

01/24/45

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23 Apr 45

SRD ACTIVITIES - MUSCHU ISLAND

- Ref Maps:- (a) CAPE BARABAR 1/20,000
 (b) KAIRIRU WEST 1 in to 1 mile
 (c) BUT EAST 1 in to 1 mile

1. Spr DENNIS SRD was a member of a party of 2 officers and 6 other ranks who were inserted into MUSCHU ISLAND on night 11/12 Apr. He rejoined this formation at KUMUDU W051219 on the mainland on 20 Apr after his escape from the Island.

A preliminary interrogation was carried out by 6 Aust Div, and AIB AITAPE representatives on 21 Apr.

A Tac R was made 22 Apr to check as far as possible on information given by Spr DENNIS and the preliminary report has been checked over with him, amendments being made as necessary.

2. The information set out in the following narrative of events is considered fairly reliable but, due to the circumstances in which the party found itself, some inaccuracies, particularly the pin pointing of the actual insertion point and the enemy occupied areas must be expected.

3. It is important that references are considered in conjunction with the maps specified since grid locations do not agree. Maps are attached showing approximate movements of the party and of Spr DENNIS.

4. NARRATIVE OF EVENTS:

(Ref Map "a")

11/12 Apr

112130K - 112230K: Party consisting of Lt BARNES, Lt GUBBAY, Sgt WEBER, Sig HAGGER, Pte CHANDLER, L/Cpl WALKLATE, Spr DENNIS, Pte EAGLETON left HDML 1231 about 3 miles ESE of CAPE BARABAR in 4 folding boats. Struck reef about 315217. 3 boats swamped. 2 automatic weapons, 1 Battery, 1 hand-talkie, paddles and possibly Verey lights were lost. Remaining equipment landed in saturated condition.

112230K - 120500K: Boats pulled ashore, party slept 15 yards inland. Nothing seen or heard.

12 Apr

0500 - 1000: Boats concealed 50 yards inshore. Base made about 100 yards inshore where W/T sets were concealed. Party moved EAST and reached SUP Point after 30 mins - NMS. 2 oiled JUKI MGs covering beach to NW were dismantled and thrown into sea. From SUP Point DENNIS took bearing to elevated rocks off eastern tip KAIRIRU Island - 340 degrees (this agrees with Map "a"). Party moved W and NNW along coast towards Cape SAUM described as bare and brown (confirmed by Tac R).

Strong posts were seen every fifty yards along coast with network of trenches and connecting tracks behind. Approximately four MGs were dismantled. From about 322225 party followed various tracks Westerly for approximately 1 mile to a tilled garden in a grass and secondary growth area approximately 315224. Several bomb craters in this area - drinking water obtained for first time. Huts are scattered but Japs occupy those to NORTH and NW of the garden.

1000 - 1500:

(Movements of party are uncertain, but Spr DENNIS appears confident that following narrative fits all the facts).

Captured a PW approximately 310220. Returned towards garden but missed previous track and arrived on beach WEST of landing place.

Mistaking this bay for the one between SUP Point and Cape SAUM, party turned right, crossed small creek mouth 20 feet wide 6 inches deep, approximately 306217 - A half buried, wooden, flat-sterned barge at this point.

Jap encampment about 2 - 300 yards up this creek at 305218 - 298218

With PW bound and gagged party followed coast, reached high ground with cliffs fringing sea (From here the mainland could be seen).

Several gun positions seen along cliff, one resembling an Oerlichen.

At hut 303209 one Jap was shot.

Near hut and gun 298208 another Jap was killed.

Party then moved Easterly, recrossed the creek and finally found the gun position previously observed on SUP Point.

Jap patrol passed near. PW slipped his gag and shouted. PW shot. Party went to ground.

1500 - 1800:

Party moved by former route to folding boat cache. Jap ambush set here with MG covering boats.

Party withdrew, made fresh base and planned getaway.

12/13 Apr

1800 - 2000:

Party moved EAST to 327223 - built log raft.

Whole party put to sea but raft smashed on coral reef near SUP Point.

Most of equipment was lost

DENNIS alone retained his SMG and rations. Remainder had wolrods, knives and mirrors.

2200:

Lt BARNES, Lt GUBBAY, L/Cpl WAINWRIGHT, Pte EAGLETON, decided to put to sea on separate logs with plan to signal Tac R plane on morning of 13 Apr, so HMML could pick them up and take off remainder of party at alternative rendezvous at Cape SAUM - no sighting since.

122200K - 130600K: DENNIS and party moved half mile inland and rested.

13 Apr

0600 - 1600: DENNIS party moved inland and rested eventually arriving near Cape SAUM in afternoon.

13/14 Apr

1600 - 2200: Moved to position approximately 320233.

132200K - 140200K: Watched for signals HMS.
Heard engines to NW.

0200 - 0600: Moved to 318230, slept in sago forest.

14 Apr

0600 - 1200: Made rendezvous for party near crater on NORTH side of garden.
Proceeded to original base to get ATR 4. Set.
Set found intact.
Moved back to rendezvous intending to set up communications.
Ambushed by Japs as they approached rendezvous.
DENNIS shot 2 Japs. His party dispersed discarding Set in scrub.

1200 - 1900: DENNIS unable to locate party.
Returned to crater for water. Found it sour and bitter due to some chemical.
Many Jap footprints in this area.
Moved WEST through sago.
Shot one Jap near a hut.
Surprised a Jap patrol of four and shot one.
Hld for night in sago 305225.
Japs continued patrolling and shots were heard to SE near beach.

14/15 Apr

141900K - 150600K: Rested.

15 Apr

Continued WEST having given up hope of contacting remainder of party.
Moved on to high ground and at approximately 290220 found .5 in MG in position but unattended.
Topped it over the cliff.
(Steep forest cliffs run EAST to WEST on the island, with steep face to NORTH side. - Tac R).
1000 hrs: Saw Japs searching in sago and forest.

NOTE: All map references from this time on are given off Maps "b" and "c".

Passed Jap camp where much wood was being cut, beside a stream. Approximately 268219
Crossed telephone wires running NORTH - SOUTH twice.
(Red and yellow air line, galvanised wire along ground).
Heard activity and engines in direction MUSCHU Bay.
Reached coast in vicinity village 243203 where there are three wrecked barges on the beach (confirmed by air photographs and Tac R).
Japs occupy area along beach Eastwards for half mile and just inland.
Estimated 50 to 100 Japs.

15/16 Apr

Rested near barges.

16 Apr

Remained in observation for the day.
Parties of Japs seen to be blowing fish in vicinity of bargos and to EAST.

16/17 Apr

Selected a suitable board to put to sea with from the bargos and concealed it.

17 Apr

Remained in vicinity all day.
Found board had been removed and placed on barge again.
Put out to sea, paddling on the board.
Current carried DENNIS about 2 miles NW.
Shore current then swept him SW and finally SE where he eventually landed just WEST of Capo PUS.
Rested two hours before dawn.

18 Apr

First Light:

Proceeded NW along coast.
Number of unserviceable trucks, possibly 12, between 235165 to 223171.
Jap parties scattered throughout this area as far as 212176.
Timber cutting often heard.
Road NOT used.
Telephone lines are present.
At 212176 DENNIS turned inland and proceeded WEST on a passably good track across ground shown as swampy on the map.
Reached HAWAIN RIVER where banks very steep during early afternoon.
Continued WEST into foothills.
Observed small patrols proceeding to coast along NORTH SOUTH tracks.
Was observed by two Japs - shot one.
Encountered patrol of four Japs - shot one.

Last Light:

Reached approximately vicinity 2526 (about three miles from coast).
Sighted NO Indians.

18/19 Apr:

Rested for night.

19 Apr:

Morning:

Continued Westward.
Mountains becoming higher and steeper.
Until noon continued to see and hear small patrols as on previous afternoon.
Surprised two Japs. SMG misfired.
Japs so surprised one lost his rifle and fouled the other.

Afternoon:

No further Jap patrols encountered.
Tracks little used or unused.

19/20 Apr

Spent night on high mountain overlooking KARAWOP and BOIKEN (Possibly Hill 2400 W0918).
Heard own guns firing from KARAWOP towards BOIKEN.

20 Apr

0700 - 1400:

Moved WEST and NW until met by 2/7 Aust Gdo Sqn patrol near KUMUDU 050220.

5. Spr DENNIS had only his emergency ration of fruit, chocolate and milk tablets. He retained his SMG, water bottle, maps and air photos partially defective compass and notebook. All codes, recognition signals etc he had torn from his book and destroyed.

6. SUMMARY of Main Points:

- (a) MUSCHU ISLAND is held in force on a plan generally confirming that shown in captured documents
- (b) Defensive positions encountered guarding beaches SUP PT - CAPE SAUM and WEST of CAPE BARABAR indicate likelihood of all suitable landing beaches being similarly manned.
- (c) Enemy is present in CAPE PUS - CAPE KOLANG.
- (d) Passable tracks exist in country WEST of PUS - KOLANG shown as swampy on map.
- (e) Movement of numerous small parties from SOUTH to NORTH on tracks between HAWAIN RIVER and main track through KOANUMBU to BOIKEN may indicate enemy is reinforcing BOIKEN Sector.

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