

their losses were only one man killed and one officer and one man wounded. On the other side, the Japs lost over two hundred men. In estimating enemy casualties, only those seen killed were counted.

On one occasion a patrol slipped behind a Japanese defensive position. That the last thing in the world the enemy expected was an attack from the rear was shown by the fact that the whole layout was planned to resist an attack from the sea. When close to the position the Fijians were spotted and a few shots came from the Jap lines, whereupon the Fijians poured in a volley of rifle fire, grenades, and Bren gun fire, catching the startled Japs on their way to their action stations and killing forty-seven with no loss to themselves. True to their methods, only those seen killed were counted, although there must have been even more casualties among those Japs sleeping or resting in huts which were riddled by the Brens or blasted with grenades.

After seven weeks the enemy in the area was stirred up, and heavily reinforced his troops, starting a frontal assault on the outposts. So, having inflicted damage, material and moral, on the invader, and having found out all they wanted to know, the Fijians pulled out and returned to the perimeter. On their return journey the track they had used when outward bound was found to be dangerous because of the number of Japs, so, using native guides, an alternative track was made. This became uncertain, and finally they made straight for the coast. For this reason the planes carrying their supplies missed the column and the last two days of what turned out to be a five-day march were done without food.

Later, when the Japanese made a determined and large-scale assault on the perimeter, the Fijian battalions were in reserve and after the assault had failed went out on patrol time and again to harass

the retreating Japs. It was during this period that the American decoration of the Silver Star was won by a Fijian private. Left behind with the transport, it was his job to recognize the battalion on its return from an extended patrol and pass the word down so that they would not be mistaken for an enemy patrol and fired on. Whilst waiting he observed a small Jap patrol hiding on the trail which the battalion would use. Gathering four of his comrades he set off into the jungle and routed the enemy, killing five Japanese and bringing back a Jap machine gun, a knee-mortar, and one prisoner.

Of powerful physique, the Fijians have shown themselves both courageous and skilful in the jungle. Excellent scouts and confident masters of bush-craft, they are nearly all marksmen and have the whip-hand of the enemy. Orders are given in English and translated by N.C.O.s. However, many of the New Zealand officers have learnt something of the Bau dialect, the main language of the Fijis, and know enough to give the relatively short and simple commands that are necessary in action. As batmen the Fijians show themselves interested in everything that concerns the officers they serve, and it is they who act as language teachers. Their interest in the officers sometimes has its embarrassing moments. One officer, asked by his batman if he had a "marama" or sweetheart, off-handedly said that some one had taken her from him. He found later that the news was round all his platoon, who were quite concerned at his loss.

Not only have the Fijians shown themselves loyal and stalwart soldiers, they have shown also that they possess initiative and leadership of a high order.

On one patrol two sections, under a Fijian sergeant found themselves cut off from the main body. Making their own way back they found their progress blocked by a

