

An Old Digger Speaks

Port Moresby, April 1943, 9 pm

The air raid siren screams a warning. From Lae, Mitsubishi bombers en route; the raid lasts about 3 hours, from 9.15 to midnight. One Beaufighter is destroyed. The enemy planes are too high for the ack ack torches to spot. There are no night fighters



L.A. Leane

With bold and daring courage of youth, the 18 year old conscripted Chocolate Soldiers, the laughing stock of the forces, excavated a hilltop and installed artillery guns. With great temerity they asked their officers that no night fighters be sent up at night. "Give us a go" they pleaded.

"What can kids like you do that experienced men can't?" the officers bawled. But the Choco's prevailed.

The sirens wailed their warning, the searchlight lit up the night; the tracer bullets pierced the sky, the enemy planes played hide and seek amongst the clouds. The artillery boomed. The enemy planes crashed to the ground.

The ground staff took off their hats, "Good on yer" they whooped with glee, "Give it to 'em".

The New Guinea News reported an all time record number of enemy planes destroyed. The Choco's were shrouded in glory.

Hats off to the Japanese who came in flying low in their suicidal flights. Two such brave men died. These brave men were under orders, as were we.

Allied ships were sunk in Port Moresby Harbour. My own ship was narrowly missed by bombs. Many Japanese ships were destroyed by our Bostons and Beaufighters. Their ground strafing in the jungle proved most effective, as was later discovered by the troops. One Japanese freighter was despatched carrying mustard gas.

Because of man's lust for power, what a waste of manpower by friend and foe. There is a way out of this human holocaust and it's called the way of the Cross. It was founded by the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ of Galilee, two thousand years ago.

Like the Choco's, Jesus is a laughing stock; like the Choco's he overcame the enemy and now his head is high and many worship him.

Many of us are laughing stock, the butt of every joke. Come under the leadership of Jesus and like the Choco's, you too, can lift your chin high.

*From the diary of the late L.A. Leane,
father of Bruce Leane*

