

sergeants to school the new recruits, it would not get first-class reinforcements. As an additional check, if the commander of the training division in Palestine did not approve of the quality of the officers and instructors sent back to him from the units, he returned them and asked the units to choose again. To keep training up to date and to prevent the development of a class of behind-the-line instructors, the officers and N.C.O.s were returned to their units from the training division after they had spent six months there teaching recruits.

Newly-arrived officers were also sent to school for four weeks as soon as they arrived in the Middle East. Every soldier from Australia was put through an eight-weeks course regardless of what training he had done at home; and, on top of this, specialists were given additional courses. At intervals the sergeant-majors were sent to school. The Australian training division was made the master gauge for training in the Middle East, and three hundred British, South African, New Zealand, Polish, French, and Greek officers were sent to learn its system. It was less than a year old when the greater part of the A.I.F. left the Middle East to fight the Japanese.

By December 7, 1941, the Australian overseas force had fought in the Western Desert, in the mountains of Greece, in Crete, in the bare and rocky ravines of Syria. Japan's entry meant that they had to learn jungle fighting, and the overwhelming of the 8th Australian Division in Malaya, Amboina, and Timor and Rabaul—it was scattered among all these places—was a challenge. Australian units fresh from bivouacs in the snows of Lebanon began training for jungle warfare in the thickest bush they could find in South Queensland. Other brigades, which were delayed to garrison Ceylon on their way home to Australia, used the Ceylon jungle to train in.

When the veterans arrived home they found that Australia was trying to maintain a far larger army in proportion to her population than America will be maintaining even when the American Army reaches the limit of 7,500,000 men which President Roosevelt has announced.

Some of the brigades which beat the Japanese at Milne Bay and in the Owen Stanley Range trained for those campaigns, working out their own technique of jungle warfare in the forests of Queensland. They had six weeks to get ready for the new kind of fighting in between the time they reached Australia from the Middle East and the time they were in action in New Guinea. Other brigades—and these were the veteran troops—were halted in Ceylon on the way to Australia. There was practically no force on the island to defend it except those Australians at the time when Japanese aircraft were bombing Ceylon, and it seemed likely that Japan's next big move would be towards Ceylon and Madagascar.

The experimental, self-critical, intensely practical Australian brigade—the same which had broken the perimeter defences at Bardia and Tobruk early in 1941; had foiled a German blitzkrieg in Greece and had come out unshaken and intact; and then had fought their hardest battle in Crete and Syria—was one of those which spent four months in Ceylon working out this new jungle warfare. They worked so hard on it that when they departed their memoranda were text-books on jungle fighting.

These men were among those who met the Japanese in New Guinea and pushed them back to Gona on the coast, using tactics they had worked out in Ceylon.

The lion's share of the fighting in the New Guinea campaign has been done not by *Yank's* Aussies, but by Australian veterans with three or four long, uncomfortable campaigns behind them; who have left men they fought with dead in Cyrenaica, Greece, Crete, and Syria. They judge themselves and the men they meet by their ability to do their jobs and their determination not to let their mates down. In this war, as in the last, this simple standard has produced rather better infantry than the Germans could put into the battle, either in France in 1918 or at El Alamein in 1942.