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“It was about 4 pm, and I’d just had a mouthful of bully beef. I’d have loved a swig of water to wash it down, but that’d have to wait. I peered around the corner of my cave and saw a Turk looking down towards me. I didn’t think he saw me ‘cos I moved so slowly, but I knew he’d be ready when I joined the attack tonight.

“I could see our sergeant and a couple of the lads getting ready to make their assault up the ravine. There was an Aboriginal soldier in that little group, and I recognised him as a stockman I’d worked with in Winton. Bloody good horsemen, those blokes were. I gave him a grin and a nod, and the toothy smile he returned seemed to light up the whole ravine. I gave him a thumbs up and went back to concentrating on the task at hand. *When they move, my Turk will be distracted, and I’ll have him*, I thought. *Then I’ll have a chance to join in with our boys.*

“There was constant withering fire from the top of the cliff. It mostly bounced off the iron shield. Billy Sing was giving them what for; I saw one Turk fall for every shot of his. I rolled out of my position and aimed upwards with my .303. I saw my Turk and nailed him. His mate, who I hadn’t seen earlier, shot at me, and I felt my right shoulder get hammered. I tried to reload, but I couldn’t use my shoulder. I felt something going on inside me—a sort of heat with a lack of pressure somehow and a weakening of my muscles.

“It was getting towards night—the sky had darkened—and I suddenly realised that I wouldn’t be going home. The right side of my face was buried in the sand of that ravine.

“I’m so sorry, Mum. Sorry, Dad. I did my best, so be proud of me for that, please, I thought. I’ve tried so hard in this bad, bad place, but I won’t be seeing you again, on this side of heaven, anyway. Bugger! I thought I had that Turk covered, too. It’s so dark now and getting colder. I wish I were back in the bar with my mates in Winton. I can just feel a little smile starting at the memory as the fine sand blows across my left cheek.”

Lest we forget.