

21st October 1942

REPORT ON VISIT TO RUSSELL ISLANDS

GENERAL

A party consisting of Sub-Lieutenant Horton, Petty Officer Andresen^e R.A.N.V.R., and eight marines from the Pioneer Battalion under Corporal Justus, left Kukum beach at 1215 on 10/10/42 by Higgins boat, and proceeded to Savo Island, where incidental business was transacted, and thence to the Russell Is., landing being made at 2030 on the South Shore of Pavuvu Is. due North of Allacon Is.

Gear was carried ashore and it was during transportation that the wireless transmitter fell into the water. The Higgins boat left with the transmitter (which proved unusable despite an immediate drying out) at 0830 on 11/10/42 for Savo Is., en route to Lunga.

Cutting a track through the untouched forest to the position chosen for the O.P. proved more difficult than had been anticipated, and instead of the four days estimated to reach the position, it was not until 19th October that the gear was carried to the final position. Here it was that Captain Trench arrived with instructions to withdraw the gear and leave for Kukum. However the position is now chosen and prepared for future use if necessary.

It had been decided to investigate possible Japanese activities in other parts of the Russell group, and consequently Mr Horton returned with Capt Trench to the landing place having arranged for Mr Andresen^e and his party to cut a trail direct to Sunlight Channel from the O.P. as this would shorten the time required to transport the gear to the Higgins boat from 8 days to 2 days. (See Map 1)

A visit was made to the old site of Loun village on the night of the 19th by Higgins boat but as the village had been moved no contact was made with the natives and the party returned to Pavuvu Island.

On the 20th Lingatu plantation was inspected closely from Sunlight Channel and found to be deserted. Gun pit and sand bags were noted also an observation tower. (See Map 2) Mr Andresen^e and the marine party were picked up in Sunlight Channel at 1800 and the whole party proceeded to Hai village on Moko Island where contact was made with the local natives and a shrewd and intelligent boy by name of Silvester was taken on board as pilot and informant. Acting on his information a visit was made to

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Lou. Island and an American aviator, Lieut. D. Barr, was taken on board. The natives were given certain instructions and information and the party left for Lunga via Savo at 2100. Unfortunately the propeller of the boat was damaged by coral and consequently the return journey against a head sea and rising wind was slow in the extreme. Savo was passed at approximately 0900 on 21st. No call was made there as the fuel position and the propeller were causing some concern. The party landed at Alligator Creek Lunga at 1505, the fuel supply having given out five minutes earlier.

INTELLIGENCE

1. As far as it is possible to be certain of anything, it is thought that no knowledge of our landing and subsequent preparation of an O.P. position was held by anyone except ourselves. The chart of the Russell group is extremely inaccurate and large scale "rough" maps are appended. Care was taken that the natives should not know the whereabouts of the O.P.

2. Silvester, whom I regard as reliable and used to Europeans, gave me the following information.

(a) 16 Japanese had visited Lingatu plantation about 1½ months ago and had established a small O.P. there. This included the aforementioned gun pit and sand bag protection and the observation tower. They had left the house in a poor condition and had impressed six natives from Karamaloun village to work for them at Lingatu. During the stay of this party they had visited Yandina plantation and had captured four Chinese male employees of Fairymead Sugar Co. These Chinese had subsequently been shot at Lingatu wharf and their bodies thrown into the sea. The Japanese had not molested the two wives and two children left by the Chinese in the bush and arrangements were made for Silvester to take them to his village and look after them. The Japanese had left about 11th of October for Guadalcanal. Since then no other Japanese had used Lingatu plantation.

(b) A party of four hundred (approximate) Japanese in four landing craft had come to Karamaloun village (see map) on the night of 16th October. They were armed with rifles and light and sub machine guns. Approximately 200 had left at 2100 on 18th October in two boats for Guadalcanal. The second group were still there on the night of 20th.

(Note: Sub Lt. Horton accompanied an S.B.D. group on an attack on Kara-

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Karamaloun village on night of 21st October). The Japanese had impressed five natives including headman Tommy to shew them the reefs in the vicinity of Ksramaloun. Silvester was instructed to get in touch with this group and to tell them to escape from the Japanese and in future to avoid them. He was instructed to inform all natives that they should avoid contact with the Japanese but keep a watch on their movements.

(c) Six Japanese in poor material condition had swum ashore to Moie island after their landing boat had been sunk by dive bombers. This was some time ago.

(d) Japanese had passed through the Russell group previously using landing craft and coming from New Georgia via Murray Island to Karamaloun and Lingatu.

(e) Silvester reported the sinking of two Japanese war vessels: one on the 14th off the north of the Russell group was a two funnelled warship and was hit by SBDs about mid-day, sinking in the afternoon: the second, a single funnelled war vessel, apparently a destroyer, was hit about 1300 on the 19th and sank about 1800~~h~~ on the 19th off the Russell Group to the north.

(f) Silvester reports that frequently planes are seen to fall in and around the Russell group, and also that groups of Japanese planes flying to Lunga are usually visible from the Russell group (our observations confirm this).

3. Arrangements were made to contact Silvester and other natives if and when intelligence work is to be carried out in the Russell group.

4. The natives are very loyal and have only worked for the Japanese under threat of the death penalty.

5. The Russell group has many excellent anchorages for surface craft float planes and submarines.

6. There are supplies of native foods to be had at the villages, but apart from coconuts and cattle other natural food does not exist in quantity. Good water was found in several places.

7. There are two hundred drums of Balik Papan diesel oil suitable for use by vessels, stored at Banika estate and one hundred drums commercial gasoline at Yandina estate.

8. During the ret

8. During the return journey a bright light was visible for five minutes on the heights above Veisale and was seen at 2145.

9. The observation point was established on the flat top of the Pavuvu mountain chain nearest to Sunlight Channel and furthest north of the small range. It is suitable for dropping supplies by parachute.

The area of observation runs clockwise from Cape Somata in the west to Cape Bola also in the west, nearly a full circle.

At the point the track reaches Sunlight Channel there is a conspicuous dead tree in line with Banika hill due east.

Personnel and means of conveyance.

1. It is recommended that future missions of this nature take native carriers whenever possible. The task of carrying a small amount of gear and their own equipment was sufficient to exhaust the Marine carrying party on several occasions. The climate is not suitable for Europeans to undertake sustained labour of this type and if it is necessary to use European carriers - it is suggested that the carrying party do not carry equipment and be protected by a small group of armed marines with no other duties.

The eight marines attached to the party did extremely well under most difficult conditions and a special word of praise is due to Cpl Justus who was in charge of them.

2. A Higgins boat is not the best type of craft for this kind of expedition, as it is ill armed and not very fast, but under the circumstances the boat used proved adequate though extremely wet in any kind of a sea. She was well handled by her crew on all occasions.

D. C. Horton

Sub-Lt R.A.N.V.R.

KARAMALOUN - JAPANESE
(KARAMULLA IS.) HERE

CAPE SOMATA

O.P.
1400
approx

2nd TRACK
to
SUNLIGHT
CHANNEL

SUNLIGHT
CHANNEL

MOKO
IS.

Hai
Village

ROUTE OF
HIGGINS
BOAT
RETURNING
TO
LUNGA

CAPE
BOLA

Harold
Pt.

BAVIA
MT.

INLAND
ROUTE

LINGATU

Route
of
Higgins
boat

entering
from
LUNGA

Allanon
Is.

Iai rna

Loun
Is.
Village

MOIE
Is.

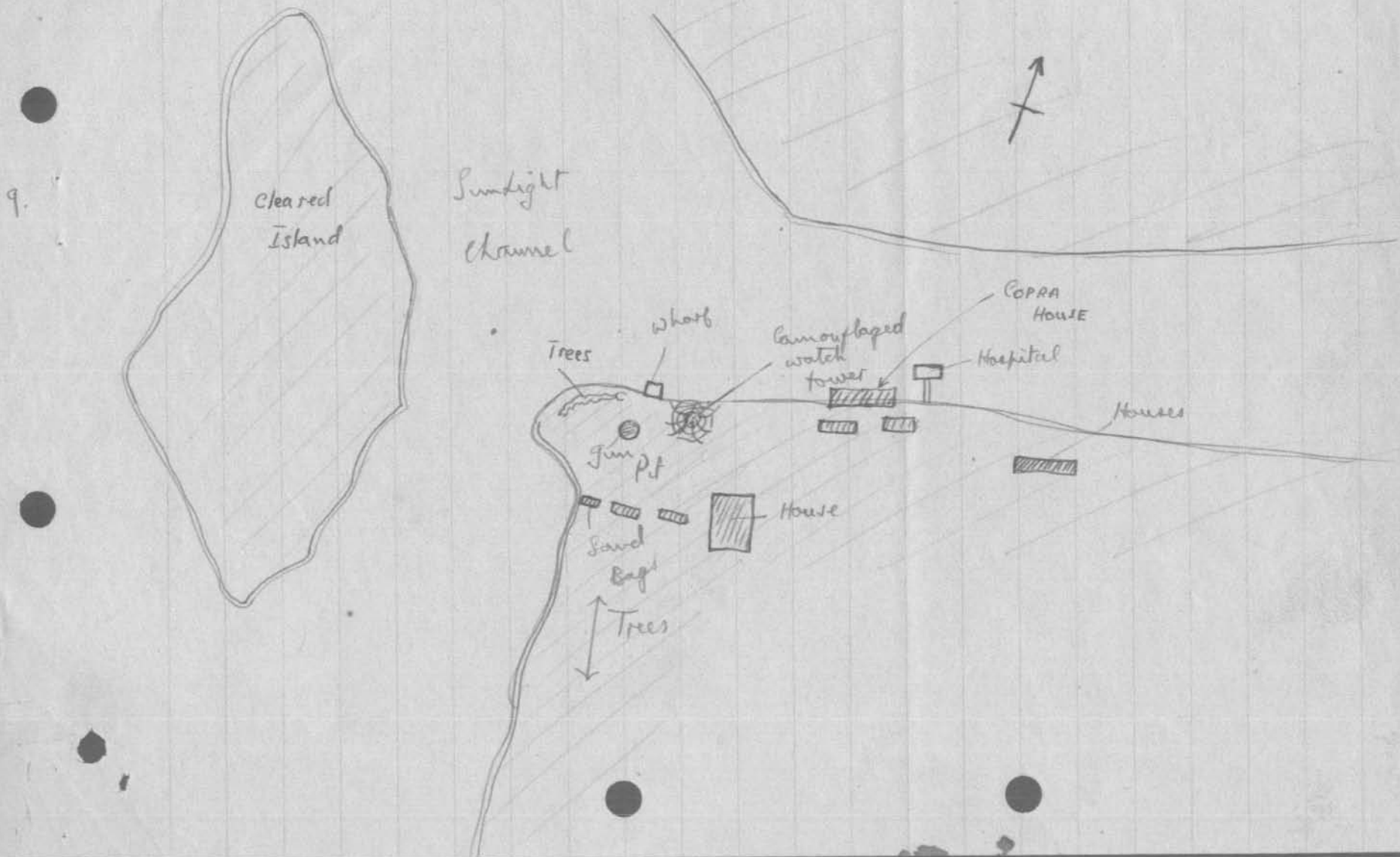
MAP I

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MAP. 2

Sketch of LINGATU House



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