

THE BATTLE OF SHAGGY RIDGE.

1076 1210pm In Bertha L.
25/4/44

Periodically our newsreel screens, portray some action in the wild hinterland of New Guinea; each fresh instalment impresses the mind with the forbidding grimness of that jungle scene. How men could live here, assailed by the greatest hazards of unbending Nature, as well as the attacks of the enemy, is a never-ending source of wonder. This episode, too, is in the same tradition. It was a battle fought by Australian infantry in the neighbourhood of Finisterre; ~~aided by the native porters who help in the back-breaking job of carrying loads through the jungle wastes; though the white infantry have their share of carrying, too.~~

The scheme of attack was a three-pronged drive from the Ramo Valley towards Madang. Shaggy Ridge is a knife-edge elevation with a drop of 2,000 feet on either side. ~~Enough for human will and muscles to climb up, superhuman to fight as it.~~

Machine guns and mortars gave the Australian soldiers covering fire while they advanced: ~~but trying to shoot at the enemy in this wilderness seems like throwing pebbles into the Pacific.~~

Slowly, indomitably, they advanced. Despite the handicap under which the covering fire was given, it was the accuracy of it that enabled the assault to be made. How can you explain that? You can't; you can only accept that it was a fact --- and realise once more the great quality of our soldiers.

Almost as hard as the assault itself is the job of caring for wounded. In this war, the Japanese frequently leave their own wounded to die. If there were nothing else to prove it, this alone tells us that the cause for which the United Nations fight, must be the right one.

What a tonic, if you're fed up with the war; don't you suppose they're fed up? And yet they fight on!