

when I saw Mac wave us down with an urgent hand. We hit the mud, and lay still. The sun was shining high in the trees, and there was a noisy hum of insects, but nothing else. After a while Mac beckoned me up, and I went, carefully. He pointed up the trail, and I looked through some fern, and saw a small flag stuck squarely in a clear space in the path.

It was white parchment, only a few inches square, and was scrawled stylishly with elegant Jap characters. "I think it means 'Out of Bounds,'" Mac whispered. "Hold on, Corp., I'll get it." He wriggled forward, while we watched anxiously, fingers on the trigger. The half-expected bark of a shot never came, though, and we had a good look at the notice when Mac brought it back. It was double dutch, and the only thing we knew was that it was Jap. It was quite dry, so could only have been there for an hour or two. "Right, chaps, they're here after all. Back to the beach, so something can be organized!" All the time we withdrew from that place we felt that we were observed by many hostile eyes. There was not a sign of life.

We were about a quarter of a mile down, in the same formation, when we had to throw ourselves flat again. In the middle of the path was an identical flag cutting us off this time! We felt trapped, and the silence was unnerving. We imagined the Japs sniggering at our bewilderment, and felt helpless rage at being their butt. It was now most

urgent that we get back immediately, and after a hurried consultation in whispers we split our number in two. Each half of the patrol made a wide and cautious detour, and to our great surprise we were not molested, and met half a mile down the track. "The plot thickens!" Jim said; "I wonder why they let us off when they had us taped?" We didn't waste time on speculation, and made fast time downhill to the beach.

We went over with the Platoon Commander and the Sergeant to the Nisei boy. The Lieutenant handed him the flag and asked: "What do you think of this?" He grinned, and said without surprise: "I don't think they'll do much good." "Why, what does it say?" "Oh, it tells the soldiers of the Emperor that it is useless for them to resist us. It advises them to surrender and get good food." He opened his shallow steel case, and we could see many more parchment flags like it. "We distributed them to the natives this morning, and they've taken out quite a number already." He looked at a native who was listening. "Joel here can sneak through the bush and plant them on tracks so that no-one would know where they came from. Eh?" He poked the boy in the ribs, and received a toothy smile in reply. The Lieutenant looked hard at us, and said "Er hm! Quite an idea."

However, we never could explain to the other section why we didn't meet on the saddle.

