

Martin McLane

Japanese Attack

The Japs were in among us and just about ten yards away was a Japanese standing there, a sergeant. You could see him sergeant with his stripes on. A fearsome looking man and waving his sword, waving it round. They were very good with their swords you know. They were inherited from their relatives and they used to practice this *bushido* with swords and what have you. And he'd stand waving his sword and shouting and yelling. Now when I think of this later on he was drawing attention for people to fire at him while these other men waited for the Bren guns opening up and they'd throw grenades at the Bren guns, which was happening. They'd throw grenades at any Bren gun that opened up and they were hitting our lads. Now at this instance I jumped off the ground when I saw the sergeant. I said "I'm going to get that basket". And up with my Sten gun, I didn't kick him. I just put it up and 'bang', the gun wouldn't fire. I was speechless, I was furious, I went berserk. Again my weapon failed us. I quickly pulled the bolt back, hit the magazine sharpish, aimed and fired again. And the gun wouldn't fire again. I was distraught then. I was cursing the gun, cursing everybody. It could only happen to McLane this. Off with the magazine, put another one on, same thing happened, the Sten gun would not fire. And no matter how I tried in those few seconds, few minutes, and I was very good at weapons, I couldn't get this gun to fire. No way, I was just getting a clunk, a clunk as if something was jamming inside. When you took the magazine off you could see the round had been dragged forward but it was slumped across the opening of the magazine, it wasn't being driven forward properly. So I took a grenade out with the intention of hitting this chap with a grenade. I had the pin out, I was determined to get him because he was causing all the disturbance in the area. And I was ready to fling it and I said "I cannot...", all round this area is our lads in positions, these little foxholes which were scattered quite uneven in the top of the hill. I said "I'm most likely to hit them". So I got down and I put the pin back in the grenade and bent the pin back so it wouldn't fall out. Somebody in the meantime had hit the Jap sergeant.