we were able to watch all developments without the Japanese having any knowledge of our presence. Police patrols, reporting daily, were kept during the whole of my stay on Rendova. In order to ensure maximum safety for PWD, native houses were built on the location and the method of approach was by river bed. Every precaution was taken to camouflage both the lookout and the houses. The Japanese apparently never suspected the presence of our Station as they made no attempt to search the bush, except on one occasion, when some of my police scouts, without my knowledge, stole some of their personal gear. The Scouts were instructed if caught, to pretend not to understand the Japanese. This proved successful, as on two occasions, scouts were captured and were able to escape and give us much useful information. All local natives were ordered to avoid the Japanese and in all cases they did this. Control of the natives was greatly enhanced by the fact that I had been District Officer of New Georgia District in previous years. During the whole of the Japanese occupation the civil administration functioned and personnel at Stations, NRY, GSE or PWD or any other person, who in any way committed a breach of the law were sent to Segi and were dealt with by Captain Kennedy as District Officer. Consequently discipline throughout the islands was high and the scouts showed great courage and ingenuity in collecting information. On three occasions my scouts were wounded and several attached to ZGJ 5 were killed.

Apart from the main Station, two other positions were installed and stores placed in hidden locations in the bush. Supplies were brought in by PBY to Segi and thence by canoe, carried by night to us. On one occasion the Japanese over-ran a small outpost of ours, covering an ingress trail, but fortunately they did not investigate and we were able to close the trail and arrange for other methods to bring in supplies. We were able to some extent to use local produce but as the Japanese increased

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the patrol activities, food supplies became very short. In the early months of the establishment of the Station, the police were fed on local vegetables for which we paid at a fixed rate. Later we stole Jap rice and fed them on that.

BRIEF DIARY OF EVENTS.

During the early part of April, Sub Lieut. Evans established Station GSE at Kolombangara Island and I handed over scouts to him in that area. He also covered Wana Wana Lagoon.

I was visited during March by Messrs. Boyd and Coltus and in May by Messrs. Corrigan and Nash and previous to the attack on Rendova, by nine U.S. Officers, who had come to overlook the country. Six of these returned and three remained until D Day and I took them down on the night before, to carry out special work on the shore. Flt. Lieut. Robinson R.A.A.F. and three operators arrived during mid-July, to join me and they settled in at PWD. During the period in which the Station was established, we were able to rescue and return eight U.S. Airmen and 22 Chinese who were being pursued by the Japanese. On D plus 1 day, a party of Japanese, who had escaped from Rendova Harbour attacked Station PWD and forced Flt.-Lt. Robinson and three operators to evacuate at once. They were able to save the codes and the crystals and later a patrol was sent up to hold the station until such time as we are able to return to clear up the damage. The station was then established within the defence perimeter on Rendova Island near to G 2. I handed over the Station to Flt. Lt. Robinson on July 24th and proceeded to Lunga by PT boat and reported to Lt. Commander Pryce-Jones.

NOTES.

1. The Japanese in the area were Marines and apparently did not desire, and had not the ability to travel into the bush. The only occasion upon which we were at all harassed by them was when, as I said before, one of my police stole some personal gear. It appeared that they did not become hostile to the natives stealing back their own canoes which had first been stolen by the Japanese, or the natives stealing their rice to replace garden produce seized by the Japanese, but once their personal gear was touched they became annoyed and pursued the local natives.

2. At first the Japanese attempted to establish friendly relationships with the local natives but under our instructions they were avoided.

3. I think it would be a fair statement that because the natives in the New Georgia area were being supervised by people whom they knew, they had no wish to desert to the Japanese, although some of them were killed and their work was at all times dangerous in the extreme.

4. As a matter of practical use, I would suggest that the shoe be developed on the lines of the Japanese Jungle boot, in order to deceive the Japanese, if any tracks were seen on trails.

5. The wireless equipment functioned well at all times, but occasionally it had to be heated owing to the damp climate. A TBW set is now installed at Rendova. This set is not portable.

6. I would emphasise that unless police are fully trained, they should not be armed with anything but knives and should also be trained in bomb throwing and guerilla tactics at night.

7. Several Jap pilots were captured and owing to local circumstances had to be shot.

8. The wireless log of the Jap party at Rendova Harbour was captured and contained an entry indicating that they had suspicions of Allied forces landing on Renard Island just off the central East Coast of Rendova Island, shortly before D day. This referred to the four canoe party of Flt. Lt. Robinson which passed within fifty feet of a Jap barge while

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its sentry was asleep, when approaching a village from which the party was to proceed to PWD.

9. Considerable annoyance was caused by reporters and photographers who appeared to think that it was a privilege to be interviewed by them. They were disillusioned.

10. U.S. control of their press in regard to security of C.W. was poor and several high ranking Officers were inclined to reveal information of whereabouts of personnel etc. too freely. Sub. Lt. Mann with whom I travelled from Noumea to Brisbane informed me that Colonel Nabbe ^(L. abbe) at Vila was particularly indiscreet in this respect and appeared to regard the organisation as his own creation.

11. Variety in supplies and an occasional drink would have been very welcome.

CONCLUSION:

Owing to the favourable conditions under which we worked, i.e. the civil control of the District by Captain Kennedy and the prompt punishments meted out to any native who disobeyed orders, together with the fact that the Japs apparently had not or did not use D.F. and were disinclined to put out bush patrols, life at PWD apart from the necessity of continual watchfulness, was fairly placid.

It is suggested that for the greater efficiency of a C.W. Station, two Officers should be installed as it is impossible for one Officer to leave the station for any lengthy period of time owing to the necessity for safeguarding material and keeping continuous watch.

X. C. Horton

Lt. Horton,
R.A.N.V.R.