

## Morotai and North-West Borneo

On 11th April, 1945 the Battery, under command of Major K. E. Willis, embarked on the converted Liberty ship the "Sea Ray", and sailed from Brisbane with three other ships in the early afternoon.

The accommodation for the troops was not satisfactory, the bunks being tiered five high, and owing to the number of troops on board and the inadequate cooking facilities, the only meals served were breakfast and the evening meal.

Two minutes silence was observed on 13th April when news was received that Franklin D. Roosevelt, the President of the United States of America, had died.

The mountains of New Guinea were sighted the next day, and the convoy followed the coast northwards to the Huon Gulf and on to Biak, where the ships anchored for about two hours on 17th April, and were joined by another ship and a corvette.

The ships then sailed along the northern coast of New Guinea towards the Halmahera group of islands and anchored at Morotai Island on 19th April. The island had been taken from the Japanese by U.S. forces on 16th September 1944 and a perimeter had been established, beyond which existed a few emaciated Japanese.

After spending six days in the Transit Camp, the Battery with the rest of the Regiment, after crossing the Cabita River, moved to a site overlooking the sea.

As the Halmahera Group was a Dutch possession, Australian currency was changed into Dutch guilders, six guilders being the equivalent of one Australian pound.

The troops had to take care when bathing, as there were deadly coral snakes in the sea. Fortunately the beer ration was only two bottles per man, per week, so the number of snakes observed was not increased.

A program of intensive training was carried out, including infantry patrols into the jungle, with some element of danger, as at least one Japanese was sighted.

Early in May news came through that the landing at Tarakan had been successful with few casualties, and on 7th May the news of Germany's unconditional surrender was received with relief.

Lieutenant-Colonel Perry relinquished command of the Regiment on 1st May, with Major Willis administering command pending the arrival of Lieutenant-Colonel J. A. England, formerly of the 52nd Aust. Composite A.A. Regiment.

At this stage, the officers within the three Troops were as

follows:

"A" Troop (six guns)

Lieutenants H. B. Corneliusen, R. F. L. Wyatt and J. McCaskill.

"B" Troop (six guns)

Lieutenants B. W. Paton, J. C. Paton and K. A. G. Ball.

"C" Troop (six guns)

Lieutenants D. R. Pritchard, G. G. Finlay and B. F. A. Yeates.  
(Lieutenant Finlay had replaced Lieutenant Wansey, who had been seconded for special duties).

The Regiment came under the command of 9th Division A.I.F. on 6th May, and on the 24th the guns were water-proofed ready to move. The final packing was completed the next day.

The move from Morotai was made on 30th May, as a gunner's diary records:

*"Up at 6 a.m. packed and moved from here at 9.15 a.m. Arrived at wharf 11 a.m. and waited until 4 p.m. before starting to load. As usual the loading plan was wrong and had to move guns a number of times. We are on L.S.M. 133. Have 3 tanks and 2/2nd Machine Gunners with us, 53 troops altogether. Left Morotai at 7.30 a.m. and anchored in bay. Have bunks to sleep on below. Have to climb over trucks etc. to move about the boat.*

*"Thurs. 31st May. Hot day. A very hard morning's work water-proofing and carting ammo. Can get iced water all the time. Fair tucker. Played bridge for a while. Started on a long session for 1/- hundred, 6d. rubber. Doug and I played Blue and Snow. First night finished with us 1/6d. down"*

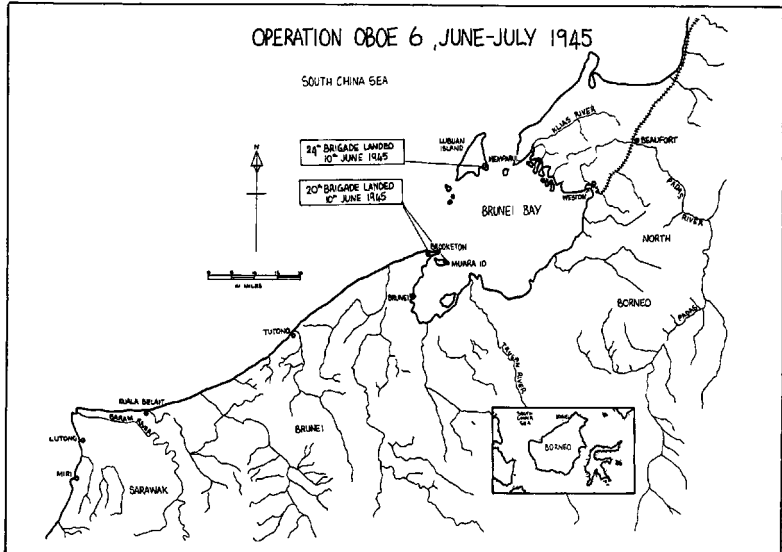
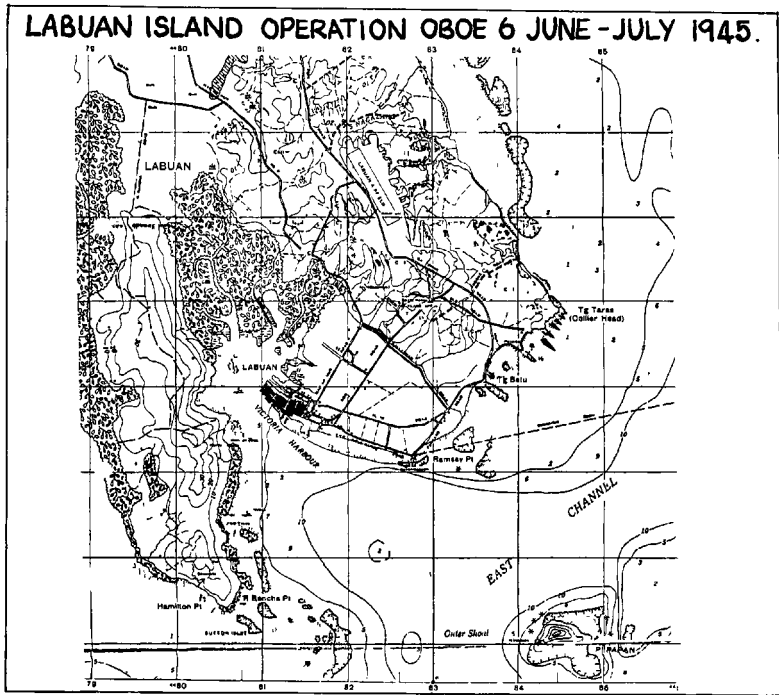
The War Diary of the Regiment records that loading was completed on 1st June, and that the vessels anchored in Morotai Harbor until 4th June, the Regiment being embarked on over 15 vessels, including L.S.I.'s, L.S.T.'s, L.C.I.'s, and L.S.M.'s.

The convoy of 85 ships, commanded by Admiral Royal in U.S.S. "Rocky Mount", sailed on 4th June for Borneo. The convoy included 34 L.S.T.'s, 22 L.C.I.'s and 22 L.C.M.'s, and the Australian L.S.I.'s "Manoora", "Kanimbla" and "Westralia". The escorting vessels were the U.S. cruisers "Boise", "Nashville" and "Phoenix", and H.M.A. Ships cruiser "Hobart" and destroyer "Arunta".

The convoy passed Mindanao on 7th June, and an oil tanker refuelled some of the ships. On the following day twelve P.T. boats joined the convoy off Palanan Island.

The voyage from Morotai is remembered with mixed feelings by Mick Preece:

*"From Morotai we went in convoy to Borneo. By this time I was on C.6 with Killer Curtis (Sergeant), Harry Anderson, Jim Summers, Cec Woodall, Snowy Chadwick, Frank McGrath and Killer Ryan, nearly all Queensland crew. On L.S.M. 133 I was made cook for the army blokes by Sergeant Frank Scott. I selected Cec*



*Woodall as off-sider. Had to get up at 4 a. m. to cook the breakfast and when the Yank cooks saw our baked beans they were so delighted they offered to cook our breakfast in exchange for the beans; so for the rest of the trip, instead of baked beans, we ate flapjacks, with bacon and maple syrup, for breakfast."*

\* \* \* \*

After a voyage of 1100 miles, the convoy arrived in the vicinity of Labuan Island, off the northwest coast of Borneo, on 9th June.

There were three landings in Brunei Bay in the Oboe 6 operation:

1. Victoria Harbor, Labuan Island – Brown Beach 24th Brigade, 2/28th and 2/43rd Battalions, 2/11th Commando Squadron and 2/12th Field Regiment, with divisional reserves to consist of 2/32nd Battalion and 2/12th Commando Squadron. 2/3rd Aust. Composite A.A. Regiment less "B" Troop, 9th Aust. Light A.A. Battery. Ancillary troops.

2. Muara Island, White Beach and Red Beach, and

3. Brooketon, Green Beach and Yellow Beach.

The landings at Muara Island and Brooketon were carried out by 20th Brigade, consisting of 2/13th, 2/15th, 2/17th Battalions and 2/8th Field Regiment, with "B" Troop, 9th Aust. Light A.A. Battery.

The landings were supported by 2/4th Pioneers, U.S. 727 Amphibian Transport and 593 Engineers Boat and Shore Regiment, British B.B.C.A.U. and S.R.D. guerrilla detachment, and 1st T.A.F. and component units R.A.A.F., together with U.S. and R.A.N. components.

There was no opposition to the landing. The Troop landed on Muara Island, but three guns moved to Brooketon the next day, followed by the other three guns on 12th June. The "B" Troop story is continued later.

\* \* \* \*

**SECRET**

### OBOE SIX

#### SEQUENCE OF EVENTS – Z DAY

(Issued with 2/3rd Aust. A.A. Regiment Operation Order 1)

Serial	Time	Event
1	D minus 70 minutes	Naval Bombardment begins
2	D minus 65 minutes	LCI (M) begins firing with mortars on HAMILTON PENINSULA. LCI (G) begin firing on assault beach with 40mm guns.
3	D minus 65 minutes to D minus 62 minutes	LCI (R) and LCS (L) discharge rockets on landing beaches

- |    |                                              |                                                                                                   |
|----|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4  | D minus 45 minutes                           | Aerial bombardment with anti-personnel bombs begins on area C<br>(HAMILTON PENINSULA)             |
| 5  | D minus 35 minutes                           | Aerial bombardment begins on areas A and B (BROWN BEACH and hinterland) with anti-personnel bombs |
| 6  | D minus 30 minutes                           | Naval bombardment accelerates                                                                     |
| 7  | D minus 15 minutes                           | Aerial bombardment on areas A and B ceases                                                        |
| 8  | D minus 9 minutes<br>to<br>D minus 6 minutes | LCI (R) and LCS (L) discharge rockets on landing beaches                                          |
| 9  | D minus 6 minutes                            | 1 CL lifts 800 yards inland. LCI (G) ceases fire on beaches with 40mm guns                        |
| 10 | D hour                                       | First wave beaches.<br>Assault troops land.                                                       |
| 11 | D hour                                       | 1 CL (main armament) ceases fire                                                                  |
| 12 | D plus 10 minutes                            | 1 CL (secondary armament) ceases fire                                                             |
| 13 | D plus 22 minutes                            | Second CL (main armament) ceases fire                                                             |
| 14 | D plus 22 minutes                            | 1 CL and 1 DD stand by to support advance of 2/28 and 2/43 Aust. Inf. Bns as required             |
| 15 | D plus 40 minutes                            | Aerial bombardment on area C ceases                                                               |
| 16 | D plus 60 minutes                            | All scheduled naval fire ceases.                                                                  |

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The Regiment's War Diary records the landing at Brown Beach:

*"10th June. 20 Aust. Inf. Bde. Gp. detached from convoy before entering Brunel Bay and the remainder entered Victoria Harbor at first light*

*"The first element of the Regt. to land was "A" Tp 9 Aust. L.A.A. Bty.*

*"Their personnel and equipment were landed by 'D' plus 4 hours and the six guns deployed in defence of BMA at 'D' plus 5½ hours. This was considered very good considering recce. had to be carried out on foot by Tp Comd and transport was limited to 2-3 ton 4 x 4 vehicles. No enemy interfered with the operation and at 1600 hours one 40mm guns gave support to 2/12 Aust. Cav. Cdo. Sqn. landing on Hamilton Peninsula. This gun fired 62 H.E.*

rounds at a prepared enemy fox-hole and tunnel in the side of high ground. Results were observed to be effective.

"R.H.Q. recce. party comprising C.O., O.O., Comd 6 Aust. H.A.A. Bty., one S.L. Bty. officer and Comd 2/3rd Aust. A.A. Regt. Sig. Sec. were ashore at 1730 hrs. and completed an initial recce. of the area before nightfall."

A story of the landing comes from Frank Scott:

"As one of the landing craft was approaching the shore, a member of the American crew said to the Australians near him "Say, buddies, put your cigarettes and matches under your helmet." On enquiring the reason they were told that the captain of that particular landing craft never took his vessel too close to the beach in case he couldn't get off again; so the troops would probably be up to their necks in water when they left the vessel.

"This must have been the craft from which one of the shorter members landed. As he stepped off the ramp, he disappeared altogether weighed down with his equipment. Fortunately, with the aid of his friends, he made it to the shore."

A gunner's diary records Z. Day, Sunday 10th June and the days following:

"Arrived Sugar Anchorage at 4 a.m. On guard from 5-7 a.m. Aircraft dropped one bomb. Our boys met no resistance on either beach. Stinking hot day. 24's and 29's did the bombing. 4 cruisers, 10 destroyers also rocket ships hit the shore. Japs started to shell beach-head so a destroyer fixed that up. Moved further into the Bay for the night. Slept in gun pit on deck.

"11th June. L.S.M. and L.S.T. moving in to unload at the island. Spent a very easy day in the bay. Red warning at 1200 hours, but nothing happened. Special message from MacArthur.

"12th June. Landed on Red Beach at 11 a.m. very poor one, had to wade through 5 feet water. On Labuan Island now. Met up with the rest of the boys, left guns in boat. A compound of natives near us. Japs shot our prisoners of war. Pitched 2 man tents. On F.D.R. (field rations) for two days. Artillery and planes going all day. Japs being pushed back. Heavy gear coming off.

"13th June. Cloudy day. A peaceful night. Only a swim parade this morning. There is plenty of water. All we have to do is dig for it. 1000 natives came to the compound. Route march to Victoria, this has been flattened.

"14th June. Artillery were on the job all night. 2/6th are now shelling the mainland. Lot more natives coming in. Now attached to 2/32 Bn. 9th Div. Money changed into Malay dollars \$1 = 2/11d. Japs rounded into a pocket. A hot feed, this was good. 8 Aust. P.O.W. brought in. Saw Jap prisoner, was in good condition.

A plane came over at 9 p.m. dropped a bomb. Another at 11 p.m. when the searchlight went into action also all the Bofors on the ships. Plane was shot down into the sea near here. We stood for an hour, then as I was on guard did not get to bed until 0200.

"23rd June. Worked on the pit and other jobs, boys very tired so had the afternoon off. Willis made an inspection; was pleased with job we had done./ Heavy rain 1700. 2 Reds before 2030.

"24th June. A peaceful night C.3 now have 6 Japs. Mac on C6 was shot this morning, he is very low. Cleaned up this morn then a spell. Mac died at 2300 tonight

"25th June. A peaceful night and a stinking hot day. Worked on the pit and odd jobs this morning, had the afternoon off. Archer called. Another squadron of Kittys in. Haircuts. Tobacco issue 2 oz tin every three weeks. Out for a possible ground attack also red warning at 2030 to 2145 hours."

6th Heavy A.A. Battery, the Searchlight Battery, the Signal Section, Workshops Section, and "C" Troop 9th Light A.A. Battery landed on 12th June, and on the following day four ground targets on Klias Peninsula, on the Borneo mainland, were engaged in a field role by the Heavy A.A. The U.S. Navy supplied a plane and observer. The directions given were "Up a little", or "Down a little", or "To the right" or "To the left". The gun crews were quite unused to this non-technical approach, but they did their best. Forty rounds were also fired by 6th Battery on Menumbok village on the mainland.

Again on 19th June the Heavy A.A. fired 950 rounds in support of a landing by 2/43rd Infantry Battalion at Mempakul, on the mainland.

On 14th June, the unit diary records:

"*"A" Troop went out of action 1330 hours to move to their A.A. area.*

*"At 2055 hours an unidentified enemy aircraft circled the area, dropped bombs harmlessly and withdrew. Target was not engaged as Searchlight did not expose. . . .*

*"At 2232 hours another enemy plane approached at approx 8000 feet from the east. Searchlights exposed and quickly illuminated and held the target in spite of violent evasive action by diving to a low altitude and turning sharply back to the east. Two 40mm guns engaged with accurate fire and vessels in the harbor engaged with intense L.A.A. fire. Plane was shot down.*

*"3.7 guns did not engage owing to the evasive action."*

On 15th June "C" Troop, which had been under the command of

2/32nd Australian Infantry Battalion, reverted under the command of the Regiment and was deployed around the Labuan Airstrip.

The enemy, by this time, had been mainly confined to an area approximately one mile north of Victoria Harbor and one mile west of the Labuan airfield, and known as The Pocket.

The area had been shelled by H.M.S. "Shropshire" on 18th and 19th June. However the enemy continued, over a period, to infiltrate into the occupied areas. The following incidents occurred, involving the Regiment:

17th June. In the early hours of the morning sentries at the Searchlight Battery H.Q. fired on enemy troops infiltrating the lines. The fire caused the enemy to run towards an adjacent unit where one Japanese was killed.

20th June. "Pancho" McDonald remembers that he was on Sergeant Keith Sullivan's gun A.6 situated in the middle of a swamp, not far from the beach. The other members of the crew were Connell, Simpson, Flynn, Weatherlake, McKeon, Hollins, Williams and Broderick. When the Japanese broke out and made for the airstrip and "Victoria" township, the gun site was in the middle of the crossfire from other units.

21st June. At the same gun site, Harry Corneliusen recalls that at about 6 a.m. he was disturbed by Bren gun fire. On investigation he found out that the guard had heard the stealthy approach of an enemy party of about 10 or 12. The guard had roused the gun crew, Mick Simpson pulled out a grenade and landed it amongst the Japanese, shouting "*Split this up amongst you, you yellow bastards.*" The grenade failed to explode. Just as the enemy were disappearing round a bend in the track, Broderick the Bren gunner opened up and shot an officer and another soldier. Harry, with the gun crew covering him, went to investigate and found them both very dead. The officer was carrying a special-looking sword which Harry was tempted to keep for himself, but instead gave it to the Bren gunner who promptly sold it to the nearest American for \$75.

It was on the same day that about fifty Japanese broke out of The Pocket and raided the Base at "Victoria". The 2/1st Docks Operating Company held them off for two hours, killing 32 of the enemy.

Another party raided the airstrip with aerial bombs, with the object of destroying the Spitfires. The party was repulsed by the 2/7th Field Company. The engineers killed eleven Japanese, with the loss of one killed and four wounded.

Lieutenant George Finlay reported that on the night of 20/21st June, he was awakened at 0515 hours by small arms fire, from the direction of Bombardier Nolen's gun. Section Headquarters was



immediately deployed in defence of the area. On investigation, it was found that a cow had been driven into the gun site area and movement in the scrub had been heard. No action had been taken at that stage because the Engineers were in the line of fire. Some time later, seven members of the gun crew, with R.A.A.F. groundstaff and Engineers, combed the area on the west side of Able Road. One Japanese broke cover and was brought down with Bren gun fire, two Japanese moved through the scrub into a house where they were killed by grenades. Later in the morning another of the enemy was sighted and fired on without result. Two 50 lb. bombs were found in the area.

On 22nd June, the C.3 detachment sergeant reported hearing a movement near the gun site. Bursts from Bren and Owen guns were fired in the direction of the movement, and scuffling in the bushes towards the valley was noted. At 0630 the booby traps were examined and one in the N.E. corner of the site appeared to have been interfered with. Apparently measures had been taken by the enemy to delouse it until fired on.

On 24th June, C.3 detachment was again in trouble. At 0115 hours, the booby trap laid by the detachment exploded and at 0145, Lance Bombardier Munn and Gunner Hedger fired on a Japanese moving towards the gun, at a range of 30 yards. Another Japanese appeared on the left flank and was fired on. Bren-gun fire combed the area. At dawn the area was patrolled and two dead Japanese were found, one lying across the trip-wire of the booby trap, and the other about 30 yards from the gun. At 1030 hours a further patrol was made of the area. A dead Japanese was found 200 yards from the gun-site; death had been the result of small arms fire.

Also on the same morning at 0645 Gunner McGrath, who was on guard at C.6 Detachment, sighted a Japanese and called Gunner Chadwick. They moved 100 yards from the gun to investigate a movement in the scrub. Bombardier Anderson joined the party, and the three separated to 20 yards apart, in order to comb the scrub. Gunner McGrath was wounded by fire from the enemy and died later in the day.

The unit War Diary of 24th June records:

*"Det. C.3 accounted for a further 3 enemy killed – one by Hand Grenade Booby Trap and two by LMG and rifle fire. The area around their gun site (L.6) has been consistently infiltrated by the enemy and the Det. by admirable initiative and resource have already accounted for 5 certain and several probable kills."*

John Howman recalls an incident that occurred about this time:

*"The Yanks were busily ferrying the infantry across the narrow stretch of water, which was the outlet for the large lagoon behind the township of Victoria built on the spit. Across the water was a*

hill from which some fire was coming. We were sited nearby, when an American colonel suggested that we could help by firing at the mortar position indicated. This we did and duly reported the position completely destroyed. The next day, when things had quietened down, we discovered that we had been firing at a Chinese tomb dug into the hill."

Harry Corneliusen recalls a more pleasurable occurrence:

"While we were filling in time unloading stores etc. in the harbor at Labuan, the troops learned that a ship containing canteen supplies had been sunk in the harbor after striking a mine, the main prize being many cases of best Aussie beer. The recovery of the life-giving liquid was somewhat hazardous, as the wreck was closely guarded by carbine-toting Yanks. This did not deter the grog-desperate members of our unit; under cover of darkness, and overcoming such problems as diving below the water and between decks, they managed to carry off quite a percentage of the prized loot. They played it cunning and buried in the sand many bottles of 'mother's milk'. Then, as the thirst demanded, they would wander down to the beach and dig up a bottle or two. Such minor problems as the oil-covered bottles (from the explosion of the wreck) didn't worry them at all."

On 27th June, Major Fletcher arrived to take up his appointment as second in command of the Regiment. Major Willis, who had temporarily held the position, reverted to the command of 9th Battery. The same day five officers and 175 other ranks arrived from Morotai as "follow up" personnel, with stores and equipment.

The following night the searchlights exposed in an attempt to locate two Japanese who were escaping from the Island. They were not discovered.

The War Diary records:

"Most of the enemy who infiltrated the town and air-strip areas during the night 20/21st have now been liquidated. Since then there has been an arduous period for most Detachments of the Regiment, which, by reason of their small numbers and the disposition of their equipment, have had little sleep and rest. This has considerably retarded the construction of gun pits and clearing of their areas."

Routine Orders of 16th June 1945 repeated messages from Lieutenant General Sir Leslie Morshead and from General Sir Thomas Blamey:

"31. Special Notice

The following letter has been received by Maj. Gen. G. F. Wooten, Comdr 9 Aust. Div. from Lt.-Gen. Sir Leslie Morshead, Comdr 1 Aust. Corps –

"In a message received this afternoon, General MACARTHUR described the execution of the BRUNEI BAY operation as flawless,

and requested me to convey to you, your officers and men the pride and gratification which he felt in such a splendid performance.'

*"The following message has been received by Maj. Gen. G. F. Wooten, Comdr 9 Aust. Div. from General Sir Thomas BLAMEY, C. in C. Australian Military Forces.*

*'Delighted to learn splendid initial success of OBOE SIX. Congratulations and best of luck for continued success.'*"

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Reverting to Z day, 10th June 1945, when "B" Troop, in the operation carried out by the 20th Brigade, landed at Muara Island and subsequently moved to Brooketon:

One section of "B" Troop moved from Brooketon on 15th June for defence of 2/8th Aust. Field Regiment positions and the proposed Auster strip. Extremely bad roads and inadequate transport made the move most difficult. Then, on the next day the section moved from the Auster strip further south and was deployed in defence of Clifford Bridge.

By 28th June both sections of "B" Troop were deployed at Brunei.

On 5th July, 9 Battery Headquarters, Captain Archer in charge, and Lieutenant Rule, acting Battery Captain, moved to Labuan Island where Captain Archer relinquished command to Major Willis.

Headquarters "B" Troop and one section of guns moved to Kuala Belait on the coast, about 80 miles south of Brunei, on 10th July; and two days later the second section of "B" Troop moved to Lutong, another twenty or so miles along the coast, where an unopposed landing by 2/13th Battalion Group had been made on 20th June.

The Troop was still under command of 2/8th Aust. Field Regiment.

No Japanese troops had been encountered from the time of the landing on Muara Island.

The Official War History describes the road down the coast as follows:

*"...from Tutong onwards the road was a wide beach ... and on the hard sand at low and medium tides vehicles could be driven at up to 50 m.p.h."*

Again quoting from the History:

*"The troops got on splendidly with the civilians – both the impassive, business-like Chinese and the cheerful, unhurried Malays – and particularly the children."*



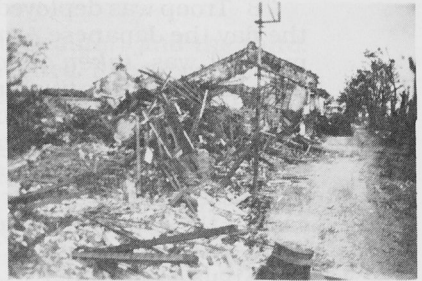
*Brunei, Borneo. (Courtesy Australian War Memorial)*



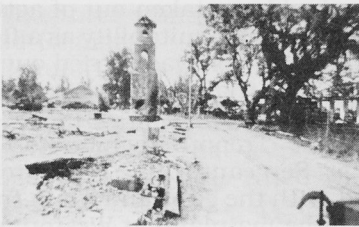
*Beaufort, Borneo - Ready for action. (Courtesy Australian War Memorial)*



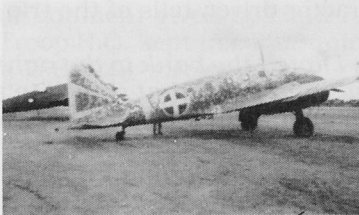
Labuan Island looking towards  
Borneo Mainland.  
(Photo courtesy W. Nicholls)



Labuan shopping centre destroyed by  
Allied bombing and shelling.  
(Photo courtesy W. Nicholls)



Labuan Township after Allied attack  
(Photo courtesy C. Rae)



Japanese plane that brought in the  
surrender party – Labuan.



Japanese lookout post – Labuan.  
(Photo courtesy W. Nicholls)



Lt. Gen. BABA and Staff arriving for  
surrender procedures.



Maj. Gen. KARADA 37 Japanese Army  
brought to Labuan for surrender  
procedures.

"B" Troop was deployed in the same positions until 14th August, the day the Japanese Army unconditionally surrendered. Detachment B1 was *"taken out of action on account of being in undesirable section of native quarter."* (War Diary)

The Troop was to perform one further act before coming out of action. On 10th September, to coincide with the actual signing of the surrender by Lieutenant-General Baba the Commander of the Japanese forces in the area, "B" Troop fired 101 rounds. The shell case of the last round fired by the Troop was handed to Brigadier Windeyer, Commander of 20th Infantry Brigade and Commander of the Kuala Belait area.

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Back on Labuan Island, a Bofors had been taken out of action and installed on a L.C.M. to undergo trials for suitability as a field artillery gun along the waterways. A firing test was carried out on 9th July, with 62 rounds fired. The trials were considered satisfactory.

On 23rd July, "C" Troop H.Q. and "C" Troop Detachments, C.1, C.2, and C.6, under command of Sergeant Guy, Bombardier Nicholls and Sergeant Curtis moved, with the guns and a gun tractor, by barge from Labuan Island to the mainland at Weston and proceeded up the Padas River to Beaufort. Fortunately the weather was fine for the voyage across Brunei Bay.

John Ballantine, who was the tractor driver, tells of the trip up the river:

*"As we entered the Padas River, I noted the bank to the right to be moving. This was the river grass and weed that moved in the wake of the barges and which extended beyond sight. The river gradually defined to a fairly deep channel. Hard banks on the left, and hundreds of monkeys to the right swinging through the trees and screaming. Several villages were passed with jetties projecting into the river. Women washing themselves under clinging garments. There was one stop for eggs and enquiries made for the purchase of a monkey.*

*"Arriving at Beaufort, the barges had difficulty in making secure to the high bank, due to the swift river current.*

*"Owing to the steepness of the bank, difficulty was also experienced in getting the guns and tractors off the barges. The chain used in the first attempt broke, but the gun tractor successfully used its own winch to reach the top of the bank. An attempt to pull a gun out of another barge also failed when the chain broke, the gun running back into the barge and damaging one of the levelling jacks. The gun tractor winch was again used with success.*

*"The road from the river was constructed from split palm trees,*

*which made the going very rough."*

Two of the guns were deployed around Beaufort and the third, C.6 was ordered by the commander of the area, to be located on a steep hill about 300-400 feet high, which overlooked the air-strip.

The gun was moved by block and tackle, borrowed from the Engineers, to the base of the hill. A bulldozer then took over, making a road ahead and at the end of the day bringing the gun up that far. Each day, time was lost because the bulldozer kept losing a track. At the end of the second day, news was received that the first atomic bomb had been dropped on Japan. (Having no detail of the damage caused, the news meant little to the gun crew). The gun was at last in action on the fourth day.

The three guns came under the command of 2/12th Aust. Field Regiment.

Beaufort was a fair-sized town, with substantial buildings, including a cinema. A railway ran from Weston on the coast, through Beaufort, to Jesselton further north up the coast. It had been discovered that jeep tracks were the same as the railway gauge, so a jeep was fitted with flanged wheels and used as a locomotive.

There was no air activity or ground activity against the enemy.

Leisure time was taken up with visits to the pictures and to live entertainment given by concert parties.

Troop H.Q. kept in communication with Battery H.Q. by the use of a W.S. 122 wireless set.