

SGT Leo Clohesy and 10 platoon



SGT Clohesy was awarded *Mention in Despatches* for his exceptional service in the field in the South West Pacific area.

We do not know for sure why this award was made but his actions over the period 28 to 30 June 1945 must have been significant factors in the award being made. SGT Clohesy was wounded on 12 August, counter attacking snipers who had killed Pte Bahr.

The story of SGT Clohesy and 10 Platoon's three day patrol out from Wakunai was detailed in the 7th Battalion's war diary and is repeated here exactly as recorded in the diary.

7th Battalion War Diary for 1:45pm, 30 June 1945

A patrol from 10 PI (platoon) commanded by SGT Clohesy returned to the Coy Company) base after an exciting 3 days.

The object of the patrol which departed from the WAKUNAI base at 9am on 27 Jun was to recce and ambush the track running down the North East coast of Bougainville from 750319 to 762310 (*these numbers are map references*). Previous reports indicated that the NUMA NUMA area was thick with Nips and that pro-Jap Kanakas were assisting them. SGT Clohesy established his firm based on Saddle Mount at 738294, 3000 yards (=3,000 metres or 3 km) from the coast for the night of 27/28 Jun.

On the morning of 28 Jun, SGT Clohesy and 9 others with one native scout left their base to set an ambush along the coastal track for the day. The remainder of the patrol numbering 5 including Sigs Wilson and Walsh and stretcher bearer Pte Bob Bysouth with a wireless set and one native, remained at the firm base.

On the evening of 28th a message was received at Battalion from the firm base to the effect that the patrol to the coast and not returned and would probably spend the night in the bush. This was the last message received from the firm base and at 6pm 29 Jun 2 men including Sig Wilson arrived in an exhausted condition at B Coy base at Wakunai.

At 10am on the same morning (i.e. 29th) the patrol's firm base still only occupied by 5 men was surprised and attacked by 15 — 20 Nips armed with at least 3 automatics. The 5 men fought them at a range of 15 yards (= 15 metres) but were forced to withdraw.

Enemy casualties during this action were 1 killed, 5 or 6 wounded. The native with our patrol was killed. The 5 men had no time to gather up their equipment and the Nips were left with 14 packs, a 208 wireless set and a bren gun.

The two men reported that at 12 noon that day whilst finding their way back to B Coy, they heard heavy fire coming from the direction of the firm base.

SGT Clohesy and patrol returning to the firm base from the coast found 8 — 10 enemy in occupation. Our patrol attacked the enemy and drove them off. 1 enemy was killed, 2 probably killed and 2 wounded. All our equipment was captured intact and the patrol then returned to B Coy's perimeter. Total casualties for the action:-

Enemy—2 killed, 2 probably killed, 7 wounded

Own—1 native guide killed